2023 Military Equipment Report

Sonora Police Department

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Preface:

The Sonora Police Department is committed to the service we deliver to the residents, merchants, and visitors of Sonora are in keeping with the highest traditions of public safety. Safeguarding life and property is the Sonora Police Department's highest priority, and we pledge to carry out this obligation through compassion, dignity, and equality for every individual. Our actions will be distinguished by professionalism, fairness, and diligence.

The equipment listed in this annual report are essential tools that may be required to aid in de-escalating intense situations or bringing volatile conditions and critical incidents to a safe resolution. The mere possession of this equipment does not warrant its use in every circumstance. With this indispensable equipment, the men and women of the Sonora Police Department continue to stand ready to accomplish our mission of driving the crime rate down and improving the quality of life in the City of Sonora.

Summary:

On September 30, 2021, Governor Newsom signed AB-481, requiring law enforcement agencies to obtain approval of the applicable governing body, the City Council, by adopting a military equipment use policy. The Sonora Department was required to seek City Council approval of their military equipment use policy by ordinance at a regular open meeting prior to taking certain actions relating to the funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment, as defined. The bill allows the governing body to approve the funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment within its jurisdiction only if it determines that the military equipment meets specified standards.

The approval is subject to an annual City Council review to determine whether, based on an annual military equipment report, the standards outlined in the approving ordinance have been met. The City Council may renew the authorizing ordinance, disapprove authorization for particular military equipment where standards have not been met, or require modifications to the military equipment use policy to address any non-compliance with standards. Finally, the bill requires publication of the military equipment use policy and the annual military equipment report on the Department's website.

AB-481, Section 7072 states the following: (a) A law enforcement agency that receives approval for a military equipment use policy pursuant to 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 as long as the military equipment is available for use. The law enforcement agency shall also make each annual military equipment report required by this section publicly available on its internet website for as long as the military equipment is available for use. Within 30 days of submitting and publicly releasing an annual military equipment report pursuant to this section, the law enforcement agency shall hold at least one well-publicized and conveniently located community engagement meeting, at which the general public may discuss and ask questions regarding the annual military equipment report and the law enforcement agency's funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment.

In addition to maintaining the highest levels of public safety, the Sonora Police Department is committed to transparency, public trust, community partnerships, and compliance with the law. As such, the Sonora Police Department has authored the following 2023 Annual Military Equipment Report in accordance with annual reporting requirements set forth in AB-481. This report covers the usage and reporting requirements for the proceeding Calendar year (2023).

Introduction:

The Sonora Police Department retains a small complement of defined military equipment to assist in safely achieving its mission statement of driving the crime rate down and improving the quality of life in the City of Sonora. Our trained men and women know that the mere possession of the equipment does not warrant its use for every incident. The Sonora Police Department recognizes that critical incidents are unpredictable and can be very dynamic in nature. A variety of equipment options can greatly assist incident commanders, officers, and specific units in bringing those incidents to a swift resolution in a safe manner.

Military equipment is restricted for use only in certain instances. There may be instances wherein unpredictable critical incidents demand that incident commanders authorize defined military equipment to be used in a manner not outlined within Department policy. In scrutinizing those particular instances, the judgment of the incident commander influenced by the totality of the circumstances, public safety, officer safety, civil rights, and information available at the time will be used. It is incumbent upon incident commanders, supervisors, and individual officers to recognize the particular circumstances wherein military equipment should be employed to enhance public and officers' safety and bring a critical incident to a safe resolution. This Annual Military Equipment Report outlines a summary of military equipment usage guidelines, inventory, fiscal impact, and complaints for 2023.

Definitions:

Pursuant to AB-481, the following definitions are applicable only to the Department's current military equipment inventory and potential future military equipment acquisitions for operational needs. (For a more detailed list, refer to Government Code section 7070 for "military equipment" as defined within the Assembly Bill.)

"Governing body" means the City Council and Mayor.

Military equipment" means the following:

1. Unmanned, remotely piloted, powered aerial or ground vehicles. This definition applies to the Department's inventory of small Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and SWAT robots.
2. Armored personnel carriers. However, police versions of standard consumer vehicles are specifically excluded from this definition.
3. Command and control vehicles that are either built or modified to facilitate the operational control and direction of public safety units.
4. Battering rams, slugs, and breaching apparatuses that are explosive in nature. However, items designed to remove a lock, such as bolt cutters or a handheld ram designed to be operated by one person, are specifically excluded from this definition.
5. Firearms of .50 caliber or greater. However, standard-issue shotguns are specifically excluded from this definition.
6. Ammunition of .50 caliber or greater. However, standard-issue shotgun ammunition is specifically excluded from this definition.
7. Specialized firearms and ammunition of less than .50 caliber, including assault weapons as defined in Sections 30510 and 30515 of the Penal Code, with the exception of standard issue service weapons and ammunition of less than .50 caliber that are issued to sworn members.
8. Any firearm or firearm accessory that is designed to launch explosive projectiles.
9. "Flashbang" devices and explosive breaching tools, "tear gas," and "pepper balls," excluding standard, service-issued handheld OC. This definition applies to all of the Department's inventory of flashbangs, pepper ball launchers, and related ammunition. Additionally, this definition applies to all of the Department's inventory of various chemical agents and chemical agent delivery systems maintained by the SWAT Unit.
10. The following projectile launch platforms and their associated munitions: 40mm projectile launchers, "bean bags," and rubber bullets.
11. "Military equipment" does not include general equipment not designated as prohibited or controlled by the Federal Defense Logistics Agency.

