

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMPLIANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

ACTION ITEM - CONSENT

For Meeting of September 17, 2025

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COMPLIANCE WITH STATE ASSEMBLY BILL 481

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California Assembly Bill 481 (AB 481), authored by Assemblymember David Chiu (D-San Francisco), was signed into law September 30, 2021, and addresses funding, acquisition, and use of military equipment by law enforcement agencies.¹ The bill creates more transparency, oversight, and accountability in the use and acquisition of certain police equipment. The full text of AB 481 is available [here](#).

AB 481 requires law enforcement agencies, including the police departments of the University of California (UC), to submit to the governing body an annual military equipment report for each type of military equipment approved by the governing body within one year of approval, and annually thereafter for as long as the equipment is available for use.

The University supports and complies with this law, which complements milestones in the UC Community Safety Plan's commitment to community engagement and oversight, transparency, and accountability. Compliance requires the UC Board of Regents to review and approve the annual report on equipment. The equipment that falls within the scope of AB 481's definition of military equipment provides UC police departments with less lethal alternatives to standard-issue firearms for use in extraordinary public circumstances. No UC campus uses or receives goods from the U.S. Department of Defense and Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) program for surplus military equipment. This report complies with the annual reporting requirements of AB 481.

RECOMMENDATION

The President of the University recommends that the Compliance and Audit Committee recommend to the Regents approval of the UC military equipment use policy in Attachment 1 and the annual report on military equipment inventory in Attachment 2, including requested equipment, to comply with California Assembly Bill 481.

¹ AB 481 added Chapter 12.8 to Government Code Section 7070 Division 7 of Title 1.

BACKGROUND

The UC Police Department (collectively, all ten UC campus police departments in this item are referred to as the “UCPD”) retains and employs various equipment that falls within AB 481’s definition of military equipment. The equipment is maintained and in place so UCPD can safely achieve its mission to safeguard and protect the communities on all the UC campuses, medical centers, and properties.

Mission and Values of the Department

UCPD prioritizes training, use of best practices, and is forward-thinking in the technology and tools it acquires and utilizes in its mission for the safety of its personnel and the safety of community members, patients, and visitors alike.

The equipment that falls within the scope of AB 481’s definition of military equipment provides UCPD with less lethal alternatives to standard-issue firearms for use in extraordinary circumstances. While AB 481 uses the term “military equipment,” the definition in statute encompasses equipment that is not exclusively used by the military. Additionally, no UCPD uses or receives goods from the U.S. Department of Defense and Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) program for surplus military equipment, commonly referred to as the Federal 1033 program.

The UC Police Department recognizes:

- Critical incidents are unpredictable, often fluid, and dynamic in nature.
- The mere possession of any equipment does not warrant its use for every incident.
- Use of all equipment, not just military equipment, is predicated on the mission of the department, policy, training, law, the safety of UC officers, and the safety of UC communities.

Each campus reviewed its military equipment to ensure that its continued retention follows UCPD’s commitment to maintaining public safety and security for all on each of the University of California campuses.

Review of Inventory

The inventory of military equipment at the ten UC campuses is included in full in Attachment 1. As noted in the initial report, inventory that meets the requirements of the statute includes:

1. A bomb robot, used by the UC Berkeley Bomb Squad to aid in the removal of suspected explosive devices, ensuring the safety of the campus community members, visitors, and police officers tasked with handling these types of incidents.
2. Breaching rounds, used to gain access to locked doors in emergencies.

3. Distraction devices, used to distract dangerous suspects using light and sound so officers can safely effect an arrest and bring to conclusion high-risk situations where lives are at risk.
4. Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD), a portable speaker used to provide increased sound and clarity over public address systems, bullhorns, or megaphones so officers can effectively communicate with crowds and provide emergency directions to people in large areas so they can take immediate actions such as sheltering in place or evacuating.
5. The remainder of the military equipment is less-lethal tools, including kinetic energy and impact launchers and munitions, as well as chemical agents, such as pepper spray or tear gas by itself in a spray or included in impact munitions.

All these tools are meant to provide officers with the ability to de-escalate or overcome self-destructive, dangerous or combative individuals without having to resort to deadly force. These tools are not used indiscriminately but with caution to protect the lives of UC community members/visitors and UC officers when bringing an incident to a conclusion with the least amount of force.

The above equipment requires initial training through a manufacturer's certified instructor, or California Police Officer Standards and Training (POST), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Tactical Officers Association, California Tactical Officers Association, or through POST-certified instructors. The training extensively covers how to use (mechanics) and when to use (appropriate deployment) of the equipment. Some of this equipment, primarily summarized in #5 above, requires annual re-certifications.

Importantly, the University's policy dictates that only those officers trained in the use of any piece of equipment may use that equipment. Additionally, beyond these requirements, UCPD follows University-specific guidance from the [Robinson-Edley Report \(UC Response to Protests on UC Campuses\)](#), the [Report of the Presidential Task Force on Universitywide Policing](#), and the [UC Community Safety Plan](#).

