




# TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

 Proudly Policing Since 1841	<b>SUBJECT</b> <p style="text-align: center;">Tactical Flight Officer Program</p>	 Nationally Accredited 1986	
	<b>CHIEF OF POLICE</b> 		
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## AUTHORITY/RELATED REFERENCES

FS Chapter 23, Part I, Florida Mutual Aid Act  
 General Order 33, Jurisdiction, Mutual Aid, and Investigative Task Forces  
 General Order 57, Training Protocols  
 General Order 60, Response to Resistance  
 General Order 61, Weapons, Firearms, and Less-lethal Firearms

## ACCREDITATION REFERENCES

CALEA Chapter 4

## KEY WORD INDEX

<b>Airborne Use of Force</b>	Procedure IV
<b>Equipment Protocols</b>	Procedure III
<b>General Information</b>	Procedure I
<b>Mutual Aid Considerations</b>	Procedure V
<b>Training, Proficiency, and Qualification Protocols</b>	Procedure II

## POLICY

The Department is responsible for establishing protocols for the Tactical Flight Officer Program in support of the Aviation Task Force, a joint aviation unit of the Leon County Sheriff's Office and the Department. Members shall adhere to established protocols in their assignment to the Tactical Flight Officer Program and the Aviation Task Force.

## DEFINITIONS

**Flight Operation:** When the Aviation Task Force is engaged in a law enforcement mission, specifically excluding training exercises.

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**Tactical Flight Officer:** A member assigned to the Tactical Flight Officer Program.

## PROCEDURES

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The Aviation Task Force (AVTF) combines the resources of the Leon County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) and the Department to more effectively provide aerial law enforcement response to crimes within the unincorporated areas of Leon County and the City of Tallahassee.
- B. The Tactical Flight Officer (TFO) Program was established to support the AVTF.
- C. Tactical Flight Officers operate under the authority of the Sheriff, with Countywide jurisdiction while carrying out the duties and responsibilities of a TFO.
- D. Tactical Flight Officers will be co-located at the LCSO Aviation Facility at Tallahassee International Airport.
- E. Each TFO is required to obtain and maintain an airport security identification badge, and display it as mandated or requested.
- F. Each TFO shall report to the designated Operational Support Lieutenant for any issues requiring a Department supervisor.

### II. TRAINING, PROFICIENCY, AND QUALIFICATION PROTOCOLS

- A. The designated Operational Support Lieutenant is responsible for ensuring each TFO is provided relevant training contemporaneous to their assignment to the TFO Program/AVTF.
- B. The Leon County Sheriff's Office Aviation Section is responsible for providing in-house TFO training related to LCSO equipment and procedures.
- C. All training shall be documented as mandated by General Order 57 (Training Protocols).
- D. The following are applicable to a TFO's utilization of night-vision goggles (NVGs) during a flight operation.
  - 1. Initial NVG training shall occur prior to the TFO participating in a flight operation, and at least annually thereafter.

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2. The training shall be conducted by an authorized NVG flight instructor through the LCSO Night Vision Device Training Course.
  3. The designated Operational Support Lieutenant is responsible for ensuring the training is received.
- E. Each TFO is responsible for maintaining proficiency in utilizing all mission equipment.
- F. Each TFO is responsible for maintaining proficiency in all mission profiles to include day and night, both unaided and with the use of NVGs.
- G. Each TFO must successfully complete airborne use of force training prior to participating in a flight operation.
- H. Each TFO participating in airborne use of force training shall adhere to established AVTF training and safety protocols, to include these pre-flight safety procedures:
1. Regardless of the training venue, the involved TFO(s) shall ensure management/personnel at the location are contacted to ensure the firearms range will be vacant at the time of the airborne use of force training,
  2. Upon arrival at the training venue, the involved TFO(s) shall ensure there is a reconnaissance performed of the area to ensure there are not any non-authorized persons on or nearby the firearms range, and
  3. A pre-training safety briefing shall occur, with all training participants in attendance, to address, at a minimum, 1) planned mission profiles, 2) checklist phraseology, and 3) emergency procedures.
- I. Patrol rifle proficiency requirements for a TFO include:
1. The biennial patrol rifle sustainment class to demonstrate proficiency and qualification as mandated in General Order 61 (Weapons, Firearms, and Less-lethal Firearms), and
  2. A biennial rifle qualification from a LCSO helicopter from various mission profiles.

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### III. EQUIPMENT PROTOCOLS

- A. The Department is responsible for providing needed equipment to each TFO.
- B. The following items are identified as required equipment for each TFO:
  - 1. Flight helmet
  - 2. Flight suit
  - 3. Flight helmet NVG mount
  - 4. Nomex flight gloves
  - 5. Flight vest
  - 6. Flight kneeboard

### IV. AIRBORNE USE OF FORCE

- A. The protocols of General Order 60 (Response to Resistance), to include the deadly force protocol which states, *Because of the inherent risks of such action, officers are strongly discouraged from discharging a firearm at or from a moving vehicle*, are applicable to a TFO's airborne use of force.
- B. A TFO is authorized to shoot at a vehicle with the intent to disable only when:
  - 1. The TFO believes the use of deadly force is objectively reasonable to defend their life or the life of another person from an imminent threat of serious injury or death, and
  - 2. It can be reasonably assured all vehicle occupants are suspects who are, have been, or about to be involved in a violent felony.

### V. MUTUAL AID CONSIDERATIONS

- A. TFOs shall abide by and are subject to Department written directives in carrying out their TFO assignment.
- B. If a Department written directive or other lawful order, written or oral, is contradicted, contravened or otherwise in conflict with a direct order of a supervising member of the AVTF, the TFO shall inform the supervisor

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of the conflict. In such situations, Department written directives and other lawful orders supersede the direct order.

- C. The LCSO Aviation Standard Operating Procedure is the governing document for the AVTF for aviation operations aboard an LCSO helicopter.
- D. Any complaint received against a TFO shall be investigated by the Department in compliance with established procedures, and such action does not preclude the LCSO from investigating complaints on the AVTF.