

**Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO)
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC)**

**Public Meeting Agenda
October 8, 2025, 6:00pm.
Finley Community Center
2060 W. College Avenue
Manzanita Room
Santa Rosa, CA. 95401**

ADVISORY NOTICE

The meetings will be held as an in-person/online hybrid format.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND THIS MEETING IN PERSON AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE, OR MAY JOIN THE MEETING VIRTUALLY THROUGH ZOOM.

Members of the Community Advisors Council will attend the meeting in person, except that they may attend virtually via ZOOM, to the extent allowable by the Brown Act for good cause pursuant to AB-2449.

Join the meeting via the Zoom application on your computer, tablet or smartphone:

Go to:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/83383920240?pwd=GY90nl9bsYthismWNhvaCzoMcayPCq.1>

Please be advised that those participating in the meeting remotely via Zoom do so at their own risk.

The CAC's public meetings will not be canceled if any technical problems occur during the meeting.

Call-in and listen to the meeting:

By telephone: Dial 1-669-900-9128

Webinar ID: 833 8392 0240

Passcode: (IOLERO) 465376

1. Spanish interpretation will be provided via zoom and in-person. Any additional language services could be available at all regular and special CAC meetings if made at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to help ensure availability. For more information or to request services: contact (707) 565-1477. If you need an accommodation, an alternative format, or required another person to assist you while attending this meeting, please contact the CAC Community Engagement Manager at (707) 565-1477 or by email cac@sonoma-county.org within 72 hours of the meeting to ensure arrangements for accommodation. Spanish interpretation will be provided within the Zoom application, you must use version 5.9.0 or later. We will make every effort to accommodate you.
2. **Interpretación al español se proveerá vía la aplicación de zoom y en persona.** Cualquier otro idioma/lenguaje podría ser disponible en todas las reuniones regulares y especiales del CAC si el pedido es 48 horas antes de la reunión para garantizar disponibilidad. Para más

información o para pedir servicios: llame al (707) 565-1477. Si necesita una adaptación, un formato alternativo o requiere que otra persona le ayude mientras asiste a esta reunión, por favor contacte ala Gerente de Compromiso Comunitario del CAC al 707-565-1477 o notifícanos por correo electrónico cac@sonoma-county.org en un plazo de 72 horas de la reunión para garantizar los arreglos para la adaptación. Para traducción en español, se tiene que usar la versión de Zoom 5.9.0 o una versión más adelantada. Haremos el esfuerzo posible por proporcionar la adaptación.

Public Comment at Community Advisory Council Meetings

Members of the public are free to address the CAC. Public comments:

- Should fall under the subject matter jurisdiction of the CAC (as noted in the founding documents).
- Are time limited. Time limits are at the discretion of the Chair and may be adjusted to accommodate all speakers.

In addition to oral public comment at the meetings, the community is invited to communicate with IOLERO staff and CAC members through email. Members of the public who would like to make statements that may exceed the time limits for public comment, suggest topics to be placed on future agendas, or suggest questions to be raised and discussed by CAC members or staff, may send an email addressing these matters to cac@sonoma-county.org

CAC members may not deliberate or take action on items not on the agenda and may only listen and respond briefly in limited circumstances. Should CAC members wish to deliberate on an issue raised during public comment, that issue may be placed on a future agenda of the CAC for discussion and possible action. Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the CAC after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the IOLERO office at the above address during normal business hours or via email.

Purpose. An IOLERO community advisory council is hereby established to increase visibility for the public into the delivery by the sheriff-coroner of policing and corrections services, to provide community participation in the review and establishment of sheriff-coroner policies, procedures, practices, training, and initiatives, and to engage the public to better understand the role of IOLERO and of the sheriff-coroner.

Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

2. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

3. CURRENT MEMBER ATTENDANCE, OPENINGS AND APPOINTMENTS

Chair will report on current CAC member attendance record and report on current openings and appointments. If you are interested in applying for the current vacancies, please visit: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/boardsandcommissions>

A. Current Vacancies:

- District 2

4. ORAL REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Oral reports and/or comments to be provided. No action will be taken on these items.

- a. Sheriff's Liaison Report
- b. IOLERO Director's Report
- c. CAC Public Correspondence Report

5. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- a. Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposed Amendments to the CAC Bylaws Article III Section 2(B)(4)
- b. Discussion and Possible Action on the Canine Ad Hoc Final Report
- c. Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposed Resolution to Censure Sheriff Engram
- d. Discussion and Possible Action on the Press Release from DSA

6. PRESENTATIONS: NONE

7. ADJOURNMENT FOR AD HOC COMMITTEE WORKING MEETINGS

The CAC will adjourn for a 30-minute recess for each ad hoc committee to conduct business. The public is free to stay and listen. As these are ad hoc working sessions, no official public comment period will be held. Access to these working sessions is not available on Zoom.

8. RECONVENE TO REGULAR MEETING

9. CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ad Hoc Committee Chairs to provide oral reports and/or updates on the work being conducted. No action will be taken on these items.

- A. Community Engagement
- B. Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA)
- C. Policy Recommendations Review (Canine)
- D. Community Engagement about ICE

10. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

This section is intended for non-action items from this agenda and for items not appearing on the agenda that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the CAC. Please state your name and who you represent, if applicable. Comments will be limited at the discretion of the chairs based on number of comments and other factors.

11. REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

12. CAC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmembers may provide oral announcements on things related to CAC business.

13. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE TOPICS TO PUBLICIZE

The CAC will discuss possible topics of interest to publicize in order to better communicate with the public about the activities of the CAC. The CAC may take action to create such material or provide directions to staff to do so.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting of the Community Advisory Council will be Wednesday, November 12, 2025.

The in-person/hybrid meeting will be at the following location:

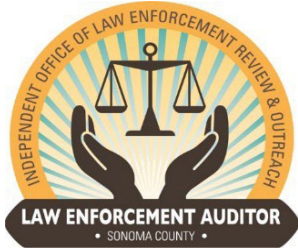
Location:
Finley Community Center
2060 W. College Avenue
Manzanita Room
Santa Rosa, CA. 95401

Commitment to Civil Engagement

All are encouraged to engage in respectful, non-disruptive communication that supports freedom of speech and values diversity of opinion. We, the members of the CAC, have adopted a list of norms referred to as our “Designed Team Alliance”, which describes the way we want to show-up and be in community while modeling collaborative behavior. We request that CAC members, staff, and the public follow the CAC’s agreed upon norms, which are:

- Be tough on the topic not on people
- Respect all participants in the meeting
- Respect others’ perspective, even when you disagree
- Respect each other’s time
- Stay within the meeting’s time and content parameters

- Practice active listening
- Listen with an open mind to all information, including dissenting points of view
- Speak to others as you would like to be spoken to
- Allow others to speak without comment or intrusive sounds
- Honor freedom of speech
- Call each other “in”



Community Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach
September 10, 2025

Members of the public and CAC members attended this meeting in person/online hybrid format. September 10, 2025, Community Advisory Council meeting was held hybrid in person and via zoom.

PRESENT

Council Members: John Azevedo, Nancy Pemberton, Robin Jurs, Lorena Barrera, Nate Solomon, Trevor Ward, Imelda Martinez De Montano

IOLERO Staff: John Alden, IOLERO Director, Lizett Camacho, Community Engagement Manager

Members of the Public: 5 members of the public attended via Zoom. 10 members attended in person.

Sheriff's Office: Sheriff's Liaison, Lt. Brent Kidder

Absent: Michael Miller, Alberto Botello, Casey Jones

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02p.m.

1. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was facilitated by CAC Chair Barrera.
Council members introduced themselves to the public.

2. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 13, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

A. Motion to approve the meeting minutes: Councilmember Jurs
2nd: Councilmember Azevedo
Vote:
Ayes: Jurs, Azevedo, Pemberton, Barrera, Ward, Martinez De Montano
Abstain: Solomon
Absent: Miller, Jones, Botello

Motion carries.

3. CURRENT MEMBER ATTENDANCE, OPENINGS AND APPOINTMENTS

Chair Barrera reported on the current attendance record of CAC members and explained the importance of attendance and also reminded CAC members of the attendance requirements written in the CAC-approved bylaws. Chair Barrera also reported on current openings and appointments. Anyone interested in applying for the current vacancies, please visit: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/boardsandcommissions>

A. We continue to have the following vacancies:

- District 2

4. ORAL REPORTS AND COMMENTS

a. Sheriff's Liaison Report

Lt. Kidder reported on the fact that the Sheriff's Office has fewer community events this time of year. However, the SCSO is engaging in ongoing Spanish radio outreach, specifically focused on immigration updates. The Sheriff's Office is making visible changes to their uniforms shifting to all-green color. Patrol cars will be repainted to black-and-white design for visibility and recognition. There are no policy changes since last update.

