



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Sheriff-Coroner

Subject: Adopt Resolution Renewing Uncodified Assembly Bill (AB) 481 Ordinance and Approve 2024 AB 481 Annual Report

Meeting Date: May 20, 2025

Formal Title: Consider adopting resolution renewing the County's uncodified ordinance that adopted and approved a Military Equipment Use Policy for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office (Ord. 5435), make findings based on the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Annual Military Equipment Report for 2024, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Adopt resolution renewing the County's uncodified ordinance that adopted and approved a Military Equipment Use Policy for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office (Ord. 5435) and make findings based on the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office's Annual Military Equipment Report for 2024; and
2. Approve Sheriff's Office's 2024 Assembly Bill 481 Annual Report on Military Equipment Acquisition and Use.

Executive Summary

California Assembly Bill (AB) 481 amended the Government Code to regulate the funding, acquisition, and use of military equipment by law enforcement agencies. On May 10, 2022, the Board adopted an uncodified ordinance (Ord. 5399) approving a Military Equipment Use Policy for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, and on May 16, 2023, the Board adopted an uncodified ordinance (Ord. 5435) approving an amended Military Equipment Use Policy for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

Pursuant to Government Code section 7072, a law enforcement agency that receives approval for a military equipment use policy pursuant to Government Code section 7071 "shall submit to the governing body an annual military equipment report for each type of military equipment approved by the governing body within one year of approval, and annually thereafter for so long as the military equipment is available for use."

This Board is required to annually (1) renew the ordinance and (2) determine, based on the annual military equipment report submitted by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, whether each type of military equipment identified in that report has complied with the standards for approval set forth in AB 481 and codified at Government Code section 7071(d).

Discussion

Each year, pursuant to California Government Code section 7072, the Sheriff's Office is required to prepare and submit a military equipment report for the Board's review and approval. California Government Code section 7072 requires the Sheriff's Office's military equipment report to be submitted within one year of the Board's approval of the military equipment policy and annually thereafter for as long as the military equipment is available for use. The Sheriff's Office's 2024 annual military equipment report presented here complies with the legislative mandate and the current Military Equipment Use policy.

Transparency and Community Input

The Sheriff's Office meets the requirements of AB 481 and scheduled a community meeting to discuss the 2024 AB 481 Annual Report on Military Equipment Acquisition and Use to obtain public comment. The Annual Report, a requirement of AB 481, was presented to the public at a Town Hall meeting on May 8, 2025. Due to the submission date of this Board letter, a summary of the community meeting will be presented at the Board's May 20th meeting for this item.

The Sheriff's Office provides an accessible and user-friendly method for community members to file complaints via our website. Interested individuals can find the complaint form by visiting www.scsheriff.com, navigating to the "I Need To" section, and selecting "Forms and Documents." Community members with questions or concerns can contact the Sheriff's Professional Standards and Conduct Unit directly at 831-454-7616. The Sheriff's Office will investigate all complaints received and will respond to concerns or questions relating to our Military Equipment Policy. The Sheriff's Office will provide a timely response regarding the finding of the investigation or answers to the questions and will work to do so within 30 days of completed investigations and/or receipt of questions.

Online Resources

The Sheriff's Office website provides the following AB 481-related content:

- Assembly Bill 481 - Defined list of military equipment currently in Sheriff's Office possession
- Policy 706 - Military Equipment
- 2024 AB 481 Annual Report - Military Equipment Acquisition and Use

Annual Military Equipment Report Requirements

AB 481 requires the Board to review the military equipment use report to determine whether each type of military equipment identified in the report has complied with the applicable standards. If the Board determines that a type of military equipment identified in the annual military equipment report has not complied with the applicable standards, the Board shall either disapprove a renewal of the authorization for that type of military equipment or require modifications to the military equipment use policy in a manner that will resolve the lack of compliance.

The annual military equipment report must contain the following information for the immediately preceding calendar year for each type of military equipment:

- 1) A summary of how the equipment was used and the purpose of its use;
- 2) A summary of any complaints or concerns received concerning the military equipment;
- 3) The results of any internal audits, any information about violations of the military equipment use policy, and any actions taken in response;
- 4) The total annual cost for each type of military equipment, including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, upgrade, and other ongoing costs, and from what source funds will be provided for the military equipment in the calendar year following submission of the annual military equipment report;
- 5) The quantity possessed for each type of military equipment; and
- 6) If the law enforcement agency intends to acquire additional military equipment in the next year, the quantity sought for each type of military equipment.

Use of Military Equipment

The primary goal of the Sheriff's Office use of military equipment is to de-escalate situations, preserve life, ensure the safety of all people, and protect civil liberties.

The Sheriff's Office's 2024 AB 481 Annual Report on Military Equipment Acquisition and Use meets the reporting and documentation requirements under the AB 481 legislation. Military equipment described in the report includes equipment owned by the Sheriff's Office or used by the Sheriff's Office within the Sheriff's Office's jurisdiction. The Sheriff's Office's ability to respond to a critical incident and provide mutual aid when called upon may necessitate the use of Board-approved military equipment.

The Sheriff's Office provides emergency response to many agencies for special operations such as, but not limited to:

- Search and Rescue
- Bomb Team Response
- Fentanyl Response Team
- Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Team Response
- Armored Vehicle
- Crisis Negotiation Team Response

Military Equipment Deployments in 2024

A detailed summary of deployments for the potential use and/or use of military equipment is described in the Annual Report. The Sheriff's Office is committed to protecting the lives and property of individuals in the County by working with the community and by providing skilled, professional, and appropriate response for the unique circumstances of each incident and threat to public safety.

Summary of Complaints

There have been no formal complaints received by the Sheriff's Office regarding the Sheriff's Office's usage of military equipment during 2024.

Results of Internal Audits

In maintaining the highest standards for maintenance and use of designated military equipment, Sheriff's Office personnel follow strict compliance of internal policies and procedures, and maintain thorough documentation of the condition, use, and deployment of military equipment.

The results of the Sheriff's Office's internal audits showed the Sheriff's Office's military equipment to be in good working condition. The Sheriff's Office's internal audits found no violations of its military equipment use policy.

Cost and Quantity of Military Equipment

The Sheriff's Office's total annual cost and quantity possessed for each type of military equipment is detailed in the 2024 AB 481 Annual Report on Military Equipment Acquisition and Use.

Anticipated 2025 Equipment Acquisition

The Sheriff's Office has one equipment purchase anticipated for 2025 relevant to AB 481 applicable military equipment for an estimated total cost of \$345,000 and is detailed in the 2024 Annual Report. The equipment falls within the military equipment category of Robots

(Category 1) as described in Table A below. There is no impact on the General Fund in acquiring the equipment.

Table A: Recommended Equipment Acquisition for 2025

Equipment Category	Equipment Description	Qty.	Purpose	Cost	Funding
Category 1 (Robots)	Remotect Andros Spartan (medium-sized)	1	Disrupts suspicious packages; remotely manipulate objects; remotely gain visual/audio data; deliver Hostage Negotiator's Team phone; open doors and clear buildings.	\$345,000	Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), federal Bay Area grant

Financial Impact

The recommended actions result in no increase in General Fund contribution for this fiscal year.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Operational Excellence
Comprehensive Health & Safety: Provide for a Safe Community
Operational Excellence: Customer Service Experience

The Sheriff's Office operational goals and strategies aim to improve public safety by enacting policies and legal measures that promote transparency, protect members of the public, provide community involvement, and promote overall public safety.

Submitted By:

Chris Clark, Sheriff-Coroner

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.