



PERFORMANCE AUDIT: LAPD'S COMPLIANCE WITH AB 481

**(MILITARY EQUIPMENT: FUNDING,
ACQUISITION, AND USE)**



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August 26, 2024

Honorable Karen Bass, Mayor
Honorable Hydee Feldstein Soto, City Attorney
Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council

Re: Audit of the Los Angeles Police Department's Compliance with California Assembly Bill (AB) 481

The use of military equipment by local law enforcement agencies is of keen public interest as it impacts how the communities the agency is intended to serve perceive the agency. The Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) use of military equipment has caused harm to City residents, leading to serious injury and to millions of dollars each year in liability claims. For example, the LAPD's use of military equipment, including less-lethal projectile launchers, against protestors has led to serious injuries and multimillion dollar jury awards and settlements, including:

- **\$3.75 million:** Awarded by a jury to a young man who was shot twice by military projectiles during a protest;
- **\$1.5 million:** City settlement with a man who suffered testicular trauma when LAPD shot him in the groin with a 40-millimeter launcher reportedly causing one of his testicles to explode and require immediate surgery; and
- **\$1.25 million:** City settlement with a Marine Corps service member who suffered a traumatic brain injury and brain bleeding when LAPD shot him in the head with a beanbag shotgun during a protest.

In the fall of 2021, California Assembly Bill (AB) 481 was signed into law with the intent and purpose of bringing public oversight and accountability to the funding, acquisition and use of military equipment. While AB 481 contains the legal minimums that a law enforcement agency must meet regarding military equipment, these minimums do not and should not foreclose the higher level of transparency and accountability the City of Los Angeles deserves. The law enshrines this principle by noting "these provisions do not preclude a county or local municipality from implementing additional requirements and standards related to the purchase, use and reporting of military equipment by local law enforcement agencies." See AB 481.

Broadly defined, "military equipment" includes everything from drones and high-caliber firearms to flashbang grenades and battering rams. AB 481 articulates requirements that law enforcement agencies within the state must adhere to when possessing and using military equipment. Specifically, the law details requirements for a law enforcement agency's military equipment **use policy** and **report**.

LAPD possesses and uses a robust collection of military equipment within the City. In response to calls from community members and organizations who requested more information about the LAPD's military equipment use policy and reporting, my Office launched a performance audit to evaluate the LAPD's compliance with AB 481, its process for developing AB 481 reports, and how its efforts compare to other agencies throughout California.

Our audit findings strongly suggest that the LAPD's current AB 481 use policy and report fails to fully comply with AB 481's specific requirements. Specifically, our audit shows significant areas of concern with the LAPD's current AB 481 policy, including lack of full compliance with AB 481's military equipment use policy and report requirements.

For the military equipment **use policy requirements**, our audit found that the LAPD did not fully meet five of eleven requirements and that it fully met the remaining requirements. For example, the LAPD's published military equipment use policy failed to provide manufacturer product descriptions, to sufficiently detail information about military equipment LAPD intended to procure, or to provide information about the estimated annual maintenance costs for some of its military equipment.

For the military equipment **report requirements**, our audit found that the LAPD fully failed to meet two of the eight requirements, partially met three requirements, and fully met the remaining three requirements. Of utmost concern and something that is critically important to public oversight and transparency is that the LAPD's report is difficult for the general public to locate and that the LAPD's outreach and education efforts regarding military equipment are limited. Unlike other California law enforcement agencies that are providing necessary and valuable transparency to their communities, the audit found that the LAPD's report does not disclose specific information about the use of military equipment (such as specific dates on when and why military equipment was used).

Additionally, because of the decentralized nature of LAPD's bureaus' and divisions' self-reporting of military equipment information, our audit found that the LAPD lacks sufficient controls and safeguards to ensure that information published by the LAPD in AB 481 reports is accurate.

The LAPD must achieve full compliance with the law and abide by the mandate of providing transparency and accountability regarding the funding for, acquisition, and use of military equipment. To ensure that the City of Los Angeles does not fall out of step with best practices, our audit makes several substantive recommendations that LAPD must adopt and implement immediately.

Chief among our audit's recommendations is the requirement that the LAPD should keep an accurate inventory of all its military equipment, that it provide detailed reports for each instance of military equipment use, and that it participates in meaningful community engagement by holding well-publicized and conveniently located meetings where the public can discuss and ask questions regarding the LAPD's military equipment report, the LAPD's funding for, acquisition of or use of military equipment.

Our audit makes recommendations for (1) ensuring full compliance with AB 481, (2) boosting transparency into the use of military equipment (3) reducing the risk of reporting inaccuracies related to the LAPD's military equipment and (4) improving the public's ability to engage with and impact the LAPD's military equipment policies, including but not limited to the following:

- Create a dedicated AB 481 webpage that includes a copy of the military equipment use policy, military equipment reports, and other relevant reports and community engagement information;
- Establish a formal procedure, specific to AB 481, which allows the public to communicate questions and general concerns about the use of military equipment, and describes expectations for providing a timely response to those inquiries;
- Hold one or more community engagement sessions, annually after the publication of the military equipment report, with the purpose of engaging the community and allowing the public to ask questions, provide comments, and receive answers from the LAPD;

- Develop additional guidance clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations when responding to questions and general inquiries from the public;
- Provide additional information about items in the military equipment inventory in annual military equipment reports, including product descriptions from the manufacturer and information about acquisition and maintenance costs;
- Provide detailed information on the number of use instances for each type of military equipment in annual military equipment reports;
- Provide additional guidance to LAPD bureaus and divisions clarifying standards for identifying and reporting military equipment quantities, and reporting military equipment cost information;
- Develop a procedure to conduct limited verifications of, or quality control reviews of, inventory and cost information reported by LAPD entities;
- Develop a formal definition for military equipment use for the complaint intake, review, and reporting process.

With this audit, members of the public and policy makers are empowered to demand the public oversight and transparency required by law and by our City's values.

While we are encouraged by the LAPD's assurances that it has and will further implement some of our recommendations in this audit, those assurances alone fail to satisfy the requirements of AB 481.

Therefore, due to the LAPD's current military equipment use policy and report not being in full compliance with AB 481, especially within the context of deadly military equipment used on Angelenos, and until significant implementations by the LAPD of the recommendations in our audit are made to reach full compliance, the City Council should reject the next iteration of LAPD's Military Equipment Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth Mejia".

KENNETH MEJIA
City Controller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California Assembly Bill (AB) 481 was signed into law September 30, 2021 with the intent to bring public oversight and accountability to law enforcement's use of what the law defines as military equipment, including items such as drones, high-caliber firearms, grenades, and battering rams. In short, the law focuses on the possession and use of military equipment by law enforcement agencies.

AB 481 requires law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to:

- (1) develop a military equipment use policy which includes a description of each type of military equipment in their possession;
- (2) submit this use policy to their governing body for approval, and obtain approval from the governing body within 180 days; and
- (3) submit within one year of the approval of the policy, and then annually thereafter, a military equipment report which details the LEA's military equipment inventory, usage, and costs for the prior year.

The law details specific requirements for both an LEA's military equipment use policy ("use policy") and the military equipment report ("report"). The report must include an inventory of all military equipment which includes a description, the total cost, and the purpose of each item. Additionally, the policy and report must be publicly available on the department's website for as long as military equipment is available for use. The law emphasizes the importance of community engagement by requiring LEAs to hold at least one well-publicized and conveniently located meeting within 30 days of releasing the report where the public can discuss and ask questions regarding the annual military equipment report and the law enforcement agency's funding for, acquisition of, or use of military equipment.

The Controller's performance audit evaluates the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) compliance with AB 481 and its process for developing AB 481 reports. This audit also identifies important opportunities for the LAPD to improve transparency and accountability, based on best practices identified during a review of the AB 481 reports and practices of seven peer municipal police departments from across California.

WHAT WE FOUND

We found that the LAPD is not in full compliance with AB 481's requirements. The LAPD has met most of the AB 481 requirements, but the department must act to ensure full compliance with the law, improve transparency and accountability, and provide for meaningful community engagement.

