



## REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT Policy and Procedure Manual



Policy 8.4

Use of Bite Sticks

### I. POLICY

It is the policy of the District to provide authorized employees with defensive devices so that those employees, in the normal course of carrying out their duties, may successfully utilize non-lethal force to defend themselves against dog attacks, aggressive animals or in cases when retreat is not possible and all other options have failed, for self-protection against an aggressive subject.

This Policy cannot cover every possible situation that may be presented to District personnel; thus, it is imperative that personnel use good judgment in their actions.

### II. PURPOSE

To provide training, certification, and guidelines on the use, maintenance, and storage of extendable batons (Bite Sticks).

### III. DEFINITIONS

**AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEES** – Rangers, Senior Rangers, Park Ranger Supervisors, and other designated staff of the District who may carry issued self-defense devices subject to defensive training and certification.

**BITE STICK** – A metal extendable/collapsible baton or similar device carried solely as a tool for the purpose of non-lethal self-defense against aggressive or attacking animals. When necessary, use of a bite stick for personal protection from attacks by persons is authorized as a last resort in accordance with agency training, policies and procedures. The length and type of authorized Bite Stick shall be determined by the Director and will be purchased by the District.

**PROHIBITED USE OF BITE STICK DEVICES** – Examples of prohibited use include, but are not limited to the following: inappropriate display, exhibition in a careless or reckless manner, exhibition or use in a threatening manner without due cause, damage to or destruction of private property when threat to life or limb is not imminent, repeated incidents of sustained injuries to animals, “horseplay,” repeated complaints from citizens



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regarding improper use or display of devices, use of device in an excessive manner.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

##### A. TRAINING

Each authorized employee must successfully complete the District approved training and certification process in the proper use of agency issued self-defense equipment (also referred to as devices) prior to being issued a Bite Stick. The training will be provided by a certified instructor or agency approved by the District. Training will be paid for by the District. Retraining will be required at the discretion of the Director. All deployments must be consistent with District sponsored training on use of force, use of devices, and policies.

Employees in authorized classifications will not be required to obtain certification as a condition of employment. Authorized employees who choose to forgo the required training and certification will not be permitted to carry or use Bite Sticks.

##### B. USE OF FORCE OPTIONS

Employees have several force options that will be dictated by the situation and the actions of the aggressive animal(s) or attacking person(s). Non-violent alternatives, including withdrawal from the aggressor, shall always be considered before use of force, pursuant to District policies 8.6 Enforcement of Rules and Regulations and 8.7 Handling Disruptive Behavior.

Employees may be limited in their options due to circumstances and are to act in accordance with the training, policies, and procedures provided by the District and applicable Board of Supervisors policies.

##### C. AUTHORIZED USE

1. While on duty, trained authorized employees have the option of wearing Bite Sticks as a part of approved uniform. All such personnel must maintain the Bite Stick in the appropriate holster or properly concealed in



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a secure location at their workstation or vehicle at all times.

2. While on duty, trained authorized personnel may deploy the Bite Stick if and only if they are under physical attack. The mere presence of a threat (for example, verbal intimidation only, or passive or active resistance only) by itself does not justify the deployment of these devices. Active physical aggression shall be required to deploy or use these devices. Non-violent alternatives, including withdrawal from the aggressor, shall be considered before use.
3. At no time shall any authorized employee carry a Bite Stick or other prohibited item into any building, facility or location where the carrying of weapons is prohibited. The Bite Stick must be removed and remain secured at a workstation or inside a work vehicle. It is each employee's responsibility to know which building, facility, or location prohibits the carrying of weapons.
4. Employees are expected to refrain from all unwarranted and prohibited uses of Bite Sticks at all times. Nothing in these procedures authorizes or allows any employee to violate Board of Supervisors policy C-27 Workplace Violence, Threats and Securities.
5. Bite Sticks are not to be given to any unauthorized person.

### D. PROPER USE

1. Bite Sticks are to be used for defensive purposes only and in accordance with received training and guidelines.
2. Employees must always act in accordance with training, policies, and procedures when using this device. Any deviation from approved practices will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination, based on the circumstances and severity of the event.
3. In the event that the device is used on an aggressive individual, efforts should be made to treat any injuries to the subject when safe to do so, and law enforcement and/or emergency medical providers shall be contacted when appropriate.
4. When the device is displayed, threatened, or used, the employee must immediately notify his/her immediate supervisor and must provide the



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supervisor with a detailed, written incident report (Form No: 943) no later than 24 hours after the incident.

5. All use incidents as described in this section shall be subject to investigation, including an Personnel Investigation and an external law enforcement investigation to determine if such use was appropriate and within policy.

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