"Military equipment use policy" refers to the Sonora Police Department Policy 706 and means a publicly released, written document governing the use of military equipment by the Department that addresses, at a minimum, all of the following:

1. A description of each type of military equipment, the quantity sought, its capabilities, expected lifespan, and product descriptions from the manufacturer of the military equipment.
2. The purposes and authorized uses for which the Department proposes to use each type of military equipment.
3. The fiscal impact of each type of military equipment, including the initial costs of obtaining the equipment and estimated annual costs of maintaining the equipment.
4. The legal and procedural rules that govern each authorized use.
5. The training, including any course required by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, that must be completed before any sworn member is allowed to use each specific type of military equipment to ensure the full protection of the public's welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties and full adherence to the military equipment use policy.
6. The procedures by which members of the public may register complaints or concerns or submit questions about the use of each specific type of military equipment and how the Department will ensure that each complaint, concern, or question receives a response in a timely manner.

Summary of Military Equipment:

The inventory of military equipment, particularly consumable material (ammunition, diversionary devices, etc.), fluctuates regularly. This is based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to operational usage, operational deterioration, training, maintenance, and expiration and replenishment guidelines. The Sonora Department is committed to transparency in disclosing its military equipment inventory and related information to our community and elected officials in compliance with the law. The Department strives to provide the most accurate military equipment inventory and information at the time of this report's publication. The following are the various types, descriptions, and guidelines for usage of military equipment currently employed by the Sonora Police Department:

Rifles: Firearms that are fired from shoulder level, having a long spirally grooved barrel intended to make bullets spin and thereby have greater accuracy over a long distance.

Description, quantity, capabilities, and purchase cost

1. Colt M16A1 RIFLE (Quantity 14)
2. Received from Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) 1033 Program at no cost: The M16 rifle, officially designated Rifle, Caliber.223/5.56MM.
3. FEDERAL.223/5.56mm 55GR RIFLE ROUND, cost: $198 per case of 500, quantity: 20 cases. Federal 223/5.56 MM Remington ammo features a lead core 55 Grain Full Metal Jacket bullet that is nonmagnetic, non-corrosive boxer primer and brass casing. The Federal ammo has a muzzle velocity of 3240 feet per second and muzzle energy of 1282 ft-lbs.

Purpose

To be used as precision weapons to address a threat with more accuracy and/or from greater distances as a handgun, if present and feasible.

Equipment Usage 2023:

This section outlines the military equipment usage for 2023. Training usage is not captured in this section. This section only provides data for the operational use of military equipment listed within this Annual Equipment Report.

The following are incidents where designated equipment was deployed:

1. Various deployments of the Colt M16A1 rifle in response to potential or perceived threats. These incidents include:
    a. Search Warrants
    b. Area search of dangerous subjects
    c. Coverage for hold-up/robbery alarms

Purchase of Equipment in 2023:

Pursuant to Sonora Police Policy 706, the following equipment, defined as Military Equipment by law, was purchased in 2023:

- There were no purchases made for defined Military Equipment by SPD in 2023.

Complaints regarding the use of Military Equipment:

In some instances, the application and use of military equipment may cause questions and/or concerns for members of the community. It is vitally important that community members' questions regarding the application and use of military equipment are addressed. The Sonora Police Department is committed to full and fair investigation of citizen complaints. As such, the Department has sound internal policies for thorough and impartial investigations of citizen complaints. Resolving complaints in a fair, impartial, and expeditious manner will ensure a consistently high level of integrity and efficiency maintained by the Department. The following is a summary of formal investigations related to the use of military equipment as investigated by the Sonora Police Department's Internal Affairs Unit for 2023:

- There were no complaints/investigations regarding the use of Military Equipment in 2023.

Summary and responses to Policy 706 violations:

- No violations of Policy 706- Military Equipment use, were reported or known of in 2023.

Conclusion:

This Annual Military Equipment Report reaffirms the Sonora Police Department's commitment to providing transparency and information to our community and elected officials in addition to ensuring compliance with the law. The equipment, resources, and training outlined in this report allow Sonora Police Officers to protect our community better, enhance the safety of the public and officers, and bring critical incidents to a safe resolution. Public safety is and always has remained a shared responsibility. The strength of our Department lies in a partnership with our community to address crime in their neighborhoods.