In April 2022, the LAPD published its military equipment use policy listing the types of military equipment possessed by the department, legal and procedural rules governing equipment use, and relevant training requirements for that equipment. The LAPD's policy failed to

provide manufacturer product descriptions, and did not sufficiently detail information about military equipment it intended to procure. Despite AB 481’s requirement to provide the total cost of each item, the LAPD’s policy failed to provide information about the estimated annual maintenance costs for some types of military equipment.

Of the eleven requirements we identified for the military equipment use policy, the LAPD **partially met five, and met six.**

Issue	AB 481 Requirement for Military Equipment Use Policy	Determination
#1	A description of each type of military equipment, the quantity sought, its capabilities, expected lifespan, and product descriptions from the manufacturer of the military equipment. <i>Section 7070(d)(1)</i>	Partially met
#2	The purposes and authorized uses for which the law enforcement agency or the state agency proposes to use each type of military equipment. <i>Section 7070(d)(2)</i>	Partially met
#3	The fiscal impact of each type of military equipment, including the initial costs of obtaining the equipment and estimated annual costs of maintaining the equipment. <i>Section 7070(d)(3)</i>	Partially met
#4	The procedures by which members of the public may register complaints or concerns or submit questions about the use of each specific type of military equipment, and how the LEA will ensure that each complaint, concern, or question receives a response in a timely manner. <i>Section 7070(d)(7)</i>	Partially met
#5	In order to facilitate public participation, any proposed or final military equipment use policy shall be made publicly available on the internet website of the relevant law enforcement agency for as long as the military equipment is available for use. <i>Section 7071(d)(2)</i>	Partially met
#6	The legal and procedural rules that govern each authorized use. <i>Section 7070(d)(4)</i>	Met
#7	The training, including any course required by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), that must be completed before any officer, agent, or employee of the law enforcement agency is allowed to use each specific type of military equipment to ensure the full protection of the public’s welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties and full adherence to the military equipment use policy. <i>Section 7070(d)(5)</i>	Met
#8	The mechanisms to ensure compliance with the military equipment use policy, including which independent persons or entities have oversight authority, and, if applicable, what legally enforceable sanctions are put in place for violations of the policy.	Met

Section 7070(d)(6)

#9 A law enforcement agency shall obtain approval of the governing body, by an ordinance adopting a military equipment use policy at a regular meeting of the governing body held pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act...or the Ralph M. Brown Act
Section 7071(a) **Met**

#10 No later than May 1, 2022, a law enforcement agency seeking to continue the use of any military equipment that was acquired prior to January 1, 2022, shall commence a governing body approval process in accordance with this section. If the governing body does not approve the continuing use of military equipment...within 180 days of submission of the proposed military equipment use policy to the governing body, the law enforcement agency shall cease its use of the military equipment until it receives the approval of the governing body in accordance with this section.
Section 7071(a)(2) **Met**

#11 A law enforcement agency shall submit a proposed military equipment use policy to the governing body and make those documents available on the law enforcement agency's internet website at least 30 days prior to any public hearing concerning the military equipment at issue.
Section 7071(b) **Met**

The department submitted its annual military equipment report in August 2023. The report provides an updated military equipment inventory, summarizes information about complaints and investigations related to military equipment, and includes information about the annual costs of maintaining the military equipment inventory. However, the LAPD failed to submit its report within one year of the military equipment policy's approval, and it is very difficult for a member of the public to locate the LAPD report, which hinders transparency. We also found that LAPD's outreach and education efforts are limited.

Of the eight requirements we identified for the military equipment report, the LAPD **did not meet two, partially met three, and met three.**

Issue	AB 481 Requirement for Military Equipment Report	Determination
#12	The law enforcement agency shall also make each annual military equipment report required by this section publicly available on its internet website for as long as the military equipment is available for use. <i>Section 7072(a)</i>	Did not meet
#13	A law enforcement agency that receives approval for a military equipment use policy pursuant to Section 7071 shall 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 military equipment is available for use. <i>Section 7072(a)</i>	Did not meet

#14	<p>Within 30 days of submitting and publicly releasing an annual military equipment report, the LEA 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.</p> <p><i>Section 7072(b)</i></p>	Partially met
#15	<p>A summary of how the military equipment was used and the purpose of its use. <i>Section 7072(a)(1)</i></p>	Partially met
#16	<p>The results of any internal audits, any information about violations of the military equipment use policy, and any actions taken in response.</p> <p><i>Section 7072(a)(3)</i></p>	Partially met
#17	<p>A summary of any complaints or concerns received concerning the military equipment. <i>Section 7072(a)(2)</i></p>	Met
#18	<p>The total annual cost for each type of military equipment, including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, upgrade, and other ongoing costs, and from what source funds will be provided for the military equipment in the calendar year following submission of the annual military equipment report.</p> <p><i>Section 7072(a)(4)</i></p>	Met
#19	<p>The quantity possessed for each type of military equipment. If the law enforcement agency intends to acquire additional military equipment in the next year, the quantity sought for each type of military equipment. <i>Section 7072(a)(5) and Section 7072(a)(6)</i></p>	Met

Due to the statewide reach of AB 481, our audit examined the AB 481 reporting practices of seven peer municipal LEAs within California to identify best practices related to transparency and community engagement, cost reporting, and military equipment capabilities and use reporting. Many peer LEAs have implemented reporting practices and other measures that went beyond those of the LAPD.¹

To promote transparency and community engagement:

- six departments created **dedicated webpages** for sharing AB 481 information;
- five departments **provided contact information for submitting complaints or questions** about military equipment use; and
- three departments **held community engagement meetings** to discuss military equipment.

When reporting on military equipment cost information:

¹ Benchmark police departments included San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, Fresno, Sacramento, Long Beach, and Oakland

- five departments included **two or more cost categories** for existing military equipment; and
- six police departments included **cost information for projected acquisitions**.

When reporting on military equipment capabilities and use:

- six departments reported the **number of times military equipment was used** in the prior year; and
- six departments included **product descriptions from the manufacturer** in their policy or reports.

Our audit also found there are insufficient controls and safeguards in place to ensure that information published by the LAPD in AB 481 reports is accurate. Compiling and updating the LAPD's military equipment inventory poses workload and reporting challenges for the department's Audit Division, the unit responsible for producing AB 481 reports. The division is heavily reliant on the LAPD's many bureaus and divisions self-reporting AB 481 information based on data from multiple inventory systems and tracking tools. This decentralized approach creates risks related to the accuracy and consistency of reported information in the annual equipment report. We found that there were some critical differences in how bureaus and divisions developed inventory quantity figures and equipment cost estimates.

To assess the overall reliability of information being reported by LAPD bureaus and divisions, we randomly selected ten types of military equipment and conducted physical inventory counts against the quantities reflected in the relevant inventory tracking system. The inventory records were generally sufficient for AB 481 reporting purposes, but we identified discrepancies that highlight AB 481 data quality risks. During our physical inventory counts, we found that inventory records only matched physical quantities for five items (i.e., the physical quantity observed by audit staff matched the corresponding LAPD inventory record), and did not match for three items. We were unable to conduct an inventory count of one item, and one item did not have any corresponding inventory record.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

The LAPD should take steps to ensure it fully complies with AB 481 requirements and provide policymakers and members of the public with necessary information about LAPD military equipment and its impact on the community.

To ensure compliance and further transparency, the LAPD should:

- create a dedicated AB 481 webpage that includes a copy of the military equipment use policy, military equipment reports, and other relevant reports and community engagement information;
- establish a formal procedure, specific to AB 481, which allows the public to communicate questions and general concerns about the use of military equipment, and describes expectations for providing a timely response to those inquiries;

- hold one or more community engagement sessions, annually after the publication of the military equipment report, with the purpose of engaging with the community and allowing the public to ask questions, provide comments, and receive answers from the LAPD;
- provide additional information about items in the military equipment inventory in annual military equipment reports, including product descriptions from the manufacturer and information about acquisition and maintenance costs; and
- provide detailed information on the number of use instances for each type of military equipment in annual military equipment reports.

