

ORDINANCE NO. 4551

UNCODIFIED ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE MENDOCINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MILITARY EQUIPMENT USE POLICY PURSUANT TO AB 481

WHEREAS, Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 481 into law on September 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the legislative intent behind AB 481 is to increase the public transparency by which California law enforcement agencies fund, acquire, and/or use military equipment, as defined under AB 481; and

WHEREAS, AB 481 requires California law enforcement agencies to obtain approval of their applicable governing body, by adoption of a military equipment use policy, prior to taking certain actions relating to the funding, acquisition, and/or use of military equipment; and

WHEREAS, AB 481 requires California law enforcement agencies that receive approval for a military equipment use policy to submit to the applicable 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 so long as the military equipment is available for use; and

WHEREAS, AB 481 requires the applicable governing body of the California law enforcement agency to annually review the military equipment use policy and vote on whether to renew the ordinance at a regular meeting.

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mendocino ordains as follows:

Section 1.

(A) The attached policy, titled "Military Equipment", shall be added to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office Policy Manual as "Military Equipment Use Policy" and designated as section 709 under Chapter 7 of the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office Policy Manual.

(B) This ordinance shall supersede and replace Mendocino County Ordinance No. 4539.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mendocino, State of California, on this 4th day of November, 2025, by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Supervisors Cline, Mulheren, Haschak, Norvell, and Williams
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared the Ordinance passed and adopted and **SO ORDERED**.

ATTEST: DARCIE ANTLE
Clerk of the Board



Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
CHARLOTTE E. SCOTT
County Counsel





JOHN HASCHAK, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

BY: DARCIE ANTLE
Clerk of the Board



Deputy

Military Equipment

709.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the approval, acquisition, and reporting requirements of military equipment (Government Code § 7070; Government Code § 7071; Government Code § 7072).

709.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (Government Code § 7070):

Governing body – The elected or appointed body that oversees the Department.

Military equipment – Includes but is not limited to the following:

- Unmanned, remotely piloted, powered aerial or ground vehicles.
- Mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles or armored personnel carriers.
- High mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWV), two-and-one-half-ton trucks, five-ton trucks, or wheeled vehicles that have a breaching or entry apparatus attached.
- Tracked armored vehicles that provide ballistic protection to their occupants.
- Command and control vehicles that are either built or modified to facilitate the operational control and direction of public safety units.
- Weaponized aircraft, vessels, or vehicles of any kind.
- Battering rams, slugs, and breaching apparatuses that are explosive in nature. This does not include a handheld, one-person ram.
- Firearms and ammunition of .50 caliber or greater, excluding standard-issue shotguns and standard-issue shotgun ammunition.
- Specialized firearms and ammunition of less than .50 caliber, including firearms and accessories identified as assault weapons in Penal Code § 30510 and Penal Code § 30515, with the exception of standard-issue firearms.
- Any firearm or firearm accessory that is designed to launch explosive projectiles.
- Noise-flash diversionary devices and explosive breaching tools.
- Munitions containing tear gas or OC, excluding standard, service-issued handheld pepper spray.
- TASER® Shockwave, microwave weapons, water cannons, and long-range acoustic devices (LRADs).
- Kinetic energy weapons and munitions.
- Any other equipment as determined by a governing body or a state agency to require additional oversight.

Type – Means each item that shares the same manufacturer model number.

Mendocino County Sheriff's Office

Mendocino Co SO Policy Manual

Military Equipment

709.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office that members of this office comply with the provisions of Government Code § 7071 with respect to military equipment.

709.3 MILITARY EQUIPMENT COORDINATOR

The Sheriff should designate a member of this office to act as the military equipment coordinator. The responsibilities of the military equipment coordinator include but are not limited to:

- (a) Identifying office equipment that qualifies as military equipment in the current possession of the Department, or the equipment the Department intends to acquire that requires approval by the governing body.
- (b) Conducting an inventory of all military equipment at least annually.
- (c) Collaborating with any allied agency that may use military equipment within the jurisdiction of Mendocino County Sheriff's Office (Government Code § 7071).
- (d) Preparing the annual military equipment report for submission to the Sheriff and ensuring that the report is made available on the office website (Government Code § 7072).

709.4 APPROVAL

The Sheriff or the authorized designee shall obtain approval from the governing body by way of an ordinance adopting the military equipment policy. As part of the approval process, the Sheriff or the authorized designee shall ensure the proposed military equipment policy is submitted to the governing body and is available on the office website at least 30 days prior to any public hearing concerning the military equipment at issue (Government Code § 7071). The military equipment policy must be approved by the governing body prior to engaging in any of the following (Government Code § 7071):

- (a) Requesting military equipment made available pursuant to 10 USC § 2576a.
- (b) Seeking funds for military equipment, including but not limited to applying for a grant, soliciting or accepting private, local, state, or federal funds, in-kind donations, or other donations or transfers.
- (c) Acquiring military equipment either permanently or temporarily, including by borrowing or leasing.
- (d) Collaborating with another law enforcement agency in the deployment or other use of military equipment within the jurisdiction of this office.
- (e) Using any new or existing military equipment for a purpose, in a manner, or by a person not previously approved by the governing body.
- (f) Soliciting or responding to a proposal for, or entering into an agreement with, any other person or entity to seek funds for, apply to receive, acquire, use, or collaborate in the use of military equipment.
- (g) Acquiring military equipment through any means not provided above.

Military Equipment

709.5 COORDINATION WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Military equipment should not be used by any other law enforcement agency or member in this jurisdiction unless the military equipment is approved for use in accordance with this policy.

709.6 ANNUAL REPORT

Upon approval of a military equipment policy, the Sheriff or the authorized designee should submit a military equipment report to the governing body for each type of military equipment approved within one year of approval, and annually thereafter for as long as the military equipment is available for use (Government Code § 7072).

The Sheriff or the authorized designee should also make each annual military equipment report publicly available on the office website for as long as the military equipment is available for use. The report shall include the following information required by Government Code § 7072 for the preceding calendar year for each type of military equipment in office inventory.

- (a) A summary of how the military equipment was used and the purpose of its use.
- (b) A summary of any complaints or concerns received concerning the military equipment.
- (c) The results of any internal audits, any information about violations of the military equipment use policy, and any actions taken in response.
- (d) 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.
- (e) The quantity possessed for each type of military equipment.
- (f) If the law enforcement agency intends to acquire additional military equipment in the next year, the quantity sought for each type of military equipment.

709.7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Within 30 days of submitting and publicly releasing the annual report, the Department shall hold at least one well-publicized and conveniently located community engagement meeting, at which the Department should discuss the report and respond to public questions regarding the funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment.

Upon approval of a military equipment policy the Department will have a procedure established for a person to register a complaint or concern, or submit a question about the use of a type of military equipment, including how the Department will respond in a timely manner.

709.8 COMPLIANCE

The Professional Standards Bureau should conduct an annual internal audit for compliance with this policy and prepare and submit a written report to the Sheriff or designee of the results. Any violations will be referred to the Administrative Services Lieutenant and handled in accordance with policy section 1020.