

THE USE OF FIREARMS

Firearms and other police weapons are to be regarded as basically defensive. Their careless or unreasonable use or display is disturbing to the public, reflects unfavorably on the department, may cause public criticism or result in civil or criminal action against individual members.

It is basic that every officer has the right, in case of either felony or misdemeanor, to protect his own life or to protect himself from serious bodily harm. The right to meet force with force is provided by law but the courts, not the officer, are the final judges of the justification of his act.

Weapons may also be used to protect the life of a citizen from a felonious assault and to protect him from great bodily harm if there is no other reasonable way of preventing such assault. They may be used to aid in the capture, or prevent the escape, of a known felon whose crime is dangerous to human life, and where there is no other reasonable way to effect such arrest or prevent such escape. Firearms will not be used to prevent the escape of a misdemeanor or a suspected felon.