To reduce the risk of reporting inaccuracies, the LAPD should:

- provide additional guidance to LAPD bureaus and divisions clarifying standards for identifying and reporting military equipment quantities, and reporting military equipment cost information;
- develop a procedure to conduct limited verifications of, or quality control reviews of, inventory and cost information reported by LAPD entities; and
- develop a formal definition for military equipment use for the complaint intake, review, and reporting process.

AB 481 was created with the clear purpose of increasing transparency into the funding for, acquisition of, and use of military equipment by LEAs. By implementing the recommendations made in this report, the LAPD can ensure that information in future AB 481 reports is reliable and engages the public so that community members can gain a better understanding of how military equipment is used in their communities. With that information, the public, the Mayor, and the City Council can better manage the practices of the LAPD.

BACKGROUND

On September 30, 2021, the Governor signed [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 481](#) into law.² The law was one of several bills approved in 2021 aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in policing. The bill was developed in response to the use of military equipment by law enforcement agencies (LEAs) during protests in the summer of 2020. The bill's author emphasized that "the public has a right to know when and why police believe they need to use military-caliber equipment, especially when public dollars are at stake."

AB 481 requires LEAs to create a military equipment use policy. The law requires that this policy then be approved and renewed annually by the LEA's applicable governing body. After the policy is approved, the LEA must submit a military equipment report within one year, and then annually thereafter, with information about the inventory and use of military equipment.

The purpose of this audit was to evaluate how the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) implemented AB 481 and identify areas for further transparency and accountability. Specifically, we sought to answer the following questions:

- Does the LAPD's military equipment use policy and annual report fully meet the requirements and promise of AB 481?
- What systems does the LAPD have in place to accurately inventory equipment?
- What is the process for the public to communicate concerns, questions, or complaints related to military equipment?
- How can the LAPD provide further transparency into the use of military equipment?
- How have other California LEAs implemented AB 481?

This audit seeks to ensure that the LAPD is complying with AB 481 requirements and providing policymakers with the information necessary to make decisions about military equipment acquisitions and use.

OVERVIEW OF AB 481

The intent of AB 481 is to address the adverse impacts that the deployment of military equipment can have on the public by providing more transparency and oversight into the funding, acquisition, and use of such equipment. Section 1 of the bill states that:

(a) The acquisition of military equipment and its deployment in our communities adversely impacts the public's safety and welfare, including increased risk of civilian

² AB 481 adds [Chapter 12.8](#) to Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

deaths, significant risks to civil rights, civil liberties, and physical and psychological well-being, and incurment of significant financial costs. Military equipment is more frequently deployed in low-income Black and Brown communities, meaning the risks and impacts of police militarization are experienced most acutely in marginalized communities.

- (b) The public has a right to know about any funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment by state or local government officials, as well as a right to participate in any government agency's decision to fund, acquire, or use such equipment.*
- (c) Decisions regarding whether and how military equipment is funded, acquired, or used should give strong consideration to the public's welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties, and should be based on meaningful public input.*
- (d) Legally enforceable safeguards, including transparency, oversight, and accountability measures, must be in place to protect the public's welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties before military equipment is funded, acquired, or used.*
- (e) The lack of a public forum to discuss the acquisition of military equipment jeopardizes the relationship police have with the community, which can be undermined when law enforcement is seen as an occupying force rather than a public safety service.*

The bill requires agencies to establish an inventory of military equipment which includes certain types of firearms, ammunition, vehicles, less lethal weapons, and breaching equipment. The definition of such equipment is broad and does not necessarily refer to equipment that was transferred to LEAs by the military or any other branch of the federal government. Some of the items covered in the bill's definition of military equipment, such as unmanned aerial vehicles, rifles, and shotguns, may be purchased by members of the general public, but are also commonly used by LEAs.

Specifically, military equipment, as defined by the law, includes:

- Unmanned, remotely piloted, powered aerial or ground vehicles (i.e., drones and robots).
- Mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles or armored personnel carriers.
- High mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWV), commonly referred to as Humvees, two and one-half-ton trucks, five-ton trucks, or wheeled vehicles that have a breaching or entry apparatus attached.

- Tracked armored vehicles that provide ballistic protection to their occupants and utilize a tracked system instead of wheels for forward motion.³
- Command and control vehicles that are either built or modified to facilitate the operational control and direction of public safety units.
- Weaponized aircraft, vessels, or vehicles of any kind.
- Explosive battering rams, slugs, and breaching apparatuses. However, items designed to remove a lock, such as bolt cutters, or a handheld ram designed to be operated by one person, are specifically excluded.
- Firearms of .50 caliber or greater. However, standard issue shotguns are excluded.
- Ammunition of .50 caliber or greater. However, standard issue shotgun ammunition is excluded.
- Specialized firearms and ammunition of less than .50 caliber, including assault weapons as defined in Sections 30510 and 30515 of the Penal Code, with the exception of standard issue service weapons and ammunition of less than .50 caliber that are issued to officers, agents, or employees of a law enforcement agency or a state agency.
- Any firearm or firearm accessory that is designed to launch explosive projectiles.
- “Flashbang” grenades and explosive breaching tools, “tear gas,” and “pepper balls,” excluding standard, service-issued handheld pepper spray.
- Taser Shockwave, microwave weapons, water cannons, and the Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD).
- The following projectile launch platforms and their associated munitions: 40mm projectile launchers, “bean bag,” rubber bullet, and specialty impact munition (SIM) weapons.
- Any other equipment as determined by a governing body or a state agency to require additional oversight.

REQUIREMENTS OF AB 481

AB 481 required LEAs to develop a military equipment use policy by May 1, 2022, in order to continue using any existing military equipment. The use policy is defined as “a publicly released, written document governing the use of military equipment by a law enforcement agency.” The law required the policy to be approved by the relevant governing body before an agency could request or acquire any new military equipment. Once published, the

³ A tracked system is a vehicle propulsion system that uses a continuous track of plates made of steel, rubber, or other materials. Examples of equipment with tracked systems include military tanks, bulldozers, and unmanned robots.

governing body had 180 days to pass an ordinance adopting the policy. If the governing body did not pass an ordinance adopting the policy, the agency had to cease its use of military equipment.

The military equipment use policy must include:

- A description of each type of military equipment, the quantity sought, its capabilities, expected lifespan, and product descriptions from the manufacturer of the military equipment.
- The proposed and intended purposes and authorized uses for each type of military equipment.
- The fiscal impact of each type of military equipment, including the initial costs of obtaining the equipment and estimated annual costs of maintaining the equipment.
- The legal and procedural rules that govern each authorized use.
- The training that must be completed before any officer is allowed to use each specific type of military equipment.
- The mechanisms to ensure compliance with the military equipment use policy, including which independent persons or entities have oversight authority, and, if applicable, what legally enforceable sanctions are put in place for violations of the policy.
- The procedures by which members of the public may register complaints or concerns or submit questions about the use of each specific type of military equipment, and how the law enforcement agency will ensure that each complaint, concern, or question receives a response in a timely manner.

In addition to the requirements of the policy, LEAs must make the policy available on their website at least 30 days before a public hearing for the policy, and the governing body must consider the policy as an agenda item for an open session of a regular meeting that allows for public comment. After a policy is approved, the governing body must review and renew the policy via ordinance annually, and the LEA must make it publicly available on their website.