Lt Kidder reported the following Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) statistics:

SCSO, ICE Statistics	May	June	July	August
Requests for Notifications	37	50	57	51
Requests for Information	16	13	8	6
Responses	3	6	4	4
Arrests	0	0	0	0

ICE requests for notifications are requests to be notified of the release date from Main Adult Detention Facility (MADF)/jail facility. In many instances, the individual for whom ICE seeks notification has already been released. Requests for information are requests about whether an individual is in custody.

b. IOLERO Director's Report

Director Alden reported on the following topics:

Director Alden attended the CAC meeting via zoom due to COVID exposure. Director Alden reported that the Board of Supervisors reappointed him to another 3-year term as the IOLERO director. He also reported on the upcoming presentation on the David Peláez-Chavez case scheduled later in this agenda. Director Alden and IOLERO staff attended the regional NACOLE oversight conference in San Francisco. NACOLE's annual national conference is set for October in Minneapolis. Director Alden also reported on participation in recent outreach events, including the African Soul Festival.

Community Engagement Manager: Lizett Camacho reported on several more upcoming community events that the CAC members could participate in and circulated a sign-up sheet.

- c. CAC Public Correspondence Report
No correspondence was received.

Public Comment on Oral Reports: 1 member of the public addressed the CAC.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- a. Discussion on CAC Bylaws Article III Section 2(B)(4) and Possible Action

Discussion included the Chair's reading of the Bylaws Article III Section 2(B)(4), after which CAC members shared their comments. The CAC reached consensus on drafting an amendment to provide clarity on this section and the proposed amendment will be brought back for consideration at the CAC's October meeting.

- ## **6. PRESENTATIONS:**
- Receive Presentation from Director Alden on the Peláez-Chavez Decision.

CAC members asked questions as did members of the public. Director Alden announced that on Monday September 22, from 6:30p.m.-8:00p.m. IOLERO would be holding a town hall regarding the Peláez-Chavez decision. To watch the CAC meeting and the full presentation on the Peláez-Chavez decision click here: [Peláez-Chavez Decision Presentation](#)

7. ADJOURNMENT FOR AD HOC COMMITTEE WORKING MEETINGS

The CAC recessed for ad hoc committee working meetings.
Paused zoom recording at 7:10pm for committees to meet.

8. RECONVENED TO REGULAR MEETING

The CAC reconvened at 7:30pm.

9. CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairs of each ad hoc reported on the work of their committees.

- A. Community Engagement: The ad hoc committee has no updates to report.

- B. Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA): The ad hoc committee reported that they are still waiting for a response from the SCSO regarding a policy suggestion. The ad hoc is also working on drafting a letter to the RIPA Board with some input also from the Sheriff's Office. The ad hoc hopes to have all this completely in the next couple of weeks.
- C. Policy Recommendations Review (Canine): The ad hoc reported the ad hoc committee had met with the Sheriff a while back and he agreed to address some of the recommendations. The Sheriff has made significant changes to the policies and welcomed the ad hoc to discuss any further changes to the policies. The ad hoc committee hopes to report back with more details next month.
- D. Community Engagement about ICE: The ad hoc is still working on the flyer that was drafted last month. The ad hoc committee will have more to report next month.

10. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment: 1 member of the public addressed the CAC.

11. REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS

- 1. Possible Action on CAC Bylaws
- 2. Possible Action on the Peláez-Chavez decision
- 3. Censorship item

12. CAC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Solomon has attended the Immigrants Support ad hoc meeting comprised of Supervisor Hermosillo and Supervisor Hopkins.

Councilmember Ward has been in communication with the MADF/jail and is working on getting volunteers to help and provide services for inmates.

Chair Barrera reminded CAC members that work that members are conducting should be communicated to the entire CAC and that members should not begin work unless a discussion has been had with the CAC. She reminded members of the purpose of the annual Strategic Planning Workshop and how the CAC determines what ad hocs will be in place for the year and work the CAC will be conducting. Should any CAC members desire to do additional work, those ideas can be discussed as a CAC meeting. She recommended Council Member Ward to request an item be added to a future agenda to discuss the creation of a new ad hoc to work on the detention center since he is initiating work on his own.

13. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE TOPICS TO PUBLICIZE

No suggestions for publications were provided by CAC members.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46pm.

The next meeting of the CAC is scheduled for Wednesday October 8, 2025, at 6:00pm and will be hybrid (via zoom and in person).

Location:
Finley Community Center
2060 W. College Avenue
Manzanita Room
Santa Rosa, CA. 95401

DRAFT

CAC Member Attendance Tracker											
	Present		Absent								
Member Name	Azevedo, John	Barrera, Lorena	Botello, Alberto	Jones, Casey	Jurs, Robin	Martinez De Montano, Imelda	Miller, Michael	Pemberton, Nancy	Solomon, Nathan	Ward, Trevor	Vacant
Appointment Dates	8/1/2023-8/1/2027	5/11/2025-5/11/2027	2/20/2025-2/20/2027	8/1/2023-8/1/2027	5/23/2023-5/23/2027	4/30/2024-4/30/2026	6/3/2025-6/3/2027	11/16/2021-11/16/2025	6/8/2021-6/8/2027	10/24/2023-10/24/2025	
District	2 nd	3 rd	At-Large	2 nd	1 st	5 th	4 th	5 th	1 st	3 rd	2 nd
February 2024		Present		Present	Present			Present	Absent	Present	N/A
March 2024	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled
April 2024		Present		Absent	Present			Absent	Absent	Present	N/A
May 2024	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act	Truth Act
June 2024		Present		Present	Present			Absent	Present	Absent	N/A
July 2024	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled
August 2024	Present	Present		Present	Present (zoom)	Present		Present	Present	Present	N/A
September 2024	Present	Present		Absent	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	N/A
October 2024	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present		Absent	Present	Absent	N/A
November 2024	Present	Absent		Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Absent	N/A
December 2024	Present	Present		Absent	Present	Present		Present	Present	Absent	N/A
January 2025	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	N/A
February 2025	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Absent	N/A
March 2025	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	N/A
April 2025	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Present		Present	Present	Absent	N/A
May 2025	Present	Absent	Absent	Present	Present	Present		Present	Absent	Present	N/A
June 2025	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent	N/A
July 2025	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled	Canceled
August 2025	Present	Present (zoom)	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Absent	Present	Absent	Absent	N/A
September 2025	Present	Present	Absent	Absent	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	N/A

Suggested amendment to Article III, Section 2. B. 4.

4. Representation of the CAC

CAC Members are encouraged to represent themselves as individual CAC Members in community advocacy and activities related to the adopted positions and Work Plan of the CAC. They are not to work to undermine the adopted positions and Work Plan of the CAC while serving as Members.

CAC members, however, are not authorized to represent, speak or act on behalf of the CAC as a whole unless authorized by the CAC. When the member is representing the CAC, the member should state explicitly that they are doing so. For example, "I am acting on behalf of/ speaking on behalf of/ representing the CAC." When a CAC member is not representing the CAC although speaking on an issue that might be relevant to CAC's work, the member should state explicitly that they are **not** acting on behalf of/ speaking on behalf of/ representing the CAC.

If CAC members address issues relevant to the work of the CAC on their social media accounts, they should add a disclaimer clarifying that opinions shared on social media are their own, and not official commentary of the CAC.

DRAFT -- FOR SUBMISSION TO IOLERO CAC FOR APPROVAL

Re: IOLERO CAC Canine Policy Recommendations

Dear Sheriff Engram:

Thank you for meeting with the CAC's canine policy ad hoc committee several weeks ago. Robin Jurs and David Jones reported back to the CAC that you, Lt. Kidder and Sgt. Negri engaged in very useful conversation about potential improvements in canine policy. CAC appreciates that exchange and the canine policy changes which followed it. In addition, the CAC appreciates that your Office made modifications to the policy even before your meeting with the ad hoc committee. Your changes have improved policy guidance and requirements in important ways. The CAC recognizes and applauds your work to bring the policy more in line with our mutual interest: greater clarity, transparency, accountability and deputy and community safety.

