

Police Department Policies and Procedures*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Final Digest

On: Friday, December 1, 2023

Members: Packard, Anderson, Wong

The Way It Is Now: The Police Commission (Commission) oversees and adopts policies for the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). The Chief of Police manages the SFPD's day-to-day operations. The Board of Supervisors (Board) may also adopt policies for the SFPD, by a majority vote.

A policy adopted by the Commission or the Board outlines and limits how police officers conduct law enforcement duties.

Under the Commission's use-of-force policy, officers must prepare a written report when they use a firearm, point a firearm at a person, force a resisting suspect into handcuffs, or use force likely to cause physical pain or injury. Officers must also record their use of force using body-worn cameras.

Under the Commission's vehicle-pursuit policy, an officer may use a vehicle to pursue a person fleeing in a vehicle only when the officer suspects the person committed a violent felony or when the officer believes the person poses an immediate risk to public safety.

The Board has adopted a policy governing the acquisition and use of surveillance technology by the SFPD and other City departments. The City may install public surveillance cameras on streets, sidewalks and common areas of public housing upon approval of the Commission if it finds there is substantial crime occurring at the location.

Before the SFPD can use or acquire a new surveillance technology, the Board must approve its use. The SFPD may not use facial recognition technology except in limited circumstances.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ is an ordinance that would make these changes:

- Before the Commission changes SFPD policy, there would be a 90-day period for the SFPD to hold one community meeting at each district police station to solicit feedback. The Chief of Police could waive this process.
- The Commission and the SFPD would have to reduce recordkeeping and reporting to the extent allowed by law, with the goal that patrol officers spend no more than 20% of their work time on administrative tasks.
- Written use-of-force reports would be required only if the officer's use of force physically injured a person or if the officer used a firearm or pointed it at a person. In other use-of-force cases, the incident could be reported by body-worn cameras.
- A vehicle pursuit would be allowed when an officer has reasonable suspicion that a person committed, is committing or is likely to commit a felony or violent misdemeanor.
- The Commission has until October 1, 2024, to adopt new policies consistent with this measure.
- The SFPD could use drones for vehicle pursuits and active criminal investigations.
- With the intent to improve public safety, the Chief of Police could authorize installing public surveillance cameras, without Commission approval, after holding a community meeting.
- Drones and public surveillance cameras installed under these rules could include facial recognition technology and would not require Board approval. The SFPD could use other surveillance technology if it submits the policy to the Board within one year. The Board could disapprove this policy.

**Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*

- Until January 1, 2027, any changes to this new ordinance must be approved by a supermajority of the Board. After that date, the changes could be approved by a majority of the Board.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to:

- Allow the SFPD to conduct community meetings before the Commission can change SFPD policies;
- Require the Commission and the SFPD to reduce recordkeeping and reporting for officers;
- Set new policies regarding use-of-force reporting and vehicle pursuit by SFPD officers and allow the Commission to modify other policies;
- Authorize the SFPD to use drones and install surveillance cameras without Commission or Board approval, including those with facial recognition technology; and
- Authorize the SFPD to use new surveillance technology unless the Board disapproves.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you do not want to make these changes.