After the governing body has approved the military equipment use policy, the LEA must submit to its governing body a military equipment report within one year, and then annually thereafter, and post the report on its website. For the period covering the preceding calendar year, the report must include the following information for each type of equipment:

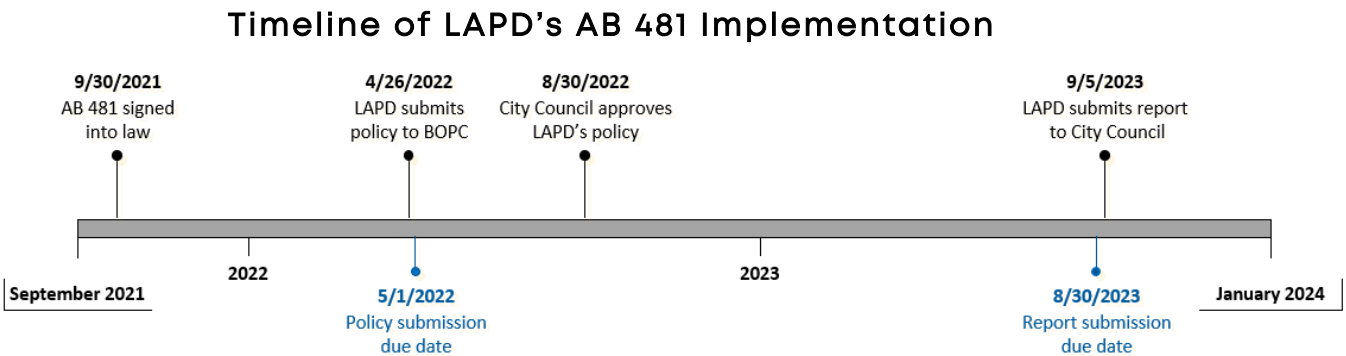
- A summary of how the military equipment was used and the purpose of its use.
- A summary of any complaints or concerns received concerning the military equipment.
- The results of any internal audits, any information about violations of the military equipment use policy, and any actions taken in response.

- The total annual cost for each type of military equipment, including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, upgrade, and other ongoing costs, and from what source funds will be provided for the military equipment in the calendar year following submission of the annual military equipment report.
- The quantity of each type of military equipment held by the LEA.
- If the LEA intends to acquire additional military equipment in the next year, the quantity sought for each type of military equipment.

Within 30 days of releasing the annual report, an LEA must hold at least one well-publicized community engagement meeting where the general public can discuss the report and ask any questions regarding its contents.

LAPD IMPLEMENTATION OF AB 481

The LAPD’s Audit Division, under the Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy, oversees the department’s implementation of AB 481, which includes the development of the military equipment inventory and relevant policies and reports. In August 2022, the Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) and the City Council approved the LAPD’s military equipment use policy, and the ordinance adopting the policy went into effect on October 10, 2022. The BOPC approved LAPD’s annual military equipment report in August 2023, and the City Council received and filed the report and renewed the policy in September 2023.⁴



This audit examined the extent to which the LAPD complied with the requirements of AB 481 through their policy and reports and identified areas for improvement based on best practices from other California jurisdictions. We believe the recommendations in this report will improve the quality of the LAPD’s AB 481 report information, increase transparency, and empower the community.

⁴ The City Council must approve the military equipment use policy annually, as AB 481 requires the policy to be adopted by ordinance and renewed annually.

I. LAPD COMPLIES WITH MOST AB 481 REQUIREMENTS, BUT SHOULD IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY

After the passage of AB 481 on September 30, 2021, the LAPD had seven months to develop and publish a military equipment use policy in accordance with the bill's May 1, 2022 deadline. The department's Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy, in consultation with the City Attorney's Office, oversaw policy development, while the Audit Division was responsible for military equipment reporting. The LAPD submitted its initial military equipment use policy to the City Council on June 23, 2022, and submitted its military equipment report to the City Council on September 5, 2023. Our audit found that the LAPD met or partially met the majority of the bill's requirements for both the military equipment use policy and report, but there were two requirements that the department did not meet.

In addition to evaluating the LAPD's compliance with AB 481, we conducted a benchmarking analysis comparing the department's AB 481 reporting and community engagement practices to seven other LEAs in the state. We identified areas where the LAPD could provide further transparency and accountability related to the use of military equipment.

For the purposes of this audit, we consider "[LAPD Manual Section 1/140.24. Use of Equipment Covered by California Assembly Bill 481](#)," and the LAPD's "[California Assembly Bill 481 Equipment Report 2022](#)," approved in August 2022, to constitute the department's **military equipment use policy**. The Los Angeles City Council adopted both documents during its approval process for the LAPD's military equipment use policy in August 2022.⁵ We consider the LAPD's "[California Assembly Bill 481 Annual Equipment Report](#)," published August 2023, to constitute the department's first annual **military equipment report**.

LAPD'S MILITARY EQUIPMENT USE POLICY

On August 30, 2022, the Los Angeles City Council approved the LAPD's military equipment use policy through the adoption of Ordinance No. 187603. We examined the LAPD's military equipment use policy to determine the extent to which the policy complied with AB 481's requirements. Our review found that the LAPD's use policy largely complies with the requirements outlined for military equipment use policies in AB 481, with some key exceptions. The policy provides a military equipment inventory, training requirements for equipment, legal and procedural rules that guide equipment use, and initial cost

⁵ AB 481 requires a military equipment use policy to contain an inventory of all military equipment, which was not included in Manual Section 1/140.25. This information was included in the LAPD's "California Assembly Bill 481 Equipment Report 2022."

information for equipment. The LAPD’s policy was also approved by the Los Angeles City Council within the required period of time. While the department generally complied with most aspects of the law, we determined that the LAPD’s military equipment use policy is insufficient in certain areas.

This report uses three determination categories for AB 481 compliance – **met**, **partially met**, or **did not meet**. A “met” determination means that the LAPD fully complied with the law’s requirement. “Partially met” means that the LAPD complied with the requirement in part, but either did not fully comply or did not appear to satisfy the intent of the requirement. “Did not meet” indicates that the LAPD failed to comply with the requirement.

Issue #1: Military equipment inventory

Requirement: A description of each type of military equipment, the quantity sought, its capabilities, expected lifespan, and product descriptions from the manufacturer of the military equipment. *Section 7070 (d)(1)*

Determination: **Partially met**

The LAPD’s military equipment use policy contains an inventory list with 219 types of military equipment broken into four categories: vehicles (58 items), firearms and ammunition (76 items), less-lethal and ammunition (62 items), and breaching equipment (23 items).

The inventory list provided a brief description, an estimated lifespan, and the capabilities for each type of equipment. However, AB 481 explicitly requires product descriptions from the manufacturer for each type of military equipment. The LAPD did not provide complete product descriptions from the manufacturer. Additionally, 42 out of 219 items on the inventory list did not include a numerical quantity in the “quantity requested” column of its inventory as required. Instead, the LAPD listed “replace as budget allows to maintain inventory.”

Item#	Description	Quantity Possessed	Capabilities/Item Details	Purpose/Use	Purchase Cost per Item	Estimated Lifespan	Quantity Requested	Est. Yearly Maintenance Cost
43	2006 Pierce HDR Walkin Shop No. 21474	1	Transports specialized equipment, tools, and communications equipment. 38 foot length SWAT truck.	SWAT and Crisis Negotiations Team Mobile Command Center	\$488,291.00	20 years	Replace as budget allows to maintain inventory	\$3,565.91

An excerpt from the LAPD’s Military Equipment Use Policy showing insufficient information about the quantity sought in the upcoming year

Issue #2: Purposes and authorized uses

Requirement: The purposes and authorized uses for which the law enforcement agency or the state agency proposes to use each type of military equipment. *Section 7070 (d)(2)*

Determination: **Partially met**

The LAPD’s policy provides the purpose and authorized use for seven general categories of equipment possessed by the department:

1. small unmanned aerial systems
2. robots
3. armored vehicles
4. mobile command post vehicles

5. firearms and ammunition
6. less-lethal weapons and ammunition
7. breaching equipment

AB 481 requires military equipment use policies to contain the purpose and authorized use for each type of military equipment; “type” is defined in the law as “each item that shares the same manufacturer model number.” The LAPD did not provide the purpose and authorized use for each type of equipment under this definition.

Issue #3: Fiscal impact of equipment

Requirement: The fiscal impact of each type of military equipment, including the initial costs of obtaining the equipment and estimated annual costs of maintaining the equipment.