CAC's canine policy review grew out of three canine apprehension events during 2022 and 2023, following which IOLERO auditors found that canines were released to bite suspects who did not objectively pose immediate threat to deputies. In two cases, IOLERO found that canine bites continued for an excessive period, and deputies were unable to stop canines from continuing to bite suspects for unacceptable periods of time. Those canine apprehensions led to substantial injury, to large liability settlements, and to negative publicity and increased community concern.

Your policy changes both before and after the recent meeting with the CAC ad hoc have provided more "comprehensive and specific guidelines regarding approved methods and devices available for the application of force," in keeping with California law. The following is a list of the CAC's canine policy recommendations. The discussion below identifies positive changes you have recently made to the policy, and states recommendations by the full CAC for your consideration that we feel would be additional improvements to the canine policy.

Recommendation No. 1: Provide a thoughtful, humane mission statement that recognizes that canine force is serious, often does lasting injury, and explains why its responsible, accountable use serves public safety. Following your meeting with the CAC ad hoc committee, your Office added substantial statements to Policy section 309.1 recognizing that canine force is "a serious measure that can cause significant injury." You've coupled that recognition with an express commitment to ensuring that any use of canine force is "judicious" and "accountable," and is consistent with "a respect for human dignity ... safety, responsibility, and service." CAC commends you for making these important statements of mission and purpose to the public and to your staff.

Recommendation No. 2: Define key terms used in canine policy (Policy No. 309) which are currently undefined. The following key terms which govern the handler's authority and decision to release a canine to bite a suspect currently remain undefined in Section 309.6:

- "apprehended"
- "imminent threat of violence or serious harm"
- "violently resisting arrest"

- “in possession of a weapon likely to cause serious bodily injury”
- “serious felony”
- “verbally surrender”
- “adequate resources available to take the suspect into custody”

CAC believes that definitions and/or examples providing a fuller understanding of these terms would lead to less subjectivity, and more consistent decision making by handlers in the field. We hope to see this concern addressed in the future.

Recommendation No. 3: Provide canine-specific guidance for de-escalation, proportionality and crisis intervention. CAC is aware that these subjects are covered in separate Sheriff policies elsewhere, but believes that canine-specific de-escalation tactics which anticipate issues unique to canine force are warranted to better guide handlers in the field. We hope to see this concern addressed in the future.

Recommendation No. 4: Specifically identify permissible tactical purposes for deployment to bite and apprehend a suspect. Canine policy currently describes suspect conduct which warrants the release of a canine to bite, but fails to state how the biting dog is to be used to facilitate taking the suspect into custody. Is the goal to prevent the suspect from using force against deputies? To ensure the suspect is not armed? To allow for handcuffing? To compel the suspect to surrender? A canine should only be released to bite a suspect when its handler can identify a tactical goal which will advance an identified safety concern. We hope to see this concern addressed in the future.

Recommendation No. 5: Provide more specific requirement that canine must be recalled when permissible tactical purpose for deployment has been achieved, or handler determines canine is not effective in achieving it. Only when the policy identifies specific tactical purposes for which canines may be released to bite (as recommended above) can the policy clearly identify when the canine must be called off. We hope to see this concern addressed in the future.

We also note and applaud your addition of important guidance regarding when a canine should be called off, including when a suspect has “verbally surrendered,” “physically complied,” is “actively responding to, and/or following commands” from officers. Importantly, your addition that a handler must consider when the “suspect’s hands are visible and/or it reasonably appears they are not in possession” of a weapon is commendable. CAC thanks you for adopting this valuable new guidance.

Recommendation No. 6: Describe actions the handler must take if the canine does not release bite on command. You have incorporated new policy language which expressly requires handlers to be and remain proficient in “several” release techniques, including verbal release, physical release, utilization of electronic bite collar and the “bite breaker bar” tool is to be applauded. This change provides important guidance for handlers and after-action review.

Recommendation No. 7: Provide policy guidance and requirements for regularly encountered law enforcement scenarios. Canine tactics and control when confronted with a suspect known to be armed, a potentially armed suspect, a concealed suspect, a fleeing suspect, a suspect actively threatening harm, a merely non-compliant suspect, etc., should be treated with greater specificity, so that training and conduct in the field can become more consistent and accountable. We hope to see this concern addressed in the future.

Recommendation No. 8: Provide appropriate admonition that violation of canine policy will subject handler to discipline as would any other violation of force policy. Your position stated to the ad hoc committee is that it would be unnecessary and counterproductive to call canine force out specifically as a “special case” for discipline, when any violation of SCSO policy provides grounds for discipline. We accede to your judgment on this question.

We also note additional improvements in canine policy since the August 2023 canine policy the ad hoc first reviewed. SCSO canine policy (Sec. 309.6) has added an express requirement that a canine be “continuously evaluated” throughout deployment to assess appropriateness, and that the handler remain in verbal and/or physical control throughout the encounter and maintain visual contact if circumstances permit. We also note that pre-deployment analysis now includes the handler’s assessment of the suspect’s ability to understand and comprehend canine pre-release warnings due to mental health or language differences, as well as the availability of other less-lethal force options. (Sec. 309.6.1.) We also commend these important additions to policy guidance.

CAC recognizes that writing good law enforcement policy is a complex task -- in part because there is a danger of too much, and too little, detail. We commend you for your policy improvements, and for meeting with and considering the CAC ad hoc committee's submissions and suggestions. We also ask that you continue to consider the recommendations we make in this letter which have not yet become part of SCSO canine policy.

You have meaningfully improved SCSO canine policy and guidance in recent months, as summarized above. As a body, and on behalf of the community, CAC thanks you for that work. In the spirit of open dialog on these important issues, CAC invites you or your staff to arrange to attend a future CAC monthly meeting to discuss SCSO canine policy and practice. CAC members and the public would benefit greatly from such a presentation and discussion with you or your staff.

Sincerely,

CAC Chair or other appropriate signers

Report on Canine Policy Review and Recommendations

I. Introduction

This report summarizes the Community Advisory Council's (CAC) Canine Policy Ad Hoc Committee's (the Ad Hoc) recent review of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) canine policy, and highlights key changes, concerns, and recommendations for further improvement. The report stems from attendance at a canine program training, research on the subject matter and several meetings between the Ad Hoc and SCSO in 2024. From that work, the Ad Hoc presented its first recommendations to the CAC at the [June 11, 2025 CAC regular meeting](#). Through feedback from the CAC and the public from the June 11th meeting, the Ad Hoc held an additional meeting in the summer 2025 with Sheriff Engram, Lieutenant Kidder, and Sergeant Negri to further discuss the subject matter and concerns with the current policy.

II. Background

The CAC's canine policy review was initiated following three notable canine apprehension incidents in 2022 and 2023. In each case, the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO) auditors determined that canines were released to bite suspects who did not pose an immediate threat to deputies. Two of these incidents involved canine bites that continued for unreasonably long durations, and deputies were reportedly unable to effectively stop the attacks. These events resulted in serious injuries, substantial liability settlements, negative publicity, and increased community concern.

III. Canine Policy Improvements Conducted by SCSO

Recent policy changes—incorporated by SCSO in 2024 and those recently incorporated after the CAC's discussion at the June 11th regular meeting and the recent meeting with the Ad Hoc—have meaningfully enhanced SCSO's canine policy. The Ad Hoc acknowledges and commends the following improvements to SCSO canine policy:

- The SCSO's acknowledgment in Policy Section 309.1 that canine force is a serious measure.
- The commitment to judicious and accountable use of canines, with respect for human dignity and public safety.

- New guidance on when canines must be recalled, such as when suspects surrender or comply.
- Inclusion of specific requirements for handler control, continuous canine evaluation, and contextual pre-deployment assessments.
- The addition of language on handler proficiency in various canine release methods, including physical and electronic techniques.
- Section 309.6 includes a new requirement that canines be “continuously evaluated” during deployment.
- Handlers must maintain verbal/physical control and visual contact with the canine when circumstances allow.
- Pre-deployment assessments now include evaluation of the suspect’s ability to understand warnings due to mental health, language barriers, and other factors.
- Consideration of alternative less-lethal force options has been added (Section 309.6.1).

These additions reflect thoughtful and necessary refinements that align with best practices and community expectations. While the Ad Hoc acknowledges that these changes provide more comprehensive and specific guidelines in alignment with California law concerning the application of force, the Ad Hoc has additional recommendations for further improvement of the SCSO canine policy.

