

## Equipment – Duty Knives

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### **Policy Statement**

Knives are cutting tools that can aid deputies in the performance of their duties. Deputies may also find themselves in extraordinary, life-threatening situations in which the use of a knife as a defensive weapon may be necessary. However, knives are not intended by this agency to be a primary weapon of defense.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to require any Sheriff's Office employee to carry a knife.

### **Persons Affected**

All law enforcement and corrections deputies.

### **Knives Authorized**

Deputies on duty may carry any type of knife that is allowed by law (see [RCW 9.41.250](#), with exceptions for law enforcement listed in [RCW 9.41.251](#)), except inside Whatcom County Sheriff's Office correctional facilities unless specifically authorized by other policy, or unless otherwise prohibited. This policy does not cover or apply to *rescue hooks* that corrections personnel may be otherwise authorized to carry for the purpose of inmate suicide attempt intervention.

### **Manner of Carry**

Deputies shall carry folding knives in an unobtrusive manner.

Deputies who choose to carry a fixed-blade knife on duty shall do so in a protective scabbard and so that the knife and scabbard are concealed as much as practicable from public view, except when assigned to duties that increase the likelihood that immediate access to such a knife for safety reasons will be required or the placement of other necessary equipment on the deputy's person make concealed carrying impractical (e.g., marine patrol, search and rescue, special response team operations).

### **Use**

Every deputy is expected to use reasonable care when using a knife in any manner.

### **Use as a Defensive Weapon**

Deputies may use knives as defensive weapons only in extreme situations. Such uses will be viewed as extraordinary defensive measures. Any use of a knife under such circumstances must comply with the law and the Sheriff's Office's [Force Response](#) policy.