Section 7070 (d)(3)

Determination: **Partially met**

The LAPD’s inventory list for military equipment contains a “Purchase Cost per Item” for each type of equipment with the exception of privately purchased firearms and two items acquired by the department in the 1980s.⁶ Most of the items listed by the LAPD do not have an estimated yearly maintenance cost listed. In the “Estimated Yearly Maintenance Cost” column of the inventory list, 20 items have “N/A” listed and 117 items have a reference to a section of the report that states that maintenance costs for each item were not available at the time of the report.

Item#	Description	Quantity Possessed	Capabilities/Item Details	Purpose/Use	Purchase Cost per Item	Estimated Lifespan	Quantity Requested	Est. Yearly Maintenance Cost
1	Bolt Action Rifle/22 IR	2	Low Velocity Extended Distance Disruption (LVEEDD) system	Explosive Devices Disruption	\$500-750	20+ years	None	N/A

An excerpt from the LAPD’s Military Equipment Use Policy showing estimated yearly maintenance cost reporting

Issue #4: Procedures for submitting complaints and questions

Requirement: The procedures by which members of the public may register complaints or concerns or submit questions about the use of each specific type of military equipment, and how the LEA will ensure that each complaint, concern, or question receives a response in a timely manner. *Section 7070 (d)(7)*

Determination: **Partially met**

The LAPD’s military equipment use policy contains a “Complaint Procedures” section which cites the department manual section on methods for submitting complaints generally, but not for military equipment specifically. The policy states that disciplinary action from complaints must be conducted within one year. Contact information, such as a phone number, an email address, or addresses for police stations, is not provided for submitting complaints or AB 481-specific questions. The policy does not address how the department

⁶ LAPD officers may use a privately purchased firearm as their on-duty firearm. The firearm must be inspected and approved by the department.

will ensure that the public will receive a timely response to a complaint or question about equipment.

Issue #5: Policy public availability

Requirement: In order to facilitate public participation, any proposed or final military equipment use policy shall be made publicly available on the internet website of the relevant law enforcement agency for as long as the military equipment is available for use. *Section 7071 (d)(2)*

Determination: **Partially met**

The LAPD's final military equipment use policy is publicly available on the LAPD website, but it is difficult for members of the public to find. To access the document, a user must search for "AB 481" in the website's search bar, click on the fifth search result for the "2022 Special Orders" [webpage](#), and search through the 18 documents on the webpage to identify LAPD's final military equipment use policy. Alternatively, a person would need to know to navigate to the "2022 Special Orders" page, which is listed under the "Administrative, Directives and Special Orders" subsection of the "Historical Documents and Internal Reports Reference Library" [webpage](#). The policy is missing page three of the equipment report section.

Issue #6: Legal and procedural rules

Requirement: The legal and procedural rules that govern each authorized use. *Section 7070 (d)(4)*

Determination: **Met**

The LAPD's military equipment use policy includes "Laws Governing Use" and "Rules Governing Use" summaries for categories of equipment and "Use of Force – Tactics Directives" for equipment in Addenda VII-X. However, some of the summaries contain very general statements and lack references to specific laws or LAPD policies, and the amount of detail with regard to laws and rules governing use varies. For example, the policy describes specific department manual and California Penal Code sections when summarizing laws and rules for firearms. In comparison, for the "Laws Governing Use" for robots, the policy simply provides the following: "Use of robots must be consistent with the laws regulating general police operations."

Issue #7: Training requirements

Requirement: The training, including any course required by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), that must be completed before any officer, agent, or employee of the law enforcement agency is allowed to use each specific type of military equipment to ensure the full protection of the public's welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties and full adherence to the military equipment use policy. *Section 7070 (d)(5)*

Determination: **Met**

The LAPD's policy provides training information for each category of military equipment and also includes course requirements and the necessary licenses for each type of equipment.

Issue #8: Mechanisms to ensure compliance

Requirement: The mechanisms to ensure compliance with the military equipment use policy, including which independent persons or entities have oversight authority, and, if applicable, what legally enforceable sanctions are put in place for violations of the policy. *Section 7070 (d)(6)*

Determination: **Met**

The policy includes a section on mechanisms to ensure compliance and names the BOPC, the Office of the Inspector General, and employees' chain of command as entities responsible for oversight. The use policy also outlines disciplinary actions for misuse of equipment.

Issue #9: Governing body approval

Requirement: A law enforcement agency shall obtain approval of the governing body, by an ordinance adopting a military equipment use policy at a regular meeting of the governing body held pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act...or the Ralph M. Brown Act. *Section 7071 (a)*

Determination: **Met**

The BOPC approved the LAPD's military equipment use policy on August 16, 2022. The Los Angeles City Council approved Ordinance No. 187603 adopting LAPD's military equipment use policy on August 30, 2022.

Issue #10: Timeline requirements for governing body approval

Requirement: No later than May 1, 2022, a law enforcement agency seeking to continue the use of any military equipment that was acquired prior to January 1, 2022, shall commence a governing body approval process in accordance with this section. If the governing body does not approve the continuing use of military equipment...within 180 days of submission of the proposed military equipment use policy to the governing body, the law enforcement agency shall cease its use of the military equipment until it receives the approval of the governing body in accordance with this section. *Section 7071 (a)(2)*

Determination: **Met**

The LAPD commenced the governing body approval process with the submission of its military equipment use policy to the BOPC on April 26, 2022. The policy was approved by the BOPC on August 16, 2022, and by the Los Angeles City Council on August 30, 2022. Both approvals occurred inside of the 180-day period following the initial submission of the policy.

Issue #11: 30-day requirement for submission and publishing

Requirement: A law enforcement agency shall submit a proposed military equipment use policy to the governing body and make those documents available on the law enforcement agency's internet website at least 30 days prior to any public hearing concerning the military equipment at issue. *Section 7071 (b)*

Determination: **Met**

The LAPD submitted its draft military equipment use policy to the BOPC on April 26, 2022. The LAPD published the draft military equipment use policy on the LAPD website in late April 2022. The first BOPC public hearing to consider the military equipment use policy was on June 21, 2022.

LAPD'S ANNUAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT REPORT

Once a law enforcement agency receives approval for its military equipment use policy, AB 481 requires the agency to submit military equipment reports to its governing body on an annual basis. The annual military equipment reports share information on how military equipment was used by the agency in the prior year, the costs associated with the equipment, and summaries of complaints received concerning military equipment use. On September 5, 2023, the LAPD submitted its annual military equipment report to the Los Angeles City Council. The section below evaluates the LAPD's military equipment report against Section 7072 of California's Government Code and includes our determination of whether the LAPD's report met, partially met, or did not meet each of AB 481's eight requirements for military equipment reports.

Our review of the LAPD's annual military equipment report found that the LAPD complied with most, but not all, of AB 481's requirements for military equipment reports. The report contains an updated military equipment list with quantities, summaries of complaints received about military equipment, summaries of violations of the LAPD's military equipment use policy, and some equipment cost information. We identified certain key elements of the LAPD's report that need improvements to attain full compliance with the law.

Issue #12: Report accessibility on the website

Requirement: The law enforcement agency shall also make each annual military equipment report required by this section publicly available on its internet website for as long as the military equipment is available for use. *Section 7072 (a)*

Determination: **Did not meet**

The annual military equipment report is not discoverable via the LAPD website's search bar. To locate the report, members of the public must know to manually search through the BOPC agenda archives. At the time of the audit, the report was publicly available on the BOPC agenda dated August 29, 2023, under Regular Agenda Items (B).

Issue #13: Report submission timeline

Requirement: A law enforcement agency that receives approval for a military equipment use policy pursuant to Section 7071 shall 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 military equipment is available for use. *Section 7072(a)*

Determination: **Did not meet**

The LAPD's military equipment use policy was approved by the Los Angeles City Council on August 30, 2022. AB 481 requires a law enforcement agency to submit an annual military equipment report to their governing body within one year of approval. The LAPD submitted its annual military equipment report to the Los Angeles City Council on September 5, 2023, six days past the one-year deadline.⁷

Issue #14: Community engagement meeting

Requirement: Within 30 days of submitting and publicly releasing an annual military equipment report, the LEA 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. *Section 7072 (b)*

Determination: **Partially met**

The LAPD's annual military equipment report was made public on August 28, 2023 on the BOPC agenda for August 29, 2023. Public comment periods were held at the BOPC meeting on August 29th, the Public Safety Committee Meeting on September 12th, and the Los Angeles City Council meeting on September 19th. Though members of the public were able to speak during the public comment periods, none of these three meetings provided the general public with an opportunity to receive answers to questions or engage in meaningful discussions about the LAPD's military equipment with LAPD officials.