IV. CAC Canine Policy Recommendations

Recommendation No. 1: Define key terms used in canine policy (Policy No. 309) which are currently undefined. The following key terms which govern the handler’s authority and decision to release a canine to bite a suspect currently remain undefined in Section 309.6:

- “apprehended”
- “imminent threat of violence or serious harm”
- “violently resisting arrest”
- “in possession of a weapon likely to cause serious bodily injury”
- “serious felony”
- “verbally surrender”

- “adequate resources available to take the suspect into custody”

The Ad Hoc believes that definitions and/or examples providing a fuller understanding of these terms would lead to less subjectivity, and more consistent decision making by handlers in the field.

Recommendation No. 2: Provide canine-specific guidance for de-escalation, proportionality and crisis intervention. The Ad Hoc is aware that these subjects are covered in separate Sheriff policies elsewhere, but believes that canine-specific de-escalation tactics which anticipate issues unique to canine force are warranted to better guide handlers in the field.

Recommendation No. 3: Specifically identify permissible tactical purposes for deployment to bite and apprehend a suspect. Canine policy currently describes suspect conduct which warrants the release of a canine to bite, but fails to state how the biting dog is to be used to facilitate taking the suspect into custody. *Is the goal to prevent the suspect from using force against deputies? To ensure the suspect is not armed? To allow for handcuffing? To compel the suspect to surrender?* A canine should only be released to bite a suspect when its handler can identify a tactical goal which will advance an identified safety concern.

Recommendation No. 4: Provide more specific requirement that canine must be recalled when permissible tactical purpose for deployment has been achieved, or handler determines canine is not effective in achieving it. Only when the policy identifies specific tactical purposes for which canines may be released to bite (as recommended above) can the policy clearly identify when the canine must be called off.

Recommendation No. 5: Provide policy guidance and requirements for regularly encountered law enforcement scenarios. Canine tactics and control when confronted with a suspect known to be armed, a potentially armed suspect, a concealed suspect, a fleeing suspect, a suspect actively threatening harm, a merely non-compliant suspect, etc., should be treated with greater specificity, so that training and conduct in the field can become more consistent and accountable.

VI. Conclusion

The Ad Hoc recognizes that developing effective and responsible law enforcement policy is a complex endeavor. There is a delicate balance between sufficient detail and operational flexibility.

The Ad Hoc respectfully asks that you consider the recommendations provided in this report that have not yet been implemented. We believe these additional changes will further align SCSO's canine policy with principles of public safety, accountability, and community trust.

DRAFT

Canines

309.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The mission of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office Canine Program is to enhance public safety through the professional, skilled, and responsible deployment of law enforcement canines. We recognize that the use of canine force is a serious measure that can cause significant injury, and we are committed to ensuring its application is judicious, accountable, and consistent with the highest standards of law enforcement.

Aligned with the Sheriff's Office mission to serve with integrity, fairness, compassion, and respect, our canine teams are rigorously trained and held to the highest levels of proficiency. They are deployed to protect the public and our deputies, apprehend violent offenders, detect illegal contraband, and foster community trust through transparency and education.

The Canine Program operates with a firm commitment to established policies, a respect for human dignity, and a focus on safety, responsibility, and service in every deployment.

309.2 POLICY

In accordance with Use of Force Policy 300, it is the policy of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office that all canine teams maintain the required level of proficiency to perform their duties effectively and lawfully in support of legitimate law enforcement objectives.

309.3 ASSIGNMENT

Canine teams should be assigned to assist and supplement the Patrol Bureau to function primarily in assist or cover assignments. However, they may be assigned by the Watch Commander to other functions, such as routine calls for service, based on the current operational needs.

Canine teams should generally not be assigned to handle routine matters that will take them out of service for extended periods of time and then only with the approval of the Watch Commander.

309.4 CANINE SUPERVISOR

The canine supervisor shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Patrol Bureau or the authorized designee.

The responsibilities of the canine supervisor include, but are not limited to:

1. Reviewing all canine use reports to ensure compliance with policy and to identify training issues and other needs of the program.
2. Maintaining a liaison with kennel services.
3. Maintaining a liaison with command staff and functional supervisors.
4. Maintaining a liaison with other agency canine supervisors.
5. Maintaining accurate records to document canine activities.
6. Recommending and overseeing the procurement of equipment and services for the teams of handlers and canines.

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7. Scheduling all canine-related activities.
8. Ensuring the canine teams are scheduled for regular training to maximize their capabilities.

309.5 REQUESTS FOR CANINE TEAMS

Patrol Bureau members are encouraged to request the use of a canine. Requests for a canine team from office units outside of the Patrol Bureau shall be reviewed by the shift supervisor or canine sergeant.

309.5.1 OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUEST

All requests for canine assistance from outside agencies must be approved by the shift supervisor or canine sergeant and are subject to the following:

1. Canine teams shall not be used for any assignment that is not consistent with this policy.
2. The canine handler shall have the authority to decline a request for any specific assignment that he/she deems unsuitable.
3. It shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to coordinate operations with agency personnel in order to minimize the risk of unintended injury.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to complete all necessary reports or as directed.

309.5.2 PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS

All public requests for a canine team shall be reviewed and, if appropriate, approved by the canine supervisor prior to making any resource commitment. The canine supervisor is responsible for obtaining resources and coordinating involvement in the demonstration to include proper safety protocols. Canine handlers should not demonstrate any apprehension work unless authorized to do so by the canine supervisor.

309.6 APPREHENSION GUIDELINES

Canines may be utilized to locate and/or apprehend for suspect(s) in the following circumstances:

- a. The suspect has committed, or is about to commit, any crime, and there is a reasonable belief to include any of the following:
 1. The suspect poses an imminent threat of violence or serious harm to the public, or any officer.
 2. The suspect is violently resisting arrest, and the use of the canine appears necessary to overcome such resistance.
 3. The suspect is in possession of a weapon likely to cause serious bodily injury.

NOTE: This includes persons with arrest warrants.

- b. There is reasonable suspicion that the suspect has committed a serious or violent felony, and there is reasonable belief to include any of the following:

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1. The suspect is actively resisting arrest, threatening to resist arrest, or fleeing to evade capture, and the handler reasonably believes the use of a canine is necessary to overcome such resistance.
2. The suspect has concealed themselves in an area which would pose a threat to the safety of law enforcement officers, the canine handler, or the public, if entry is made prior to the use of a canine.

NOTE: This includes persons with arrest warrants.

When a canine has apprehended a suspect and the handler believes the suspect no longer poses a threat, or the totality of circumstances indicates there are adequate resources available to take the suspect into custody, the handler shall promptly direct the canine to release its hold. Factors in assessing a suspect's compliance include, but are not limited to:

1. The suspect has verbally surrendered and/ or physically complied.
2. The suspect is actively responding to, and/or following commands provided by the handler and/or other officer(s) on scene.
3. The suspect's hands are visible and/or it reasonably appears they are not in possession of any weapon.

Handlers shall remain proficient in several "release" techniques, including but not limited to, verbal release, physical release, and utilization of an electronic bite collar and/or "bite breaker bar"

It is recognized that situations may arise that do not fall within the provisions set forth in this policy. Such events require consideration of the totality of the circumstances and the use of an objective reasonableness standard applied to the decision to use a canine.

The deployment of a canine shall be continuously evaluated during an incident to determine appropriateness of its use. During deployments, when practical and safe to do so, the handler shall maintain verbal control and/or have physical control of the canine; the handler should maintain visual sight of the canine if the environment and/or incident allows.

Use of a canine to locate and apprehend a suspect wanted for a lesser criminal offense than those identified above requires approval from a canine supervisor or the on-duty / on-call Lieutenant. Absent a change in circumstances that present an imminent threat to deputies, the canine handler or the public, canines should be deployed on leash or under control of an electronic collar to minimize the likelihood the canine will bite or otherwise injure the individual.

No canine handler or canine will be deployed unless the handler and canine meet current approved certification and proficiency standards.

