

**FAIRFAX COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**SOP NUMBER: 032a  
SUBJECT: USE OF FORCE -  
DOCUMENTATION, INVESTIGATION, AND  
NOTIFICATION**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide reporting requirements concerning the use of force by Fairfax County Sheriff's Deputies.

**II. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office when force is used by a deputy, appropriate notifications, accurate documentation, and a thorough investigation must be completed pursuant to the below procedures.

**III. PROCEDURE**

**A. Use of Deadly Force**

**1. Notifications for Use of Deadly Force**

- a. Deputies that use deadly force shall immediately inform an on-duty supervisor. The supervisor shall notify the employee's Branch Chief or the Staff Duty Officer.
- b. Deputies that use deadly force outside of Fairfax County shall notify the local law enforcement agency.

**2. Documentation for Use of Deadly Force**

- a. Final incident reports regarding a use of deadly force shall be completed in coordination with Internal Affairs and the Fairfax County Police Department's Major Crimes Division.

**3. Investigations for Use of Deadly Force**

- a. All incidents involving the use of deadly force shall be investigated by Internal Affairs except when deadly force is utilized against a non-domesticated animal that does not result in the injury or death of any person or domesticated animal.
- b. All incidents involving the use of deadly force outside of Fairfax County shall be investigated by Internal Affairs in coordination with the local law-enforcement agency.

**B. Use of Firearms**

**1. Notifications for Use of Firearms**

- a. Employees shall immediately inform their supervisor or the on-duty Confinement Squad Commander at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center if they discharge a firearm, except for:
  - 1) Lawful off duty activities (e.g., hunting or recreational shooting).

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- 2) Authorized training exercises.
    - b. These circumstances shall be immediately reported by the supervisor to the employee's respective commander or to the Staff Duty Officer.
  2. Documentation for Use of Firearms
    - a. The deputy discharging the firearm shall submit a written report as outlined in III. A. 2, a. pursuant to the Use of Deadly Force reporting procedures.
  3. Investigations for Use of Firearms
    - a. All incidents involving the discharge of a firearm shall be investigated by Internal Affairs except;
      - 1) Deadly force utilized against a non-domesticated animal that does not result in the injury or death of any person or domesticated animal.
      - 2) Lawful off duty activities (e.g., hunting or recreational shooting).
      - 3) Authorized training exercises.
- C. Use of Less-Lethal Force
  1. Notifications for Use of Less-Lethal Force
    - a. Deputies shall immediately inform the on-duty supervisor of the use of force incident.
    - b. The notified supervisor shall review the circumstances surrounding the use of force incident and notify the Branch Chief, Staff Duty Officer (after normal business hours, holidays and weekends) or appropriate Commander of the occurrence of any serious injury or death.
  2. Documentation for Use of Less-Lethal Force
    - a. The staff involved shall write an incident report appropriate to the division in which the incident occurred and submit it to their immediate supervisor prior to the end of the deputy's tour of duty.
      - 1) Written incident reports for inmate escorts (hands on to direct inmates from one location to another with little or no pressure on the inmate's body) do not need to be completed, unless directed by a supervisor or if an injury is apparent or alleged to have been sustained by the inmate or staff.
  3. Investigations for Use of Less-Lethal Force
    - a. Supervisor responsibility when less-lethal force is employed:

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- 1) Respond in situations where force is used and incidents involving injury (real or alleged) and conduct an appropriate investigation as described below.
    - a) Investigations do not need to be completed for an Inmate Control (control holds that affect the neuromuscular system (e.g. wristlocks, CCG level 1, etc), or direct mechanics against body structure using an object (e.g. a wall, the floor etc.) unless an injury is apparent or alleged to have been sustained by the inmate or staff, or if a supervisor determines a thoroughly documented investigation is warranted.
  - 2) Complete a Use of Force Investigation Form ([SOP 032a Attachment 1](#)).
  - 3) Complete a Use of Force Investigation to minimally include:
    - a) A description of events that led to the Use of Force.
    - b) Reasons for the Use of Force.
    - c) A statement indicating whether the deputy's actions appear appropriate based on the totality of circumstances.
  - 4) Complete an Inmate Injury Investigation Form ([SOP 032a Attachment 2](#)) for incidents that do not require a Use of Force Investigation and when there is:
    - a) Non-serious injury to an inmate.
    - b) Alleged non-serious injury to an inmate.
  - 5) Collect all available documentation and all pertinent information prior to the end of the tour of duty and complete the investigation in a timely manner.
  - 6) Submit the *Use of Force* or *Inmate Injury* investigations to the appropriate Branch Chief through the chain of command prior to the supervisor's next scheduled days off.
  - 7) The appropriate Branch Chief will submit the *Use of Force* or *Inmate Injury* Investigation to Internal Affairs for tracking purposes.
- D. Deputies assigned to partner agencies
1. Deputies assigned to work with partner agencies, will follow the reporting protocol designated by that agency, or as outlined in any mutual "memorandum of understanding".

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2. If possible, the Deputy will forward a copy of any Use of Force or use of ECW reports [SOP 032b Att. 1- Use of ECW Report](#) , along with supporting documentation, to the appropriate Sheriffs Office supervisor for tracking purposes.

07/23/01  
**DATE APPROVED**



**STACEY A. KINCAID  
SHERIFF**

08/27/18  
**EFFECTIVE DATE**

**Revised: July 2001, July 2006, June 2008, September 2011, August 2012, August 2018**