Issue #15: Summary of military equipment use

Requirement: A summary of how the military equipment was used and the purpose of its use. *Section 7072 (a)(1)*

Determination: **Partially met**

The LAPD's report provides high level, general summaries of how military equipment was used for seven broad categories of military equipment. However, the high level, general summaries often lack specific examples describing how the department deployed the equipment in the previous year. For example, the usage summary for mobile command post vehicles simply states: "the Mobile Command Post vehicles were used to stage personnel and resources away from the area of operation and served as command and control centers." While the law does not explicitly require the LAPD to do so, the report also does not include deployment data for either the seven general equipment categories, or for the individual equipment types.

Issue #16: Internal audits and policy violations

Requirement: The results of any internal audits, any information about violations of the military equipment use policy, and any actions taken in response. *Section 7072 (a)(3)*

⁷ LAPD's military equipment use policy was approved by the BOPC on August 16, 2022. LAPD's annual military equipment report was submitted to the BOPC on August 23, 2023, seven days past the one-year deadline.

Determination: **Partially met**

The report states that the LAPD did not conduct any internal audits in 2022. A “Summary of AB 481 Equipment Misuse” table is provided on page 22 of the report. The report identifies three instances of military equipment use that were “out of policy” and provides a brief description about actions taken in response. However, as the described below in Issue #17, the LAPD does not provide information about the actions taken following two sustained complaints related to military equipment reported by the Professional Standards Bureau. The report contains a footnote providing a link to an LAPD webpage containing monthly reports summarizing disciplinary penalties.

Issue #17: Summary of complaints or concerns

Requirement: A summary of any complaints or concerns received concerning the military equipment. *Section 7072 (a)(2)*

Determination: **Met**

The LAPD’s annual report includes a “Complaints and Misuse Summary” section that provides a table for the 14 complaints received by the Professional Standards Bureau related to military equipment in 2022. The table provides a summary of each complaint, the type of military equipment involved in the complaint, and the department’s adjudication. Two of the complaints were adjudicated as sustained.⁸ The table does not provide information about any subsequent disciplinary or corrective actions.

Issue #18: Annual costs

Requirement: The total annual cost for each type of military equipment, including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, upgrade, and other ongoing costs, and from what source funds will be provided for the military equipment in the calendar year following submission of the annual military equipment report. *Section 7072 (a)(4)*

Determination: **Met**

The military equipment inventory list in the report includes the “Actual 2022 Yearly Costs” for each type of equipment. The report describes the cost figure as including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, and upgrade costs.

The report does not provide a breakdown of these costs or a methodology for how the costs were calculated.

Issue #19: Quantity possessed and sought

Requirement: The quantity possessed for each type of military equipment. If the law enforcement agency intends to acquire additional military equipment in the next year, the

⁸ One complaint concerned an off-duty officer’s accidental discharging of a rifle. One complaint concerned an on-duty officer’s negligent discharging of a shotgun.

quantity sought for each type of military equipment. *Section 7072 (a)(5) and Section 7072 (a)(6)*

Determination: Met

The military equipment inventory list in the report lists the “Quantity Possessed in 2022” and “Quantity Requested” for each type of equipment.

LAPD PEERS PROVIDE GREATER LEVELS OF TRANSPARENCY IN SEVERAL AREAS

Certain provisions of AB 481 are somewhat vague and open to interpretation. Since the bill impacted all California LEAs, we conducted a benchmarking analysis to see how other local jurisdictions interpreted aspects of the law, and to identify best practices related to transparency and community engagement, cost reporting, and military equipment capabilities and use reporting. This review examines the implementation of AB 481 in the municipal police departments of the seven most populous cities in California after Los Angeles.⁹

Law Enforcement Agency	City Population ¹⁰
San Diego Police Department	1,381,162
San Jose Police Department	971,233
San Francisco Police Department¹¹	808,437
Fresno Police Department	545,567
Sacramento Police Department	528,001
Long Beach Police Department	451,307
Oakland Police Department	430,553

We assessed seven AB 481 policy and reporting areas that we determined the LAPD was either not in compliance or only partially compliant with the law’s requirements, and compared the department’s practices to the practices of selected benchmark cities.¹² We determined whether each LEA:

⁹ This benchmarking analysis examines only municipal police departments and excludes the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and California Highway Patrol. The [Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department’s](#) policy was adopted by its governing board on April 9, 2024. The [California Highway Patrol’s](#) AB 481 webpage describes military equipment as equipment acquired from the U.S. Department of Defense. Its published military equipment report contains three items – two aircraft and one explosive ordnance disposal robot.

¹⁰ City population is based on July 2022 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

¹¹ San Francisco is a consolidated city-county government.

¹² For analysis related to the annual military equipment report, the San Francisco Police Department is not evaluated because they had not yet submitted an annual report as of April 8, 2024.

1. Created a dedicated webpage to share AB 481 information;
2. Provided contact information to submit complaints or questions about military equipment;
3. Held a public community engagement meeting specifically to discuss military equipment;
4. Included two or more cost categories for existing equipment in the military equipment report;
5. Included cost information for projected acquisition items in the military equipment report;
6. Included the number of times military equipment was used in the prior year in the military equipment report; and
7. Included product descriptions from the manufacturer in the military equipment use policy or military equipment report.

Overall, we found that in some areas, such as the development of a webpage and the inclusion of cost information for future military equipment acquisitions, a large majority of departments have implemented measures that went beyond those of the LAPD. With regard to holding dedicated community engagement meetings and detailing points of contact for AB 481 complaints and questions, several departments we assessed had implemented measures that exceeded the practices of the LAPD.

The chart below summarizes the results of our benchmarking review. Following the chart are descriptions of other departments' AB 481 programs.

Benchmark Police Departments' Implementation of Select AB 481 Requirements

	Los Angeles	San Diego	San Jose	San Francisco	Fresno	Sacramento	Long Beach	Oakland
Transparency and Community Engagement								
Created a dedicated AB 481 webpage	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Provided contact information for complaints	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Held a community engagement meeting	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Cost Reporting								
Provided two or more cost categories for existing equipment	✗	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✗	✓
Provided cost information for projected acquisitions	✗	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Military Equipment Capabilities and Use Reporting								
Shared the number of times equipment was used	✗	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Included product descriptions from the manufacturer	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

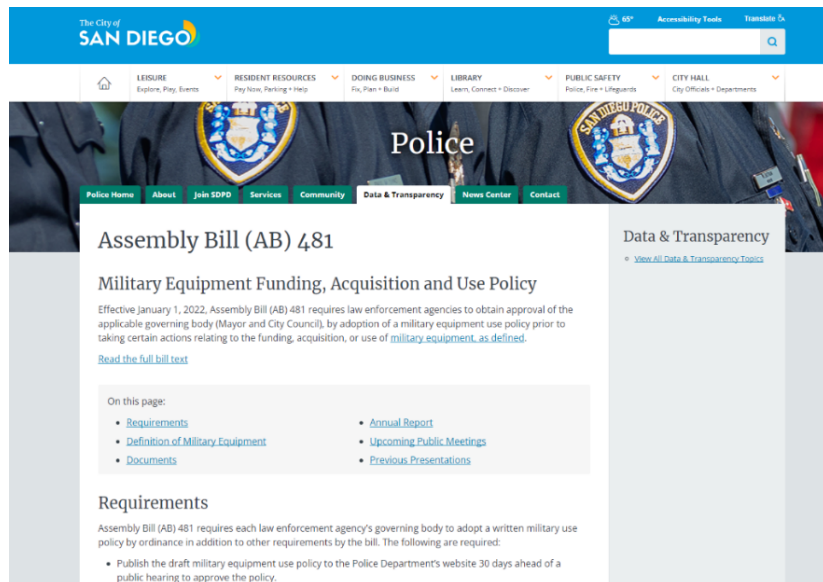
Six benchmark departments created dedicated webpages for sharing AB 481 information

AB 481 states that “the public has a right to know about any funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment by state or local government officials.” To ensure this right, the legislation requires LEAs to make both their military equipment use policy and annual military equipment report publicly available on their website. Most of the California LEAs in the benchmarking analysis met this requirement by creating dedicated webpages for sharing AB 481-related documents and information with the public.