Additional Public Consultation and Ongoing Accountability

A provision of AB 481 requires an annual report to the governing body. Following initial adoption of the policy by the UC Board of Regents, each UC Campus Police Department will submit an annual report on how the equipment was used, complaints about equipment, results of any internal audits or violations of the equipment use policy, information on the equipment's cost, updated information on equipment quantities, and information on requests to acquire additional equipment.²

AB 481 further requires local community engagement. Specifically, within 30 days of the submission of an annual report to the Regents, each UC Campus Police Department must hold

² Government Code Section 7072(a)(1)-(6)

“at least one well-publicized and conveniently located community engagement meeting, at which the general public may discuss and ask questions regarding the annual military equipment report and the law enforcement agency’s funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment.”³

Finally, the UC Board of Regents must review the military equipment use policy “at least annually.”⁴ It must do so by “vot[ing] to renew the ordinance” in an open meeting.

EQUIPMENT USED

All campuses train annually on their equipment, which requires the use of ammunition where applicable. The following campuses deployed equipment in a non-training setting:

- UC Davis (UCD) deployed drones 11 times for patrol and special events.
- UC Los Angeles (UCLA) deployed the following:
 - Approximately 240 PepperBall Pava Powder projectiles were used during an incident involving an aggressive crowd. None of these rounds were aimed at individuals and there were no reports of these rounds directly affecting any person.
 - The Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) equipment for crowd management was used approximately 71 times during incidents.
 - One Def-Tec 40mm eXact Impact Munition Model #6325 was used during an arrest when a suspect put their hand near a police officer’s firearm.
- UC Santa Cruz (UCSC) used the LRAD equipment for crowd management.

REQUESTS FOR NEW EQUIPMENT

UCB, UCD, UCM, UCR, and UCSC do not request new equipment. UCI, UCLA, UCSB, UCSD, and UCSF are requesting the following inventory:

Request For Category 1 - Unmanned, Remotely Piloted, Powered Aerial or Ground Vehicles—the Use of Drones by University of California Police Departments

- UCSD is requesting to purchase two (2) unmanned aerial vehicles/systems (drones) to assist with patrol operations and special event safety. UCB, UCLA, UCSC and UCSF previously requested to purchase drones and are working on a systemwide purchase contract for the best pricing. UCB continues to research robot platforms from the 2024 request.

³ Government Code Section 7072(b)

⁴ Government Code Section 7071(e)(1)

Request For Category 10 – Specialized firearms and ammunition of less than .50 caliber, including assault weapons or greater, excluding standard-issue shotguns and standard-issue shotgun ammunition

- UCSD is requesting to purchase 5,000 rounds of 5.56 patrol rifle ammunition at a cost of approximately \$3,300 to replenish rounds used during training.

Requests For Category 13 – Taser Shockwave, Microwave Weapons, Water Cannons, and Long Range Acoustic Devices

- UCI is requesting to purchase an additional Long Range Acoustic Device to provide evacuation and dispersal directions at more than one location (UCI Campus and UCI Medical Centers).

Requests For Category 14 – Kinetic Energy Weapons and Munitions

- UCI is requesting to replenish (35) Def-Tec 40mm eXact iMPact Munition for Special Response Team (SRT) members.
- UCI is also requesting to purchase five (5) PepperBall VK-SB, 1,000 rounds of PepperBall PAVA Projectiles, and 500 PepperBall Paint Marking Projectiles.

REQUIREMENTS TO MEET STATUTE

The statute outlines several specific requirements and a timeline of engagement, public postings, and actions to be fully compliant. AB 481 defines military equipment by listing 16 categories and a wide range of material, and further requires the governing bodies and law enforcement agencies to debate and decide in a public forum what is approved and the policies that will govern the use of that equipment.

To comply with policy, the Regents must review the military equipment use policy at least annually, by voting to “renew the ordinance” in an open meeting and determine the following:⁵

- The military equipment is necessary because there is no reasonable alternative that can achieve the same objective of officer and civilian safety.
- The proposed military equipment use policy will safeguard the public’s welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties.
- If purchasing the equipment, the equipment is reasonably cost-effective compared to available alternatives that can achieve the same objective of officer and civilian safety.
- Prior military equipment use complied with the military equipment use policy that was in effect at the time, or if prior uses did not comply with the accompanying military

⁵ Government Code Section 7070(d)(1)(A)-(D)

equipment use policy, corrective action has been taken to remedy nonconforming uses and ensure future compliance.⁶

Timeline

Compliance with AB 481 requires meeting milestones on a specific timeline. The University's progress and planning to date is summarized as follows:

1. UCPD will submit an annual report to the Regents; that report must include information on how the military equipment was used, complaints about military equipment, information on the equipment's cost, and information on equipment quantities.
Due: September 2025
2. The UC Board of Regents must review the military equipment use policy at least annually, by voting to "renew the ordinance" in an open meeting.
Due: September 2025
3. Within 30 days of the annual report, each UC Police Department must hold "at least one well-publicized and conveniently located community engagement meeting, at which the general public may discuss and ask questions regarding the annual military equipment report and the law enforcement agency's funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment."
Due: October 2025

Key to Acronyms

AB	Assembly Bill
POST	California Police Officer Standards and Training

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: [University of California Police Department Military Equipment Policy](#)

Attachment 2: [Annual Report on Assembly Bill 481 by the UC Council of Chiefs of Police, including an Equipment List](#)

⁶ Government Code Section 7071(d)(1)