

FAQ: Kenmore Police

We have received several questions about the use of force policies, training, and related topics currently in place for the Kenmore Police Department. The City of Kenmore contracts with the King County Sheriff's Office for police services, so Kenmore Police policies are directed by the Sheriff's Office leadership. These FAQ (frequently asked questions) should answer many of the questions that we have been asked recently.

Do Kenmore Police Use of Force policies meet policy recommendations from the 8 Can't Wait website?

Yes. The policies of the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) and Kenmore policies do meet these recommendations, which are detailed below. Excerpts from the related portion of the KCSO General Orders Manual (GOM) are included.

- **Ban chokeholds & strangleholds:**

GOM Chapter 6.00.050- *"Members shall not make any physical application or maneuver to the neck region that restricts blood or air flow (i.e., choke holds, sleeper holds, carotid submission holds, lateral vascular neck restraint, etc.), except as a last resort to protect the member(s) or others from an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury. Any and all variations of these maneuvers may be considered deadly force when applied to the neck region."*

- **Require de-escalation:**

GOM Chapter 6.00.025- *"When safe and feasible members shall use de-escalation tactics in order to reduce the need for force...De-escalation is a deliberate attempt to minimize or avoid the use of force to resolve a law enforcement incident using communication, tactics and actions. Examples of De-escalation goals include calming agitated subjects, providing additional time for responses, and positioning to reduce risk."*

- **Require warning before shooting:**

GOM Chapter 6.00.005- *"Clear direction and verbal commands shall be given when feasible."* A recent Special Order (2020-03) expanded on this policy, adding: *"If safe and feasible, members shall identify themselves as a police officer or sheriff's deputy and issue a verbal warning before discharging their firearm"*.

- **Requires exhaust all alternatives before shooting:**

GOM Chapter 6.00.045- *"Members shall exhaust every reasonable means of apprehension before resorting to the use of deadly force."*

- **Duty to intervene:**

GOM Chapter 3.03.015- *"Failure to report a member's possible misconduct (including excessive or unnecessary use of force against a person)...may result in discipline up to and including termination."* A recent Special Order (2020-03) expanded on this policy, adding: *"Members have a duty to intervene to prevent harm if they observe other member/s using force that is clearly beyond what is reasonable under the circumstances, and such force is likely to cause substantial bodily harm, when in a position to do so. Any member observing an act of excessive, unnecessary force shall also notify a supervisor, when it is safe and feasible to do so."*

- **Ban shooting at moving vehicles:**

GOM Chapter 6.00.050- *"Members shall not shoot at a moving vehicle, unless: a) deadly physical force is being used against the member or another person by means other than a moving vehicle; or b) the moving vehicle poses an imminent and identifiable threat of serious physical harm to the member or others from which there is no reasonable means of escape. For the purposes of this section, members shall attempt to move out of the path of an oncoming vehicle, if possible, rather than discharge their firearm; and shall not intentionally place themselves in the path of an oncoming vehicle and attempt to disable the vehicle by discharging their firearms. Members shall not discharge their firearms at a fleeing vehicle unless a member reasonable believes, and can articulate reasons therefore, why the necessity for immediate apprehension outweighs the danger to the public that is created by discharging a firearm."*

- **Require use of force continuum:**

GOM Chapter 6.03.000- *"Less lethal weapons are tools designed to assist deputies to gain control of a physically resistant, or aggressive or violent subject(s) who poses a threat of physical harm to themselves, to the deputy(s) or to other persons or property. Less lethal weapons have been adopted for use by the Sheriff's Office but are not intended to be a substitute when lethal force is necessary. Sworn personnel shall successfully complete training on less lethal weapons prior to using them. All applications of less lethal weapons shall conform to the principles outlined in the training and certification program, consistent with the RCW definition of necessary force (RCW 9A.16.010) and the Use of Force Policy (GOM 6.00.000)."*

- **Require comprehensive reporting:**

GOM Chapter 6.01- *“It is the policy of the Sheriff’s Office to promptly report and to thoroughly investigate any use of force or critical incident. Whenever a member uses deadly force, physical force, a Conducted Electrical Weapon (TASER), chemical agent or Pepper Spray, reporting is mandatory by the member using force and any member witnessing the use of force. Failure to report the use of force, when required, is a violation of this policy. Supervisory notification and supervisor response to the scene is required for all incidents outlined in this policy unless expressly exempted.”*

Are the policies for the police department available on-line?

Yes. The KCSO General Orders Manual is available on-line, and it elaborates on the policies above. The web address is: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/sheriff/about-us/manual.aspx>

What training do Kenmore Police officers receive to avoid or limit uses of force?

We have on-going mandatory training programs that include Crisis Intervention, De-escalation Training, and LEED Training (*Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity*), which are principles of Justice Based Policing efforts. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) in particular prepares officers to assist people in crisis for emotional, developmental, or behavioral health crises. Additional de-escalation training teaches our officers techniques to calm tense encounters to reduce the potential for use of force. All of our members attended Implicit Bias Training to help them learn and recognize how bias and stereotyping effects communities of color.

Our officers exceed state requirements for annual training, and the King County Sheriff’s Office is a model agency for the breadth of training that it requires of its employees.

What resources and alternative programs do Kenmore Police currently use in their policing efforts?

For several years, Kenmore has been part of the RADAR program (Response Awareness De-escalation and Referral). This program aims to decrease use-of-force incidents between police and individuals with behavioral health issues and/or developmental disabilities. The program has become a model for other law enforcement agencies, and has expanded into a five-city partnership (North Sound RADAR) that includes Kenmore, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Bothell, and Kirkland. The program shares information among the departments about community members who may be at increased risk of violence or uses of force, and offering connections to services and resources through a Mental Health Professional (MHP) Navigator. These MHP Navigators accompany officers in outreach efforts, focusing on moving people into community-based and long term systems of care that reduce reliance on the crisis and criminal justice systems. More information on RADAR can be found at: <https://www.kenmorewa.gov/services/public-safety/north-sound-radar-program>

Kenmore Police also can utilize other resources in the region, such as the Mobile Crisis Team and Crisis Solutions Center, both programs facilitated by the King County Department of Community and Human Services and Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) program.

Do Kenmore officers wear body cameras?

No. Currently officers in Kenmore (and the King County Sheriff’s Office) do not have body-worn cameras. King County Sheriff Mitzi Johanknecht has expressed her support of adding body worn-cameras, and has taken steps to make a budget request to accomplish this during King County’s 2021-22 budget process.

How often do Kenmore Police officers use force?

The KCSO definition of a reportable use of force is broad, and can range from something as substantial as the use of a firearm, Taser, or pepper spray, or as little as an arrest that resulted in a complaint of pain without any visible

injury. In other words, a reportable use of force could entail a Taser application with no injury, a handcuffing that resulted in a complaint of pain without any visible injury, or a scraped knee during a scuffle.

From 2018 through mid-June 2020, there have been 8 reportable uses of force in the City of Kenmore during this approximately 2.5 year period. During this time, Kenmore Officers had approximately 25,000 dispatched calls for service and on-views. These 8 reportable uses of force accounted for 1% of the reportable uses of force within the King County Sheriff's Office.