The San Diego Police Department’s AB 481 [webpage](#) shares SDPD’s military equipment use policy and reports, a PowerPoint presentation containing pictures of equipment and specific examples of police incidents where military equipment was used to achieve positive outcomes, and general information on AB 481’s requirements. The Sacramento Police Department’s AB 481 [webpage](#) contains the department’s policy and reports, audio recordings from community forum discussions with the public about military equipment, and a link for emailing comments or complaints about equipment to the department’s Professional Standards Unit.

Of the seven peer LEAs in the benchmarking analysis, the Fresno Police Department was the only agency that did not have a dedicated webpage for AB 481 information. However, unlike the LAPD, it does have a specific section of its “Records and Reports” [webpage](#) for AB 481 information where it provides its policy, reports, inventory list, photos of existing equipment, and a general summary of the bill and its requirements.

The San Diego Police Department’s AB 481 Web Page



Source: City of San Diego

In contrast to its peers, the LAPD does not have a dedicated AB 481 webpage. The policy and report are difficult for members of the public to find.

As described in Issue #5 and Issue #12:

- To access the LAPD’s active military equipment use policy, members of the public must search for “AB 481” in the website’s search bar, select the fifth result, “2022 Special Orders,” and then select one of 18 documents. The LAPD has a draft version of their policy available on their “Reference Library” page.¹³
- To access the LAPD’s military equipment report, the public must know to go to the BOPC agenda for the August 29, 2023 meeting, as the report is only posted as a BOPC agenda item.

Five departments provided contact information for submitting complaints or questions about military equipment use

LEAs’ military equipment use policies must explain how members of the public can make complaints, register concerns, or submit questions about military equipment. We examined whether benchmark departments provided contact information in their policies, reports, or on their websites for AB 481-specific inquiries. For purposes of this analysis, “contact information” is an email address, physical address of a police station, or a phone number.

The LAPD did not provide direct contact information in its policy or report for submitting complaints or questions about military equipment. In the LAPD’s military equipment use policy, the “Complaint Procedures” section cites the department manual section that states that complaints can be accepted from a variety of sources, including via written, verbal, physical mail, fax, or telephone submission, but specific phone numbers, email addresses, or physical addresses of police stations are not provided. The LAPD’s report contains a footnote with a web address for information on how to file a complaint to the department.

Several police departments in the benchmarking analysis provided the public with contact information for submitting complaints or questions about equipment. The Long Beach Police Department created an email address (AB481@longbeach.gov) specifically for the public to submit questions or concerns about military equipment. The department shares the email address on its AB 481 [webpage](#) and in its military equipment use policy and report. The San Francisco Police Department provided a physical address, phone number, and email address for submitting complaints and concerns in its military equipment use policy. They also include a link on their AB 481 webpage for the public to submit questions about military equipment via email. The Sacramento Police Department provides an email address and phone number in the department’s use policy to submit questions and concerns regarding military equipment and includes the email link on their AB 481 [webpage](#) for the public to submit comments to the department’s Professional Standards Unit.

Three police departments have held community engagement meetings to discuss military equipment

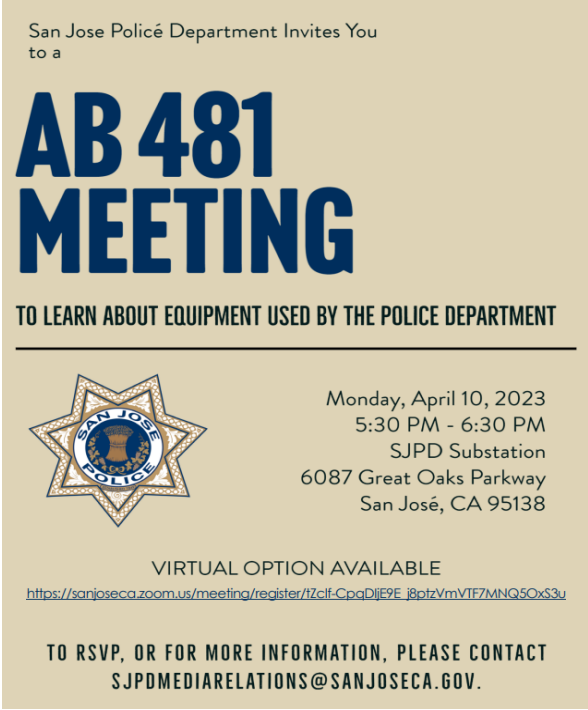
¹³ As of April 8, 2024, the LAPD’s Reference Library page included a draft of their military equipment use policy dated April 26, 2022.

AB 481 requires law enforcement agencies to “hold at least one well-publicized and conveniently located community engagement meeting, at which the general public may discuss and ask questions” about an agency’s use of military equipment and the agency’s annual military equipment report. For this analysis, we reviewed each benchmark police department’s website, report, and policy, and contacted each department to gather information about their community engagement meetings.

The LAPD has not held a community engagement meeting with the general public to specifically discuss the use of military equipment and instead relies on the BOPC and City Council meetings to meet the AB 481 requirement. The LAPD’s military equipment report states that the department met with the League of Women voters about the LAPD’s military equipment, but this meeting was not open to the public.

In contrast, the Sacramento Police Department held three community forums to discuss military equipment use with the public in July 2023. Audio recordings from two of the three conversations are available on the department’s AB 481 [webpage](#). The San Jose Police Department held a hybrid meeting in April 2023 within 30 days of releasing their report, which was advertised on the department’s social media accounts. The Oakland Police Department also held several virtual community engagement meetings between June 2022 and May 2023.


San Jose Police Department Advertisement for an AB 481 Community Meeting



San Jose Police Department Invites You
to a

AB 481 MEETING

TO LEARN ABOUT EQUIPMENT USED BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Monday, April 10, 2023
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
SJPD Substation
6087 Great Oaks Parkway
San José, CA 95138

VIRTUAL OPTION AVAILABLE
https://sanjoseca.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZclf-CpaDlIE9E_j8ptzVmVIE7MNQ5OxS3u

TO RSVP, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
SJPDmediarelations@sanjoseca.gov.

Source: City of San Jose

Five departments included two or more cost categories for existing military equipment

AB 481 requires law enforcement agencies to include information about military equipment costs, including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, upgrade, and other ongoing costs, in annual military equipment reports. To assess the level of detail related to departmental cost estimates, our benchmarking analysis examined whether police departments included two or more cost categories for existing military equipment.

Many of the peer LEA reports broke down costs for existing military equipment into specific categories, such as acquisition, training, and maintenance cost categories. The Sacramento Police Department provided three cost categories in its annual report: training costs, initial acquisition costs for existing equipment, and annual ongoing costs. The Fresno Police Department's report provided initial acquisition costs for existing equipment and an estimated cost range for annual costs for each type of equipment. The Oakland Police Department's report also included two cost categories: initial acquisition costs for each item and ongoing annual costs.

In contrast, the LAPD provided a single cost figure for existing military equipment in its military equipment report. The report includes the "Actual 2022 Yearly Costs" total for each type of equipment, which combines several cost categories, including acquisition, personnel, maintenance, and storage costs. Some items have "Actual 2022 Yearly Cost" totals well over \$100,000, while many other items have cost totals of \$0 for the year. The report does not explain how the cost figures were calculated.

