



SYKESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Utility/Rescue Tool Policy

General Order 2-21

Effective: 06/26/2018

Authorized By: *Michael A. Spaulding* Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the selection, maintenance, carry, safe handling, and proper use of the utility or rescue tool.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this agency to provide guidelines on the selection of departmentally approved police duty knives, knives an officer may carry, and how and when knives may be carried and used in order to increase officer safety, affect positive public perception, and further reduce department liability.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Authorized Use

1. This department recognizes the need for its officers to be properly equipped to handle a wide variety of duty responsibilities. Officers may carry police utility or rescue tool as authorized by this policy and consistent with their duty assignment.
2. The police utility or rescue tool is intended solely for the purpose of carrying out the general duties and designated specialized assignments of police operations; its use as a defensive or offensive weapon is authorized only in exigent circumstances.

B. Authorized Blades and Carry Requirements

1. Police utility or rescue tool shall be secured in either a scabbard (for fixed blades) or folded and secured by a fastening device so as to ensure officer safety, retention, and concealment. The blade and securing device shall be carried in the least obtrusive manner possible, and consistent with the officer's duty assignment or tactical deployment.
2. Folding blades: Folding blade utility or rescue tool shall conform with agency defined quality standards to meet the demands of work assignments as defined by departmental policy and the officer's commanding officer. The cutting edge of such utility or rescue tool shall not exceed four and one-half inches in length as measured from blade tip to handle, unless an authorized agency commander has approved a waiver to carry an alternate blade configuration.

C. Compliance and Safe Handling

1. Safe handling: Officers shall handle the police utility or rescue tool in an appropriate and safe manner so as to ensure the safety of themselves, their fellow officers, and the general public. Officers shall not exhibit or handle the knife in a careless or alarming manner.

D. Prohibited Uses

1. Authorized users shall not:
 - a. Display a knife in any offensive or threatening manner without legitimate operational justification.
 - b. Carry a knife in any manner other than clipped in a pocket or waistband, inside the pants or vest, in a department approved sheath, or in another manner approved by authorized command personnel consistent with duty requirements.
 - c. Display a blade in any event other than an authorized deployment situation.
2. Uses as a Weapon
 - a. The police utility knife is not intended for use as a weapon and officers are discouraged from using it in this capacity. However, it may be used in defensive capacities under exigent circumstances. Under such circumstances it shall be deemed a use of deadly force and is subject to the regulations therein and is governed by this department's policies on use of force.