



Yuma County Sheriff's Office

Leon N. Wilmot
Sheriff of Yuma County

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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YCSO Use of Force Policy

Location of Incident: Yuma, AZ

Over the past couple of weeks, the Yuma County Sheriff's Office has received inquiries regarding our "use of force" policy. Yuma County Sheriff Leon Wilmot has issued the following statement in response to the inquiries:

"As the Sheriff of Yuma County, I wanted to take the opportunity to educate the public on my Office's "Use of Force" policy and internal safeguards to prevent the use of excessive force on the part of my Deputies.

First and foremost, the Yuma County Sheriff's Office does not condone and will not accept excessive use of force by any of its Deputies and I have multiple checks and balances in place to prevent such incidents. I find it is of the utmost importance to have my Deputies reflect the community. I intentionally recruit and hire Deputies from the local community, many of whom are Yuma natives. I encourage community involvement on the part of my staff and find that by hiring locally, my Office achieves a higher level of commitment to the community we serve. I strongly believe that when a Deputy feels he/she is a member of the community, they represent the Office in a manner consistent with our values.

I have also implemented a body worn camera program in my Office. Each Deputy who responds to calls for service is equipped with a state of the art body camera and vehicle camera. There are fail-safe triggers built into our system to prevent situations where critical incidents are inadvertently not recorded. These cameras automatically record anytime a Deputy is potentially in a use of force situation ranging from a foot pursuit, to a physical struggle. It is my policy that audits of Deputy contacts are conducted and any service which falls short of my expectations is addressed immediately.

I have online reporting available for anyone to relay concerns about any contact with my Deputies. Any complaint is thoroughly investigated to include the review of body camera footage, and any issues identified are addressed immediately. A series of complaints on any particular Deputy is flagged for a thorough review by my administrative staff.

Any use of force on the part of my Deputies requires a mandatory report. In every case, the use of force is reviewed by my administrative staff to ensure that the use of force was justified and within policy. Again, any issues identified during the use of force review is addressed immediately.



As your Sheriff, I am elected by and accountable to this community. It is my mission to provide you, the citizens of Yuma County, with the most professional law enforcement services that I can provide. I take my commitment to this community most seriously and expect the same from my Deputies. I have, and will continue to hold my Deputies accountable for their actions and have a zero tolerance approach to abuse of their authority.

I believe that by using a Community Oriented Policing approach, we have successfully built and enjoy a relationship with our community that is second to none. I am extremely proud of the men and women of my Office and the work that they do. This is validated through the overwhelmingly positive feedback I receive from you, the members of this community. I feel that we are blessed to live in Yuma and I am proud of and grateful for the level of support our law enforcement officers receive daily from the public that we serve.”

For more information, you may contact the Yuma County Sheriff's Office at 928-783-4427 or you can visit our website at www.yumacountysheriff.org.

Information Released By: Lt. Samuel Pavlak, Public Information Officer