

Duty Knife Policy

312.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to authorize and define the general and defensive use of duty knives by commissioned members.

312.2 POLICY

The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office authorizes commissioned personnel to possess and use a personal duty knife or knives. It is recognized that commissioned personnel may have many needs for a duty knife, including both general utility needs and for limited defensive purposes. The Use of Force policy provides commissioned personnel with guidelines on the use of force. Nothing in this policy requires a member to carry a knife.

312.3 GENERAL USE

The carrying and use of a duty knife by commissioned personnel shall be done as inconspicuously as possible. It is the individual members responsibility to use the duty knife in a responsible and safe manner and to prevent injuries or property damage during use.

312.3.1 PROHIBITED CARRY IN CORRECTIONS FACILITIES

Duty knives are not authorized in the Correctional facilities.

312.4 DEFENSIVE USE OF A DUTY KNIFE

While not considered to be a primary weapon of choice in a lethal force situation, commissioned personnel may, under extraordinary circumstances, respond with a duty knife in situations which would justify the use of lethal force.

The use of a knife against a subject may be employed only when the officer has an objective and reasonable belief that his or her life is in imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm and this belief is based on the totality of the circumstances known to the officer at the time.

312.5 TYPES OF KNIVES

The cutting edge of knife shall not exceed 5 inches in length measured from tip of the blade to where it inserts into the handle. The blade may be plain-edged, serrated, or a combination thereof. Folding knives shall be a lock blade design with easy one-hand opening and closing.

Knives which open using a spring assist are generally prohibited in Washington. RCW 9.41.250 provides an exemption for law enforcement officers. Officers may possess a spring bladed knife while:

- (a) On official duty,
- (b) Transporting the knife to or from the place where the knife is stored when the officer is not on official duty, or
- (c) Storing a spring blade knife.

Kitsap County Sheriff's Office

Duty Knife Policy

The exemption does not allow a law enforcement officer to carry a spring bladed knife while off duty.

Fixed bladed knives and knives commonly referred to as a "tether", "neck", or "Karambit" knives must be carried in a manner inconspicuous to public view.

Folding knives may be carried in a conspicuous manner provided they do not interfere with, or detract from, the officer's uniform or professional appearance.