309.6.1 PREPARATION FOR DEPLOYMENT

Prior to the use of a canine to search for or apprehend any suspect, the canine handler and/or the supervisor on-scene should carefully consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time. The information should include, but is not limited to:

1. The nature and seriousness of the suspected offense.

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2. Whether violence or weapons were used or are anticipated.
3. The degree of resistance or threatened resistance, if any, the suspect has shown.
4. The suspect's known or perceived age.
5. The potential for injury to deputies or the public caused by the suspect if the canine is not utilized.
6. Any potential danger to the public and/or other deputies at the scene if the canine is released.
7. The potential for the suspect to escape or flee if the canine is not utilized.
8. The ability of the suspect to understand and comprehend canine warnings to include mental health, language, and other disabilities.
9. The availability and practical use of other less-lethal force intervention options.

Prior to the use of a canine to locate and/or apprehend a suspect during warrant service (Warrant Service Policy 607), the canine handler and/or the supervisor on-scene should carefully consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time, as listed above. The canine handler shall adhere to Apprehension Guidelines Policy 309.6 and consider whether any of the following conditions exist:

1. The suspect is wanted for a serious or violent felony.
2. The suspect has a violent criminal history.
3. The suspect has a criminal history involving firearms.
4. The suspect has a criminal history of being physically assaultive towards law enforcement or felony evasion

Canine handlers should take into consideration additional contingencies in the event their canine fails to release from a suspect.

As circumstances permit, the canine handler should make reasonable efforts to communicate and coordinate with other involved members to minimize the risk of unintended injury.

It is the canine handler's responsibility to evaluate each situation and determine whether the use of a canine is appropriate and reasonable. The canine handler shall have the authority to decline the use of the canine whenever he/she deems deployment is unsuitable.

A supervisor who is sufficiently apprised of the situation may prohibit deploying the canine.

Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting members should take direction from the handler in order to minimize interference with the canine.

309.6.2 WARNINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A clear audible announcement that a canine will be used if the suspect does not surrender should be made prior to releasing a canine, and the handler should allow a reasonable time for a suspect to surrender. The handler should, if feasible, quiet the canine momentarily to listen for any verbal response to the warning.

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If officers are in a location opposite the warning, and the situation allows, the handler should attempt to verify that the announcement could be heard. If there is any indication or knowledge of a language barrier, verbal warnings should be given in other languages if the situation allows.

A canine handler is not required to provide a canine warning announcement when there is reasonable belief that the suspect is armed with a dangerous weapon, and providing an announcement would increase the risk of injury, or serious bodily injury, to officer(s) or others.

Any apprehension by a canine from this Sheriff's Office shall be documented. The canine handler shall document whether a verbal canine warning announcement was provided, and how the canine warning announcement was given. The canine handler shall document the reasons for not providing a verbal canine warning announcement. It is the responsibility of the handler to ensure associated report(s) adhere to Report Preparation Policy 323.

309.6.3 REPORTING DEPLOYMENTS, BITES AND INJURIES

Whenever a canine deployment results in a bite or causes injury to an intended suspect, a supervisor should be promptly notified and the injuries documented in a canine use report. The injured person shall be promptly treated by emergency medical services personnel and, if appropriate, transported to an appropriate medical facility for further treatment. The deployment and injuries should also be included in any related incident or arrest report.

Any unintended bite or injury caused by a canine, whether on- or off-duty, shall be promptly reported to the canine supervisor. Unintended bites or injuries caused by a canine should be documented in an administrative report, not in a canine use report.

If an individual alleges an injury, either visible or not visible, a supervisor shall be notified and both the individual's injured and uninjured areas shall be photographed as soon as practicable after first tending to the immediate needs of the injured party. Photographs shall be retained as evidence in accordance with current office evidence procedures. The photographs shall be retained until the criminal proceeding is completed and the time for any related civil proceeding has expired.

Canines used by law enforcement agencies are generally exempt from impoundment and reporting requirements. However, the canine shall be made available for examination at any reasonable time if requested by the local health department. The canine handler shall also notify the local health department if the canine exhibits any abnormal behavior after a bite (Health and Safety Code§ 121685).

309.7 NON-APPREHENSION GUIDELINES

Canines should not be used to track or search for non-criminals (e.g., lost children, individuals who may be disoriented or in need of medical attention).

Canines shall not be deployed for subjects in the following circumstances:

1. Infractions
2. Misdemeanor crimes (such as simple assault, petty theft, vandalism, city code violations) when factors in 309.6 (1) are not present.

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3. Passive resistance by a suspect should not be considered as grounds for a canine apprehension, unless the suspect is wanted for, and/or suspected of committing a serious or violent crime, and use of canine is reasonably necessary given the totality of circumstances.
4. Mere flight from an officer
5. Protest or crowd control situations

309.7.1 ARTICLE DETECTION

A canine trained to find objects or property related to a person or crime may be used to locate or identify articles. A canine search should be conducted in a manner that minimizes the likelihood of unintended bites or injuries.

309.7.2 NARCOTICS DETECTION

A canine trained in narcotics detection may be used in accordance with current law and under certain circumstances, including:

1. The search of vehicles, buildings, bags and other articles.
2. Assisting in the search for narcotics during a search warrant service.
3. Obtaining a search warrant by using the narcotics-detection trained canine in support of probable cause.

A narcotics-detection trained canine will not be used to search a person for narcotics unless the canine is trained to passively indicate the presence of narcotics.

309.7.3 BOMB/EXPLOSIVE DETECTION

Because of the high risk of danger to the public and deputies when a bomb or other explosive device is suspected, the use of a canine team trained in explosive detection may be considered. When available, an explosive-detection canine team may be used in accordance with current law and under certain circumstances, including:

1. Assisting in the search of a building, structure, area, vehicle or article where an actual or suspected explosive device has been reported or located.
2. Assisting with searches at transportation facilities and vehicles (e.g., buses, airplanes, trains).
3. Preventive searches at special events, VIP visits, official buildings and other restricted areas. Searches of individuals should remain minimally intrusive and shall be strictly limited to the purpose of detecting explosives.
4. Assisting in the search of scenes where an explosion has occurred and an explosive device or secondary explosive device is suspected.

At no time will an explosive-detection trained canine be used to render a suspected device safe or clear.

309.8 CANINE HANDLER MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION PROCESS

The minimum qualifications for the assignment of canine handler include:

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1. A deputy who is currently off probation.
2. The testing process will consist of an oral board and physical agility test.
3. Residing in an adequately fenced, single-family residence (minimum 5-foot high fence with locking gates).
4. Living within 60 minutes travel time from the Sonoma County limits.
5. Agreeing to be assigned to the position for a minimum of three years.

See attachment: [Canine Proficiency Standard.pdf](#)

309.9 HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

The canine handler shall ultimately be responsible for the health and welfare of the canine and shall ensure that the canine receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, affection and living conditions.

The canine handler will be responsible for the following:

1. Except as required during appropriate deployment, the handler shall not expose the canine to any foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm.
2. The handler shall maintain all office equipment under his/her control in a clean and serviceable condition.
3. When a handler is off-duty for an extended number of days, the assigned canine vehicle should be stored at the Sonoma County Sheriffs Office facility.
4. Handlers shall permit the canine supervisor to conduct spontaneous on-site inspections of affected areas of their homes as well as their canine vehicles to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy.
5. Any changes in the living status of the handler that may affect the lodging or environment of the canine shall be reported to the canine supervisor as soon as possible.
6. When off-duty, the canine shall be in a kennel provided by the County at the home of the handler. When a canine is kenneled at the handler's home, the gate shall be secured with a lock. When off-duty, the canine may be let out of the kennel while under the direct control of the handler.
7. The canine should be permitted to socialize in the home with the handler's family for short periods of time and under the direct supervision of the handler.
8. Under no circumstances will the canine be lodged at another location unless approved by the canine supervisor.
9. When off-duty, the handler shall not involve the canine in any law enforcement activity or official conduct unless approved in advance by the canine supervisor.
10. Whenever a canine handler is off-duty for an extended number of days, it may be necessary to temporarily relocate the canine. In those situations, the handler shall give reasonable notice to the canine supervisor so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

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11. Canine handlers are responsible for maintaining all county equipment to include their assigned patrol vehicle. Any equipment that is not properly functioning shall be brought to the attention of the canine supervisor. The canine supervisor shall be notified as soon as practical.

309.9.1 CANINE IN PUBLIC AREAS

The canine should be kept on a leash when in areas that allow access to the public. Exceptions to this rule would include specific law enforcement operations for which the canine is trained.

1. A canine shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access.
2. When the canine vehicle is left unattended, all windows and doors shall be secured in such a manner as to prevent unauthorized access to the dog. The handler shall also ensure that the unattended vehicle remains inhabitable for the canine.
3. Canines shall be under the direct control of the handler at all times when off leash.

