

Annual Report on Use of Military Equipment
Assembly Bill 481



Reporting Period – Calendar Year 2024

ATTACHMENT 1

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Introduction:

This report provides a comprehensive assessment of the Tustin Police Department's (TPD) use of military equipment in compliance with Assembly Bill (AB) 481. The purpose of this report is to provide transparency, accountability, and insights into the department's acquisition, deployment, and use of military equipment during the reporting period.

On September 30, 2021, the Governor of the State of California approved AB 481 requiring law enforcement agencies to obtain approval of the agency's applicable governing body (in this case, the City Council) by adoption of a military equipment use policy. The department is required to seek City Council approval of its military equipment use policy via an ordinance at a regular open meeting prior to taking certain actions relating to the funding, acquisition, or use of "military equipment", as that phrase is defined by the Government Code.

The bill allows the governing body to approve the funding, acquisition, and/or use of military equipment within its jurisdiction only if it determines that the military equipment meets specified standards. The ordinance is subject to an annual City Council review to determine whether, based on an annual report, the standards set forth 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 procedure to address any noncompliance with standards.

AB 481 requires a law enforcement agency that receives approval for military equipment use to submit an annual military equipment use report to City Council in addition to seeking approval for the continued use of the equipment as outlined in the department's military use policy (Policy 706 – Military Equipment). The law enforcement agency shall also make each annual report publicly available on its internet website if the military equipment is available for use.

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

1. A summary of how the military 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.
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.

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, and/or use of military equipment.

Methodology:

The information presented in this report is based on data provided by the Tustin Police Department. The data includes inventory records, training documentation, deployment reports, and community engagement efforts related to the use of military equipment. The reporting period for this analysis is from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

Overview of Military Equipment:

Military equipment refers to specialized equipment, typically obtained from surplus military supplies or federal programs, that law enforcement agencies acquire and utilize to enhance their capabilities in critical situations. Such equipment may include armored vehicles, tactical gear, riot control equipment, surveillance technology, and specialized firearms.

Training and Deployment Procedures:

The Tustin Police Department places significant emphasis on training its officers to safely and effectively utilize military equipment items. Officers receive specialized training on the operation, maintenance, and deployment procedures specific to each type of equipment. This training includes scenario-based exercises, de-escalation techniques, and an emphasis on the preservation of life and the protection of individual rights.

Deployment of military equipment is conducted in accordance with departmental policies and protocols. The decision to deploy such equipment is carefully evaluated, and a supervisor's approval is typically required. Situations warranting the use of military equipment include high-risk operations, acts of terrorism, armed confrontations, and natural disasters where public safety and officer well-being are at stake.

Summary of Military Equipment Usage:

The summary of military equipment usage is intended to describe specific incidents where the equipment was deployed, including the nature of the incident, the equipment used, and the outcome of the deployment.

During the reporting period, the Tustin Police Department deployed its military equipment during the following situations:

40MM Less Lethal Launcher:

- 05/03/24 – Used to break window. Stolen vehicle – barricaded suspect.

Gas Munitions / Pepper ball Gun:

- 05/03/24 – Barricaded suspect in a vehicle.

Armored Rescue Vehicle (ARV):

- 01/30/24 – Suspect threatened to be in possession of illegal firearms
- 02/24/24 – Stakeout of suspect involved in an assault with a deadly weapon
- 02/29/24 – Surveillance of suspect involved in shooting into an inhabited dwelling
- 04/03/24 – Occupied stolen vehicle
- 04/13/24 – Domestic violence incident
- 05/03/24 - Stolen vehicle – barricaded suspect.
- 05/31/24 – Subject with suicidal and homicidal ideations
- 06/24/24 – Suspicious occupied vehicle, suspect possibly armed with a firearm
- 07/06/24 – Robbery suspect apprehension
- 08/07/24 – Domestic violence incident, barricaded suspect
- 09/26/24 – Stakeout and apprehension of attempted murder suspect
- 11/23/24 – Domestic violence incident involving criminal threats.

Mobile Comm Usage: No usage of reporting during this period.

Drones and Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS):

In 2024, the TPD UAS team carried out 496 flights, amounting to 81 hours of airtime. The UAS team supported extended operations beyond patrol-based assignments. The team expanded with the addition of two pilots, bringing the total number of pilots to 18. The UAS team continues to serve as a collateral assignment within the department.

The primary purpose of the UAS is to be deployed when its view would assist officers or Incident Commanders in a variety of situations, including but not limited to search & rescue, situational

awareness during critical incidents, missing persons, fleeing suspect searches, and any other situation where the UAS would improve officer safety, public safety, and suspect safety. Over the past year, the UAS has been deployed in numerous operations such as SWAT operations, suspect searches, missing persons, barricaded suspects, high-risk traffic stops, event planning, training videos, traffic collision investigations, and crime scene photography.

The UAS team have proven to be indispensable assets in assisting the Orange County Fire Authority with hotspot mapping, search and rescue missions, and fire abatement efforts. They have been deployed at every concert to improve situational awareness for staff and officers, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of responses to calls for service. The UAS also plays a vital role in addressing crime trends such as residential burglaries, working alongside other units to detect and locate potential suspects in areas that may be unsafe or impractical for officers to monitor.

Furthermore, the TPD's UAS team bolsters other units' training by assisting in documenting exercises such as mounted operations, active shooter scenarios, Emergency Vehicles Operation Course (EVOC), and SWAT. The UAS is deployed alongside the TPD SWAT team and Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), allowing for enhanced situational awareness during critical incidents, which in turn increases the safety of the public, officers, and suspects.

The positive impact of the TPD's UAS team extends beyond our city limits, as they have also provided assistance to neighboring cities during critical incidents.

Summary of Complaints:

The department did not receive any complaints concerning military equipment use in 2024.

Violations of Policy / Internal Audits:

An internal review regarding the use of the aforementioned equipment revealed no violations of policy.

Total Annual Costs and Inventory of Military Equipment:

The estimated annual cost for the use and maintenance of the military equipment in the department's current inventory is defined within Policy 706 and listed under each specific category item.

Future Acquisition of Additional Equipment:

The department's intent to acquire additional military equipment within the next year is outlined within General Order 706 and listed under each specific category item.

Community Outreach and Transparency:

The Tustin Police Department recognizes the importance of maintaining open lines of communication with the community regarding the use of military equipment. Efforts to promote transparency and engage with the community are of the utmost importance. It is important to note that the deployment of military equipment is subject to continuous review and evaluation to ensure its necessity, appropriateness, and adherence to departmental policies.

Pursuant to AB 481 and department policy, the Tustin Police Department will be sharing this annual report at the Tustin City Council Meeting on June 17, 2025.