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LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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SOP# P-050

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SUBJECT: USE OF FORCE  
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INDEX AS: LETHAL OR LESS-LETHAL FORCE: SHOOTING INCIDENTS:  
PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION: FIREARMS: LESS LETHAL WEAPONS  
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EFFECTIVE DATE: 5/6/2008  
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I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide all Officers with guidelines on the use of LETHAL and LESS-LETHAL force.

II POLICY

This Department recognizes and respects the value and special integrity of each human life. Investing law enforcement officers with the lawful authority to use force to protect the public welfare, a careful balancing of all human interests is required. Therefore, it is the policy of this department that all officers use only that force that is reasonably necessary to effectively bring an incident under control, while protecting the lives of the officer and others.

III DEFINITIONS

- A. Lethal Force: Any use of force that is likely to cause death of serious bodily injury.
- B. Less-Lethal Force: Any use of force other than that which is considered lethal force.

IV PROCEDURES

Continuum Levels of Force

- 1-Officer Presence
- 2-Verbal Direction
- 3-Soft/Empty Hand Control
- 4-Less Lethal
  - a- Oleoresin Capsicum-OC Spray or Pepper Spray
  - b- Taser
  - c- Asp
- 5-Hard/Empty Hand
- 6-Lethal Force

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- A. Parameters for use of lethal force:
1. Officers are authorized to use lethal force in order to:
    - a. Protect the Officer or others from what is reasonably believed to be a threat of death or serious bodily harm; or
    - b. Prevent the escape of a fleeing felon whom the officer has probable cause to believe will pose a significant threat to human life should escape occur.
    - c. Prevent the commission of a forcible felony.
    - d. Suppressive fire when deadly force criteria is met.
  2. Before using a firearm, officers shall identify themselves and state their intent to shoot, where feasible.
  3. A officer may also discharge a weapon under the following circumstances.
    - a. During range practice or competitive sporting events.
    - b. To destroy an animal that represents a threat to public safety, or as a humanitarian measure where the animal is seriously injured.
    - c. Suppressive fire for cover purposes is a valuable and appropriate method for officers **only** in a deadly force situation wherein an officer or officers are in need of cover fire for gaining a tactical advantage or retreating from a compromised position.
  4. Officers shall adhere to the following restrictions when their weapon is exhibited:
    - a. Except for maintenance or during training, police officers shall not draw or exhibit their firearm unless circumstances create reasonable cause to believe that it may be necessary to use the weapon in conformance with this policy.
    - b. Warning shots may not be fired.



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- f. Officers shall not be permitted to carry any weapon with which they have not been able to qualify during the most recent qualification period.
  - g. Officers that have taken extended leave or suffered illness or injury that could affect their firearms ability will be required to re-qualify before returning to enforcement duties.
2. Less-lethal force weapons and methods:
- a. Officers are not permitted to use a less-lethal weapon unless qualified in its use as determined by training procedures.
  - b. The following less-lethal weapons are authorized:
    - Oleoresin Capsicum (OC Spray or Pepper Spray)
    - ASP Baton
    - Taser- M26 and X26
- D. Reporting Uses of Force:
- 1. A written report will be required in the following situations:
    - a. When a use of force results in death or injury.
    - b. When a less-lethal weapon is used on a person.
  - 2. A supervisor will be immediately summoned to the scene and will comply with investigative procedures as required by the department in the following situations.
    - a. When a use of force results in death or injury.
    - b. When a subject complains that an injury has been inflicted.
    - c. When misconduct is alleged or suspected.

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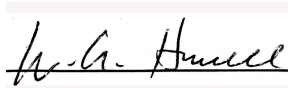
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- E. Departmental Response:
1. Lethal Force incident
    - a. When an Officers's use of force causes death, the officer shall be placed on administrative leave after completing all internal investigative requirements, and until it is determined by a mental health professional that the officer is ready to return to duty.
    - b. This department shall conduct both an administrative and criminal investigation of the incident.
  2. Administrative review of critical incidents.
    - a. All reported uses of force will be reviewed by the appropriate departmental authority to determine whether:
      - \* departmental rules, policies and procedures were violated,
      - \* the relevant policy was clearly understandable and effective to cover the situation, and,
      - \* department training is currently adequate.
    - b. All findings of policy violations or training inadequacies shall be reported to the appropriate Supervisor for resolution and/or discipline.
    - c. All use-of-force incident reports shall be retained as required by law.
    - d. There will be a regular review of use-of-force incidents by the appropriate departmental Supervisors to ascertain training and policy needs.

  
W. A. HARRELL  
SHERIFF

5/06/2008  
**EFFECTIVE DATE**