3-10/000.00 - Preamble to the Use of Force Policy

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is committed to preserving human life and dignity in a fair and unbiased manner while upholding the rights protected by the Constitution of the United States, and federal and state law.

Sometimes it is necessary for Department members to use force in self-defense, defense of others, and during the execution of lawful duties. When Department members use force, they may only use that amount of force that is objectively reasonable, proportional, and which reasonably appears necessary at the time to defend others or themselves, effect an arrest or detention, prevent escape, or overcome resistance.

The use of force against vulnerable people (children, elderly persons, pregnant people, people with physical or developmental disabilities, people with mental health disabilities, etc.) can particularly undermine public trust and should be used as a last resort. Like any other use of force, the Department will consider the totality of the circumstances when evaluating a Department member's use of force against a vulnerable person.

The Department is committed to lawful, professional, and ethical standards before, during, and after force incidents. These include efforts to prevent force when safe to do so, tactical planning where appropriate, and objective review after every force incident.