

Policy III.3000.I, Use of Force

Purpose

This policy establishes the standards governing the use of force by San Jacinto College Police officers. It is intended to ensure that officers use only the force that is objectively reasonable and necessary to accomplish lawful law enforcement objectives while protecting the rights, safety, and dignity of all individuals.

Policy

The Board of Trustees recognizes and respects the sanctity of life. It is the policy of this College to value and preserve human life. These fundamental values will be reflected in the training provided to employees of the College's Police Department.

San Jacinto College Police officers may use only the amount of force that is objectively reasonable and necessary under the circumstances to carry out a lawful duty, including making an arrest or detention, executing a lawful search, preventing escape, overcoming resistance, or protecting themselves or others from harm. The officer must reasonably believe the arrest or search is lawful or, if the arrest or search is made under a warrant, the officer reasonably believes the warrant is valid. The officer must use only that force which a reasonably prudent officer would use under the same or similar circumstances.

The Chief of Police shall establish procedures governing the use of force, reporting requirements, supervisory review, investigation, training (including de-escalation techniques), and compliance with applicable federal and state law.

Use of force considerations. When practical and when such delay will not compromise the safety of the officer or another and will not result in the destruction of evidence, officers should identify themselves as peace officers and communicate their intent before using force, unless doing so would compromise safety or the effectiveness of the intended action. In determining whether force is appropriate, officers shall consider the totality of the circumstances known to them at the time, including but not limited to:

- a. The seriousness or severity of the crime at issue;
- b. Whether the individual (suspect) poses an immediate and likely threat to the safety of the officer or others;
- c. The individual's actions, including resisting, attempting to flee, or combativeness;
- d. The individual's prior history of violence, if known;
- e. The nature of the offense or reason for the law enforcement contact;
- f. The individual's apparent mental, emotional, or physical condition, including possible impairment by drugs or alcohol;
- g. The presence or accessibility of weapons;
- h. The availability and effectiveness of reasonable alternatives;
- i. Number of other officers available or present;
- j. The need to quickly gain or maintain control of the situation; and
- k. Any other facts or exigent circumstances known to the officer at the time.

Deadly force may be used only when authorized by law to make an arrest, or to prevent escape after arrest, and when the officer reasonably believes it is immediately necessary:

- a. in defense of human life, including the officer's own life, or in defense of any person in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death; or
- b. to prevent the escape of a person whom the officer reasonably believes the person's conduct included the use or attempted use of deadly force, or when the officer reasonably believes there is a substantial risk that the person to be arrested will cause death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another if the arrest is delayed.

An officer's use of deadly force must be objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances.

Duty to intervene and to report excessive force. A College peace officer has a duty to intervene to stop or prevent another peace officer from using force against a person suspected of committing an offense if the amount of force exceeds that which is reasonable under the circumstances and the officer knows or should know that the other officer's use of force: (1) violates state or federal law; (2) puts a person at risk of bodily injury (as defined in Texas Penal Code 1.07) and is not immediately necessary to avoid imminent bodily injury to a peace officer or other person; and (3) is not required to apprehend the person suspected of committing an offense.

An officer who observes the use of excessive force by another peace officer shall promptly make a detailed report of the incident and deliver the report to the supervisor of the peace officer making the report.

Prohibition against chokeholds. An officer may not use of a choke hold, carotid artery hold, or similar neck restraint, unless the officer reasonably believes the restraint is necessary to prevent serious bodily injury to or the death of the peace officer or another person. Any officer using such force will cease immediately upon control of the subject (normally when the person has been handcuffed or no longer actively resisting) and begin the application of an appropriate medical response if needed. Officers are required to report such an incident through the process outlined in the police department's use of force reporting rules.

Duty to render aid. An officer who encounters an injured person while discharging the officer's official duties shall immediately and as necessary request emergency medical services personnel and, while waiting for emergency medical services personnel to arrive, provide first aid or treatment to the person to the extent of the officer's skill and training. An officer is not required to request emergency medical services or provide first aid or treatment if making the request or providing the treatment would expose the officer or another person to a risk of bodily injury, or if the officer is injured and physically unable to make the request or provide the treatment.

Definitions

"Force" as used in this policy means the extent of physical effort required by police to compel compliance by an unwilling subject.

“Excessive force” is application of force by an officer that is unlawful, not required, no longer required, prohibited by policy, or knowingly exceeds a degree of force that reasonably appeared necessary based on a specific situation, i.e., the level of force exceeds what is necessary to control a subject.

“Lethal Force” and “Deadly Force” are force that is intended or known by the actor to cause, or in the manner of its use or intended use is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.

Authority

San Jacinto College authorizes commissioned peace officers to use force only as permitted by applicable federal and state law while performing their official duties. Officers shall exercise sound judgment, act with objective reasonableness, and remain accountable for all uses of force.

This policy supports the College's commitment to protecting life, preserving public trust, safeguarding constitutional rights, and ensuring that all uses of force are consistent with applicable legal standards and accepted law enforcement practices.

Associated Procedures

Departmental procedures and corresponding general orders are maintained administratively within the Police Department.

Date of Board Approval	This policy became effective as of August 10, 2026, under the Chancellor’s authority granted by the Board under Policy II.2000.A, Policy and Procedure Development, Review, Revision, and Rescission. Permanent affirmation of the change followed the standard policy review process of two readings at regularly scheduled meetings of the Board with first reading on August 10, 2026, and approval on September 14, 2026.
Effective Date	This policy became effective as of August 10, 2026, under the Chancellor’s authority granted by the Board under Policy II.2000.A, Policy and Procedure Development, Review, Revision, and Rescission. Permanent affirmation of the change followed the standard policy review process of two readings at regularly scheduled meetings of the Board with first reading on August 10, 2026, and approval on September 14, 2026.
Primary Owner	Vice Chancellor, Fiscal Affairs
Secondary Owner	Chief of Police