309.10 HANDLER COMPENSATION

The canine handler shall be available for call-out under conditions specified by the canine supervisor.

The canine handler shall be compensated for time spent in the care, feeding, grooming and other needs of the canine in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and according to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement (29 USC § 207).

309.11 CANINE INJURY AND MEDICAL CARE

In the event that a canine is injured, or there is an indication that the canine is not in good physical condition, the injury or condition will be reported to the canine coordinator or Watch Commander as soon as practicable and appropriately documented.

All medical attention shall be rendered by the designated canine veterinarian, except during an emergency where treatment should be obtained from the nearest available veterinarian. All records of medical treatment shall be maintained in the handler's personnel file.

309.12 TRAINING

Before assignment in the field, each canine team shall be trained and certified to meet current POST guidelines or other recognized and approved certification standards. Cross-trained canine teams or those canine teams trained exclusively for the detection of narcotics and/or explosives also shall be trained and certified to meet current nationally recognized standards or other recognized and approved certification standards established for their particular skills.

The canine coordinator shall be responsible for scheduling periodic training for all office members in order to familiarize them with how to conduct themselves in the presence of office canines. Because canines may be exposed to dangerous substances such as opioids, as resources are available, the canine coordinator should also schedule periodic training for the canine handlers about the risks of exposure and treatment for it.

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All canine training shall be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the canine coordinator or Watch Commander.

309.12.1 CONTINUED TRAINING

Each canine team shall thereafter be recertified to a current POST, CNCA or other recognized and approved certification standards on an annual basis. Additional training considerations are as follows:

1. Canine teams should receive training as defined in the current contract with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office canine training provider.
2. Canine handlers are encouraged to engage in additional training with approval of the canine supervisor.
3. To ensure that all training is consistent, no handler, trainer or outside vendor is authorized to train to a standard that is not reviewed and approved by this office.
4. Handlers shall train "release" techniques in both scenario based and skills assessment training to ensure success during a real-world deployment.
5. Following a deployment of a canine (post bite) the handler shall have the canine evaluated by the master trainer as soon as practical.
6. At any time, based on the needs of the office, the canine Lieutenant can direct the canine and handler be evaluated by the master trainer to identify any training concerns, deployment concerns, or order remedial training.
7. In the event a Sheriff's Office canine team misses three (3) or more maintenance training days with the master trainer (8 hour monthly trainings), that team is not to return to duty at any capacity until the following occurs:
 - (a) The canine team participates in a "Return to Duty" evaluation for both patrol and narcotics detection conducted by the master trainer.
 - (b) The canine team is cleared for duty by the canine sergeant and/or lieutenant.
8. Once the canine team is re-evaluated and cleared for duty, documentation will be placed in the canine training file, clearing the team for full duty. In the event a team does not successfully complete the re-evaluation, a training plan will be developed by the master trainer and canine supervisor(s) to bring the team up to an acceptable level.

309.12.2 FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE TRAINING

Any canine team failing to graduate or obtain certification shall not be deployed in the field for tasks the team is not certified to perform until graduation or certification is achieved. When reasonably practicable, pending successful certification, the canine handler shall be temporarily reassigned to regular patrol duties.

309.12.3 TRAINING RECORDS

All canine training records shall be maintained in the canine handler's and the canine's training file.

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309.12.4 TRAINING AIDS

Training aids are required to effectively train and maintain the skills of canines. Deputies possessing, using or transporting controlled substances or explosives for canine training purposes must comply with federal and state requirements regarding the same. Alternatively, the Sonoma County Sheriffs Office may work with outside trainers with the applicable licenses or permits.

309.12.5 CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE TRAINING AIDS

Deputies acting in the performance of their official duties may possess or transfer controlled substances for the purpose of narcotics-detection canine training in compliance with state and federal laws (Health & Safety Code§ 11367.5; 21 USC§ 823(g)).

The Sheriff or the authorized designee may authorize a member to seek a court order to allow controlled substances seized by the Sonoma County Sheriffs Office to be possessed by the member or a narcotics-detection canine trainer who is working under the direction of this office for training purposes, provided the controlled substances are no longer needed as criminal evidence.

As an alternative, the Sheriff or the authorized designee may request narcotics training aids from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

These procedures are not required if the canine handler uses commercially available synthetic substances that are not controlled narcotics.

309.12.6 CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE PROCEDURES

Due to the responsibilities and liabilities involved with possessing readily usable amounts of controlled substances and the ever-present danger of the canine's accidental ingestion of these controlled substances, the following procedures shall be strictly followed:

1. All controlled substance training samples shall be weighed and tested prior to dispensing to the individual canine handler or trainer.
2. The weight and test results shall be recorded and maintained by this office.
3. Any person possessing controlled substance training samples pursuant to court order or DEA registration shall maintain custody and control of the controlled substances and shall keep records regarding any loss of, or damage to, those controlled substances.
4. All controlled substance training samples will be inspected, weighed and tested annually. The results of the annual testing shall be recorded and maintained by the canine supervisor with a copy forwarded to the dispensing agency.
5. All controlled substance training samples will be stored in locked, airtight and watertight cases at all times, except during training. The locked cases shall be secured in the trunk of the canine handler's assigned patrol vehicle during transport and stored in an appropriate locked container. There are no exceptions to this procedure.
6. The canine supervisor shall periodically inspect every controlled substance training sample for damage or tampering and take any appropriate action.
7. Any unusable controlled substance training samples shall be returned to the Property and Evidence Unit or to the dispensing agency.

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8. All controlled substance training samples shall be returned to the dispensing agency upon the conclusion of the training or upon demand by the dispensing agency.

309.12.7 EXPLOSIVE TRAINING AIDS

Deputies may possess, transport, store or use explosives or destructive devices in compliance with state and federal laws (Penal Code § 18800; 18 USC § 842; 27 CFR 555.41).

Explosive training aids designed specifically for canine teams should be used whenever feasible. Due to the safety concerns in the handling and transportation of explosives, inert or non-hazardous training aids should be employed whenever feasible. The use of explosives or destructive devices for training aids by canine teams is subject to the following:

1. All explosive training aids, when not in use, shall be properly stored in a secure facility appropriate for the type of materials.
2. An inventory ledger shall be maintained to document the type and quantity of explosive training aids that are stored.
3. The canine EOD supervisor shall be responsible to verify the explosive training aids on hand against the inventory ledger once each quarter.
4. Only members of the EOD team shall have access to the explosive training aids storage facility.
5. A primary and secondary custodian will be designated to minimize the possibility of loss of explosive training aids during and after the training. Generally, the handler will be designated as the primary custodian while the trainer or authorized second person on-scene will be designated as the secondary custodian.
6. Any lost or damaged explosive training aids shall be promptly reported to the canine supervisor, who will determine if any further action will be necessary. Any loss of explosives will be reported to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

309.12.8 NARCAN FOR CANINES

Narcan use by handlers is approved for use on canines, under the following conditions:

1. Handlers shall not direct or allow any canine to search any area where fentanyl or suspected fentanyl is known to be accessible, unsecured, or potentially airborne.
2. Since the canines are frequently deployed in situations with no prior intelligence about the substance they may be encountering, after every deployment, each handler will monitor their canine for signs and symptoms of an overdose/exposure.
3. Handlers will be noting any unusual behavior in the canine to indicate an exposure. If an exposure is suspected, the handler will immediately respond to the nearest animal hospital.
4. All handlers will carry updated medical kits to include the opiate antidote Naloxone.
5. Recurring yearly training from the local animal hospital will provide each handler with the proper protocol to administer the antidote in the field.

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6. A yearly review of the medical kits will be conducted by the canine supervisor and the animal hospital.
7. Naloxone (as well as the other drugs) will be replaced at its expiration date.
8. If a handler deploys any of the treatment drugs on a canine, the canine supervisor and shift supervisor will be notified immediately and the drug will be replaced by the animal hospital.
9. After any treatment drug is administered on a canine, the handler and the canine will immediately respond to a 24 hour emergency veterinarian.
10. If a canine is exposed or you suspect exposure has occurred, you shall immediately notify the on duty sergeant or Watch Commander. You will also, as soon as practical, notify the canine sergeant. If no canine sergeant is contacted they you will contact the canine lieutenant.

