

OFFICE OF SUPPORT SERVICES

September 15, 2020

NOTICE

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TO: All Sworn Department Personnel

FROM: Director, Office of Support Services

SUBJECT: WEAPONS OTHER THAN FIREARMS – TWENTY-ONE FOOT RULE

The “Twenty-One Foot Rule” is often associated with a pre-set distance in which a person automatically becomes a threat of serious bodily injury or death when armed with weapons other than firearms. This notice is a reminder for all Department personnel that the concept of the “Twenty-One Foot Rule” is not taught in theory or practice by the Department. Therefore, the sole reliance on the “Twenty-One Foot Rule” concept is not consistent with Department training or sanctioned by the Department as it pertains to suspects armed with weapons other than firearms.

All sworn personnel are reminded to review Training Bulletin, Volume XLVI, Issue 3 titled “Weapons Other Than Firearms,” published in October 2017, which in part states:

*When dealing with suspects armed with edged weapons, distance is **not** the only factor that must be considered. When confronting a suspect armed with a weapon other than a firearm, officers must determine the type of weapon and assess the suspect’s ability to inflict serious bodily injury or death with that weapon. Resolving the situation safely using de-escalation techniques and proper planning should be primary objectives for officers dealing with suspects armed with weapons other than firearms. Officers should always attempt to resolve the situation with the least force possible; just because lethal force **may** be authorized, it does not have to be used if the situation can be resolved safely with other force options. The guiding principle is preservation and reverence for human life.*

When developing a plan of action to deal with incidents involving weapons other than firearms, the totality of circumstances should be considered in assessing the suspect’s ability to inflict serious bodily injury or death with that weapon.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact Sergeant II Joseph Fransen, Serial No. 37629, Office of Support Services, at (213) 486-8410.


BEATRICE M. GIRMALA, Assistant Chief
Director, Office of Support Services

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