

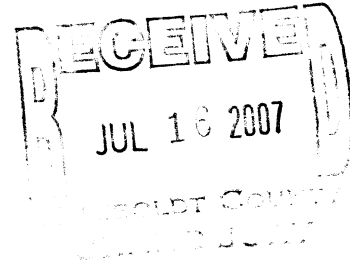


Blue Lake Police Department

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1 July 2007

Humboldt County Grand Jury
825 Fifth Street
Eureka, CA 95501



Dear Forman and Members of the Grand Jury:

My office has received the Humboldt County Grand Jury report on "Police Use of Force". Per the request detailed in the report, I have compiled responses to Finding / Recommendation 1 through 3.

Regarding Grand Jury Report #2007-LJ-02 "Police Use of Force."

The Blue Lake Police Department places the highest priority on the ethics of all our personnel.

In regards to noncompliant subjects and the use of force, I believe our officers have demonstrated excellent control and have utilized their skills and training in deescalating agitated subjects, mostly through communications. The Blue Lake Police Department has had very few complaints over the last ten years especially regarding the use of force. There has not been one Use of Force claim filed against the City of Blue Lake in the same 10 year period in comparison to other cities that participate in Public Agency Risk Sharing Authority of California (PARSAC) [1].

Concerning Finding / Recommendation #1. "Use Of Less Lethal Force"

I disagree wholly with the finding / recommendation #1, as it pertains to the Blue Lake Police Department. The recommendation was implemented prior to the Grand Jury's report.

The Blue Lake Police Department's training complies with or exceeds POST Training and Taser International training mandates. Additionally we require quarterly training on

the use of non-lethal force and firearms training. Weapon system training includes off-duty weapons, duty weapons, 12 ga. shotguns firing less lethal bean-bag munitions, FN303 Less Than Lethal System, chemical agents and Taser's. The police department takes full advantage of any training offered by the College of the Redwoods Police Academy, POST and other departments.

The Police Department maintains a computerized training file on each of its officers.

Concerning Finding / Recommendation #2. "Deployment of Taser."

I disagree wholly with the finding / recommendation #2, as it pertains to the Blue Lake Police Department. The recommendation was implemented prior to the Grand Jury's report.

Each uniformed Blue Lake Police Officer has been issued an X-26 Taser with Taser-Cam and is required to carry the unit in the field when practical.

All Blue Lake Police Officers are fully trained by certified Taser instructors before being authorized to utilize the Taser.

The Blue Lake Police Department most likely will be the first department in Humboldt County to replace the 12 gauge Bean bag rounds with the Taser eXtended Range Electronic Projectile, or XREP. The XREP is launched from a standard 12-gauge shotgun. The XREP delivers TASER Neuro-Muscular incapacitation (NMI) in a self contained projectile system weighing only half an ounce.

Concerning Finding / Recommendation #3. "Expense / Funding Taser."

I disagree wholly with the finding / recommendation #3, as it pertains to the Blue Lake Police Department. The recommendation was implemented prior to the Grand Jury's report.

The Blue Lake Police Department has deployed X-26 Tasers in the field for many years.

The police department issues X-26 Tasers to each of its sworn officers. In addition, each X-26 Taser is equipped with a Taser-Cam; including the departments spare X-26 Taser. The Taser-Cam records black & white video and audio prior to the weapon being discharged. Blue Lake Police Department is the only department in Humboldt County to have Taser-Cams.

The officers also have access to other less than lethal weapon systems such as the FN303 Less Than Lethal System. There are only three of these weapon systems in Humboldt County, one being in the possession of the Blue Lake Police Department.

In conclusion, the City is exceedingly proud of all of our Blue Lake Police Department personnel in regards to Ethics in general and particularly as it pertains to the use of force. We are committed to providing the necessary training and equipment to be able to effectively take individuals into custody using the smallest amount of force possible. Improvements and advancements to weapon system and training are always on going.

If you have any questions regarding this subject please don't hesitate to contact me at (707) 668-5895.

Warm regards,



Dave R. Gundersen
Chief of Police

DG/kjf

[1] PARSAC members are the Cities of Alturas, Amador City, Avalon, Blue Lake, California City, Calimesa, Calistoga, Canyon Lake, Citrus Heights, Clearlake, Coalinga, Elk Grove, Ferndale, Grass Valley, Hesperia, Highland, Nevada City, Pacific Grove, Placencia, Placerville, Plymouth, Point Arena, Rancho Cucamonga, Rancho S. Margarita, Rialto, Ridgecrest, San Juan Bautista, South Lake Tahoe, Tehama, Trinidad, Truckee, Twentynine Palms, Watsonville, Wheatland, Yountville, Yucaipa, Yucca Valley.