Proposed Resolution Censuring Sheriff Engram for Lack of Cooperation with IOLERO in its Investigation into the Killing of David Peláez-Chavez

WHEREAS over 64% of Sonoma County voters passed Measure P (Ordinance 6333) in November 2020, and

WHEREAS Measure P (Ordinance 6333, Sec. 2-394(b)(5)(viii.)) authorizes IOLERO to conduct independent investigations "[w]here an investigation involves an incident resulting in the death of a person in custody of the sheriff-coroner or results from the actions of an employee, and

WHEREAS Measure P (Ordinance 6333, Sec. 2-394(b)(5)(iv.) and (ix.)) authorizes IOLERO to directly contact witnesses and subpoena documents and testimony, and

WHEREAS Measure P (Ordinance 6333, Sec. 2-394(g)) requires the sheriff-coroner to cooperate with IOLERO by, *inter alia*, providing "unfettered" access to staff at the Sheriff's office, providing informal access to information related to investigations audited or conducted by IOLERO, and providing access to a supervisor or employee subject to an investigation audited or conducted by IOLERO, and

WHEREAS, on July 29, 2022 David Peláez-Chavez was shot and killed by Sheriff's Deputy Michael Dietrick, in the presence of Sheriff's Deputy Anthony Powers and under the supervision of Sheriff's Sergeant Nicholas Berg, and

WHEREAS the sheriff-coroner's office did not provide unfettered access to information related to IOLERO's investigation into the death of David Peláez-Chavez in contravention of Measure P, and

WHEREAS Sheriff Engram did not invoke the invoke the *Lybarger v. Los Angeles* admonition when his employees, Dep. Powers and Sgt. Berg, refused to answer questions of IOLERO's staff, and

WHEREAS the lack of cooperation from Sheriff Engram and employees of the sheriff-coroner impeded IOLERO's investigation and prevented IOLERO staff from reaching certain conclusions regarding the practices, procedures, and policies of the sheriff-coroner,

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Community Advisory Council to IOLERO expresses its deep disapproval of Sheriff Engram's lack of cooperation with IOLERO staff in its independent investigation into the death of David Peláez-Chavez, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Community Advisory Council to IOLERO urges Sheriff Engram to reconsider his determination not to invoke the *Lybarger v. Los Angeles* admonition when IOLERO seeks to interview sheriff-coroner employees, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Community Advisory Council to IOLERO urges Sheriff Engram to cooperate fully and without delay when IOLERO staff seek information about investigations IOLERO staff are auditing or incidents IOLERO staff are independently investigating.

Editorial: Oversight, Accountability, and the Law—Why I Won’t Compel Deputies to Interview with IOLERO

The people of Sonoma County deserve the strong civilian oversight of law enforcement they’ve asked for, delivered by government agencies that work together in good faith to deliver just that. Achieving this goal is possible but must be done responsibly and with deference to constitutional rights and respect for California law. To that end, I have declined to issue an order compelling deputies to interview with the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO).



Some critics have portrayed this decision as resistance to oversight. The reality is exactly opposite. I fully support transparency and accountability, but not at the expense of constitutional rights, state labor law, and court rulings. Since becoming Sheriff, I have increased the Internal Affairs budget, added an Internal Affairs investigator position, and changed several policies based on IOLERO recommendations.

All public employees, including deputies, retain constitutional rights. Chief among these is the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination. In law enforcement, that right is safeguarded through a Lybarger admonition, a process based on case law which allows an officer to answer questions in an administrative investigation without those answers being used in a criminal case.

Lybarger protections apply only when the interviewing agency can discipline the employee. IOLERO cannot fire, suspend, or demote deputies, so it cannot provide these protections without an agreement with the Deputy Sheriff’s Association (DSA). Forcing deputies to participate would almost certainly be challenged at the Public Employment Relations Board, as Measure P was when it was passed. The deputies prevailed, and key sections of Measure P were ruled unenforceable. If deputies were compelled to give statements, those statements could be used in criminal proceedings, potentially violating their constitutional rights. The absence of current charges from a district attorney does not preclude the California Attorney General from filing charges in the future, and no responsible law enforcement leader would expose their office to such a risk.

Beyond constitutional concerns, labor law also applies. The Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) requires that any change in working conditions, including ordering deputies to participate in IOLERO interviews, must be negotiated with the deputies’ union. This “meet and confer” process is mandatory under the law. I am not a party to these negotiations; that responsibility lies with the County and the DSA. Failure to do this when Measure P was passed is what invalidated many sections of Measure P in the first place. Until a lawful agreement is reached, I cannot unilaterally impose new requirements. Doing so would violate labor law and risk costly litigation for the County, all toward an outcome that is entirely predictable based on previous rulings.

IOLERO has suggested I am alone in this approach. That is incorrect. Out of California’s 58 counties, only nine have any form of sheriff’s oversight, and most of those are advisory. San

Francisco is the only county where deputies are compelled to participate, but that voter-approved oversight provision was negotiated with labor groups before placement on the ballot. In San Diego, deputies are invited but not compelled; in Los Angeles, negotiations are ongoing. In neighboring Marin County, labor groups are preparing to negotiate compelled testimony following a recent oversight ordinance.

IOLERO has also cited Berkeley and Oakland. But in those cities, police chiefs are subordinate to city councils, which can direct officers to participate in oversight interviews. Even there, these arrangements were negotiated with the employee associations.

The reality is quite clear: where compelled oversight exists, it is the product of labor negotiation and respect for the law, not unilateral orders.

When Measure P was placed before voters in 2020, its supporters promised greater independence and accountability. What they did not address were the inevitable and serious constitutional and labor law conflicts. It defies both the plain language and intent of Measure P to suggest that, after granting IOLERO independence and subpoena power, its director should rely on the Sheriff to compel testimony and provide Lybarger protections. That interpretation undermines Measure P's core purpose and has led to five years of costly litigation and repeated court battles.

I am not opposed to oversight. Meaningful oversight must be lawful, fair, and sustainable. This discussion has too often devolved into either/or soundbites rather than public servants acting in good faith to deliver what the voters believed they were adopting. My decision not to compel deputies to interview with IOLERO is not a rejection of accountability and oversight, it is a commitment to protecting constitutional rights, following court rulings, and ensuring that any system of oversight is built to last.

As a candidate for Sheriff, when asked about Measure P, I always said I would enforce the provisions of Measure P that were lawful. That has not changed. Ordering Deputies to interview with IOLERO violates their rights under MMBA.

-Sheriff Eddie Engram

Sonoma Deputy Sheriffs' Association

9.23.25 For Immediate Release:

Sonoma Deputy Sheriffs' Association Calls for Investigation into Retaliation, Harassment, Fraudulent Statements by

Police Oversight Director John Alden and Attorney Emma Dill

DSA Files Complaints with State Bar Against both Alden and Dill

Santa Rosa, Calif. — Attorneys for the [Sonoma County Deputy Sheriffs' Association \(DSA\)](#) today issued a blistering rebuke of the [Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach \(IOLERO\)](#), accusing its leadership of weaponizing their office to harass, retaliate against, and publicly humiliate Sonoma County deputies.

In a scathing letter about [IOLERO](#) to the Board of Supervisors, attorney Jonathan R. Murphy of [Rains Lucia Stern St. Phalle & Silver](#), PC laid out IOLERO's misconduct in stark terms:

- **Harassment & Retaliation:** Deputies were dragged into sham “interviews” even after making clear they would invoke their constitutional right to remain silent.
- **Lies & Legal Misrepresentations:** IOLERO's own lawyer-auditor, [Emma Dill](#), threatened deputies with termination and falsely claimed they were protected under [Lybarger](#) — a deliberate lie designed to trick deputies into giving up their rights.
- **Public Shaming:** [Director John Alden](#) took the extraordinary step of posting recordings of deputies exercising their rights, mocking them online — a political stunt that would and should spark outrage if done by the Sheriff's Office against criminal suspects.
- **Leaks & Collusion:** Sensitive subpoena records were conveniently exposed to a Press Democrat reporter who has been repeatedly fed IOLERO-related materials, raising serious questions about unlawful leaks.

“IOLERO has abandoned any pretense of fairness or independence,” said [attorney Jonathan Murphy](#). “Its leaders lied to deputies, threatened them, and then smeared them publicly for asserting rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution. This isn't oversight — it's abuse of power.”

