

Governor Signs Use-of-Force Bill

March 10, 2025



Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed into law the strongest use-of-force measure since 1874.

AB 392 modernizes standards for use of deadly force by law enforcement. Specifically, the bill updates existing deadly force standards to provide that deadly force may only be used when necessary.

The new law comes on the heels of the 9th District Court of Appeals decision to essentially keep deputies and officers from responding to mental health calls where there is no criminality involved.

Law enforcement up and down the State will no longer work under the umbrella of qualified immunity, as a result of the 2019 Las Vegas case decided by the Appeals Court where a mentally ill man engaged in a physical confrontation that rendered the subject unconscious and who passed away while detained by law enforcement.

California's newest law requires officers to use other techniques to address threats instead of using deadly force when safe to do so, encouraging law enforcement to train on and use de-escalation techniques like verbal persuasion and other crisis intervention methods.

The bill's author (Assemblymember Shirley Weber D-San Diego) stated, "With the Governor's signature, we are closer to a culture of policing in California that values and preserves human life."

The Governor said, "Force should be used judiciously, with respect for human life and dignity. The bottom line is that deadly force should only be used when absolutely necessary."

The enactment of the law follows the February 17 incident at the Surf Apartments when a Crescent City man with a gun precipitated a call to the CCPD, assisted by the DNSD and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Shots were fired. Tenant John Spencer, 67 was slain. The CHP Is conducting the shooting investigation. Results of the investigation will not be made available for 90-120 days.