Despite multiple formal harassment complaints filed in 2024, the County of Sonoma has taken no action to prevent John Alden's abuse of authority. Instead of protecting employees from retaliation, IOLERO has doubled down, emboldening Alden and Dill to escalate their misconduct.

"This is a disgrace," Murphy continued. "If a law enforcement agency pulled the same stunts — lying, threatening, and publicly shaming citizens for exercising their rights — IOLERO would be first in line to call it unconstitutional. The hypocrisy is jaw-dropping. The County can't stand on the sidelines for this one, they need to step in and put a stop to this."

The DSA is demanding immediate action: an independent investigation into IOLERO's misconduct, accountability for Alden and Dill, and an end to what it calls "a campaign of retaliation masquerading as oversight."

This investigation should include an inquiry into why John Alden abruptly left his previous two positions in police oversight and whether or not any mistakes were made regarding his selection in Sonoma County. In addition, the Sonoma County DSA has taken an extraordinary step in filing state bar complaints regarding the actions of John Alden and Emma Dill.

"Enough is enough," Murphy concluded. "Sonoma County deputies will not be bullied, lied to, or used as political punching bags by corrupt officials hiding behind the IOLERO banner. The DSA demands that the Board of Supervisors act against this lawless behavior by department heads. The Board of Supervisors should be considering whether or not John Alden's directorship of IOLERO is compatible with the County's goals for law-enforcement oversight, and the fair treatment of its employees."

Contacts:

Sam Singer

415.336.4949

singer@singersf.com

or

Jonathan R. Murphy, Esq.

Rains Lucia Stern St. Phalle & Silver, PC

(925) 609-1699

JMurphy@RLSLawyers.com



**Community for Law Enforcement Accountability Now
(CLEAN)**

PO Box 15064
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

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Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive, Room 100A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: Response to DSA's Harassment Complaint Against IOLERO

Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

The Deputy Sheriffs' Association (DSA) recently issued a press release expressing its outrage over the treatment it claims to have received from IOLERO Director John Alden and Auditor Emma Dill. CLEAN views this as nothing more than **faux outrage**, given the overreaction to what was in fact an extremely—indeed overly—fair report of IOLERO's investigation into the killing of Sonoma County resident David Peláez-Chavez.

We address below the major claims in the DSA's complaint and why they should be rejected.

1. Harassment & Retaliation

The DSA complains that its members were “dragged” into “sham” interviews even though IOLERO knew they would assert their Fifth Amendment right to remain silent. What is missing from this telling is crucial: **those very same members did not assert their Fifth Amendment rights when it actually mattered**—during the Santa Rosa Police Department's criminal investigation into the shooting. They answered questions then, when the risk of criminal prosecution was presumably real.

When IOLERO attempted to conduct its **Measure P-proscribed administrative review**, the District Attorney and Attorney General had already declined to prosecute. Deputies faced no criminal jeopardy. Their invocation of the Fifth Amendment at that stage was not about self-protection; it was a tactic to obstruct lawful civilian oversight.

IOLERO was correct to proceed with the interviews, even if deputies refused to answer substantive questions. It is a common practice to expect interviewees to assert their Fifth Amendment question by question. This is not harassment; it is good investigative practice.

Moreover, the Sheriff's office, in conducting its internal administrative review, failed to follow the investigative protocols agreed upon between SCSO and IOLERO over two years ago. Despite the protocols calling for the Sheriff's Internal Affairs division to interview sworn staff involved in potential misconduct or policy violations, Internal Affairs did no such thing. Those interviews might have answered some of the many questions IOLERO staff wanted to ask the subpoenaed DSA members.

2. Lies & Legal Misrepresentations

The DSA alleges that Auditor Dill lied about the law and “threatened” deputies with termination. This is a mischaracterization.

As DSA members well know, IOLERO has **no authority to discipline deputies**. Auditor Dill's explanation of potential employment consequences was correct **under the Lybarger framework**, which applies if the Sheriff, as employer, issues a direct order to cooperate. The fact that Sheriff Engram refused to issue such an order is the true source of the problem.

The DSA's complaint seeks to transform accurate descriptions of the law into misconduct. In reality, **IOLERO was fulfilling its investigative obligations under Measure P while the Sheriff and DSA sought to block it.**

3. Public Shaming

The DSA complains that Director Alden engaged in “public shaming” by posting the interview recordings of deputies asserting their rights. What the DSA fails to acknowledge is that **Director Alden was legally obligated to release these records under California state law SB 1421.**

Far from being extraordinary, this was required transparency. The public has a right to know whether deputies cooperate with oversight in deadly force investigations. Calling lawful disclosure “shaming” is an attempt to paint compliance with state law as misconduct.

CLEAN commends Director Alden for following both the letter and the spirit of California law in releasing these materials.

4. Leaks & Collusion

The DSA suggests that “sensitive subpoena records” were “conveniently exposed” to the *Press Democrat*. This insinuation is misleading. We believe those records were properly sought under the **California Public Records Act**. IOLERO was legally required to produce them.

Notably, even the DSA stops short of alleging that IOLERO leaked anything; it merely hints at the possibility. This is not a serious complaint; it is a **red herring** meant to inflame emotions and distract from deputies' refusal to cooperate.

5. The Canine Policy Example

The County's own experience with canine policy highlights why IOLERO and its Community Advisory Council (CAC) are so important.

- IOLERO identified that deputies had violated the Sheriff's Office canine policy in three separate incidents.
- Each violation resulted in costly settlements paid to victims.
- Only after IOLERO's findings were made public did Sheriff Engram retain an outside consultant to review the policy.
- Once the consultant's recommendations were adopted, the CAC offered further reforms. To his credit, Sheriff Engram accepted some of those recommendations and committed to reviewing others.

This process—**IOLERO identifying violations, public accountability prompting action, the CAC strengthening reforms, and the Sheriff adopting changes—demonstrates oversight working exactly as intended.** It not only improves public safety and transparency, it also reduces financial exposure for the County.

The Larger Issue: Obstruction Costs the County

Director Alden and his staff have bent over backwards to follow the will of the voters as outlined in Measure P and state law in this first independent investigation of a deadly force incident by the Sheriff's Office. What the DSA now labels “harassment” was in fact **IOLERO carrying out its Measure P mandate exactly as voters intended.**

Every obstruction—whether refusing interviews, filing baseless complaints, or recasting lawful

transparency as misconduct—puts the County at greater risk. The canine policy incidents illustrate the cost: deputies violated policy, lawsuits followed, the County paid large settlements, and only afterward did reforms occur.

Oversight works. Obstruction costs money.

CLEAN's Support for John Alden

CLEAN wants to be absolutely clear: **we have full confidence in and strong support for Director John Alden**. He has conducted himself with integrity, professionalism, and an unwavering commitment to the mandate given to him by the voters of Sonoma County. The attacks against him are not only baseless; they are damaging to the credibility of oversight itself.

In fact, in CLEAN's view, Director Alden and his staff have at times been overly deferential to the Sheriff's Office. They have shown patience, restraint, and a willingness to collaborate in good faith, even when met with obstruction. Far from harassment or retaliation, IOLERO has consistently bent over backwards to accommodate the very institution it is tasked with overseeing.

What the Board Must Do

We respectfully urge the Board to:

1. **Reject the DSA's harassment narrative** as unfounded and obstructive.
2. **Affirm your support for John Alden and the IOLERO staff in carrying out their difficult and essential voter-mandated work.**
3. **Urge Sheriff Engram** to order deputies to comply with IOLERO subpoenas and administrative interviews, as required under *Lybarger v. City of Los Angeles (1985)*.
4. **Recognize oversight as risk management** that reduces preventable lawsuits, insurance payouts, and taxpayer burden.

Conclusion

The DSA's complaint is not about harassment or retaliation; it is about resisting oversight and undermining the voters' mandate. **CLEAN stands firmly with John Alden and his staff** in the face of these baseless attacks.

We urge you to do the same: defend oversight, reject obstruction, and insist on full compliance with IOLERO's lawful authority under Measure P and California state law SB 1421. Doing so is both a matter of justice and a matter of fiscal responsibility for the County.

Respectfully,

Alcina Horstman
Barbara Grasseschi
Carl Tennenbaum
Nancy Pemberton

Community for Law Enforcement Accountability Now (CLEAN)

cc: County Counsel Robert Pittman
County Executive Officer M. Christina Rivera
IOLERO Director John Alden
County Sheriff Eddie Engram
DSA President Cody Ebert
Press Democrat Reporter Marisa Endicott