Six police departments included cost information for projected acquisitions

The LAPD's military equipment report did not provide projected acquisition costs for all items that the department planned to purchase in the upcoming year. The department's report listed 10 items the LAPD anticipated acquiring in the upcoming year, but cost information was not included for nine of the 10 items.

Each of the six police departments in the benchmarking analysis that released annual reports provided cost information for items that they anticipated acquiring in the upcoming year. The Long Beach Police Department's report included a list of items with quantities for projected acquisitions in 2024 and each item's acquisition cost. The Fresno Police Department's report had a dedicated section on projected acquisition items which included acquisition cost information and quantities requested. The San Diego Police Department's annual report also included a section for projected acquisition items and shared the total projected cost by equipment type, funding source information, and a brief description of the item and its purpose.

Six departments reported the number of times military equipment was used in the prior year

AB 481 requires LEAs to include a summary of how military equipment was used in the preceding year in an agency's annual military equipment report. For the benchmarking

analysis, we examined military equipment reports to determine whether departments provided the number of times that equipment was used in the previous year and identify other types of deployment data that was shared.

The LAPD did not provide the number of equipment uses in the department's military equipment report. The report has seven general summaries of how military equipment was used by equipment category (i.e. armored vehicles), but does not provide deployment data. For example, one of the summaries describes how breaching equipment was used in 2022: "Breaching tools were used to gain entry into secured locations in accordance with the Department policy and regulations." According to the LAPD, it plans to include the number of uses for certain types of equipment during the upcoming reporting cycle.

Benchmark police departments share varying types of deployment data for equipment used in the prior year. The Oakland Police Department's annual report provides the number of times that each type of equipment was deployed, the geographical locations where equipment was deployed, and the total number of days each type of covered equipment was used. The San Diego Police Department's report includes both information on the number of times that military equipment was utilized and specific examples of how equipment was used by officers in specific incidents.

San Diego Police Department Description of Military Equipment Deployment and Use

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Usage

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) were utilized a total of twenty-seven (27) times in 2022. These usages include:

- Central Division requested Security overwatch during Women's March and Demonstrations due to tension from Roe v Wade announcements.
- Conducted venue perimeter aerial security sweeps for the Farmers Open Golf Tournament.
- Supported SDDP SWAT Team on a Code-12, Emergency Deployment. sUAS was deployed to monitor a suspect that fled into a residence after shooting a police officer. sUAS was able to obtain a real time aerial view of the target location for the SWAT Team.
- Conducted evidence collection, (aerial photography/video), for the District Attorney and the SDDP Special Operations Unit in support of an investigation on a multi gang shooting incident at a hotel venue.
- Supported the SDDP SWAT Team on a high-risk warrant service that originated with the Narcotics Unit. sUAS was deployed to conduct an interior visual assessment to ensure no other persons or threats were inside of the target location prior to the SWAT Team making entry.
- Supported the SDDP SWAT Team on a high-risk warrant service related to ghost gun manufacturing and narcotics. sUAS was deployed to conduct an interior visual assessment to ensure no other persons or threats were inside of the target location prior to the SWAT Team making entry.

Source: City of San Diego


The Sacramento Police Department's report provides deployment data by equipment type and the demographic breakdown of the suspects that military equipment was used against during the previous year. The Sacramento Police Department also shares what type of military equipment was used in use of force incidents and the number of times the equipment was used in each police district.

Six departments included product descriptions from the manufacturer in their policy or reports

Military equipment use policies are required to include “product descriptions from the manufacturer” for each item of equipment. The LAPD did not meet this requirement. The department included a “Capabilities/Item Details” column in the inventory list that shared a brief and general description of each item but did not include the manufacturer’s description. We examined the benchmark police departments’ policies and reports to determine if others included descriptions and to capture best practices for sharing this information with the public.

The Oakland Police Department provided product descriptions from the manufacturer in the department’s military equipment use policy that included product features, capabilities, and uses according to the manufacturer. The San Jose Police Department provided product descriptions from the manufacturer in its inventory list in the department’s policy, and it also included photographs of vehicles, firearms, less-lethal items, and breaching equipment. The San Diego Police Department’s policy and annual reports included the manufacturer’s description for equipment items, photographs of each item, and links to the manufacturer’s webpage from where the descriptions and photographs were obtained.

The San Jose Police Department’s Manufacturer Product Descriptions

	
Manufacturer	QinetiQ
Model	Talon (Ground)
Manufacturer’s Product Description	Since its introduction in 2000, QinetiQ’s TALON family of robots have earned a reputation for durability, flexibility, reliability and performance in keeping personnel, assets and civilians out of harm’s way. In military, law enforcement and first responder applications, TALONs are widely deployed for improvised explosive device (IED) and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), reconnaissance, communications, CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear), HAZMAT, security, heavy lift, defense and rescue missions. Our TALON CBRN/Hazmat modular kit is available for TALON IV and V models.
Quantity Owned	1
Capabilities	See Product description
Lifespan	No lifespan indicated by the manufacturer. Dependent on operational usage and wear.
Initial Cost	\$195,569
Ongoing Cost per Year	\$50-\$2,000

Source: City of San Jose

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure full compliance with AB 481, the LAPD should:

1. Include product descriptions from the manufacturer in the department’s annual military equipment reports.

2. Create a dedicated AB 481 webpage that includes the military equipment use policy, military equipment reports, and other relevant information.

To improve transparency into the use of military equipment and provide opportunities for the public to learn additional information about military equipment, the LAPD should:

3. Break out cost information for each item of existing military equipment, specifically showing acquisition and maintenance costs.
4. Provide detailed information on the number of use instances for each type of military equipment.
5. Provide acquisition costs for equipment the department anticipates acquiring during the upcoming year.
6. Hold one or more community engagement sessions, annually after the publication of the military equipment report, with the purpose of engaging the community and allowing the public to ask questions, provide comments, and receive answers from the LAPD on military equipment issues. The community engagement session should be open to the public and separate from regular BOPC or City Council meetings.
7. Establish a formal procedure, specific to AB 481, which allows the public to communicate questions and general concerns about the use of military equipment, and describes expectations for providing a timely response to those inquiries.

II. LAPD PROCESSES FOR COLLECTING AB 481 INFORMATION CREATE DATA QUALITY RISKS

AB 481 went into effect statewide on September 30, 2021, and required LEAs to produce a policy by May 1, 2022. Prior to the establishment of the law, neither the state nor the LAPD had a definition for “military equipment,” and the state’s AB 481 definition is not necessarily consistent with the types of military equipment that may be acquired from the military or the federal government.

The LAPD’s initial development of its military equipment use policy and the subsequent military equipment report was a considerable undertaking. While an LEA may have all of the necessary information for each piece of equipment covered by AB 481, it is unlikely that all of the information exists in one system or that it is categorized in a manner that matches the law. This is especially true for a large entity like the LAPD, with almost 9,000 sworn officers and military equipment spread across bureaus and divisions.

The LAPD relied on existing inventory and information management processes in order to create the use policy and compile a full military equipment inventory. Varying information compilation and inventory reporting processes across the department, as well as the need for additional guidance, policies, and procedures related to AB 481 reporting, creates risks related to the accuracy and consistency of reported information in the annual equipment report.

LAPD Relies on Unverified Information Provided by Bureaus and Divisions

The LAPD does not have a centralized inventory system that spans all equipment categories. Bureaus and divisions maintain their own systems to track items, such as ammunition and less-lethal equipment, that are not managed within department-wide inventory systems for firearms and vehicles. The LAPD's Audit Division was responsible for compiling the full inventory of the LAPD's military equipment contained in the use policy and the annual report. The LAPD's divisions and bureaus self-reported their military equipment information, including cost information, to the LAPD Audit Division through a newly created PDF form. Some divisions and bureaus, based on the various types of equipment under their control, relied on multiple inventory systems to complete the forms.

The Chief of Police first notified all commanding officers about AB 481 on December 14, 2021, stating that the department was in the process of developing a new form to capture the data required for reporting. This form, the Inventory, Procurement, and Use of Military Equipment, Form 15.62.00, was implemented through the Chief's Administrative Order No. 4, which was distributed on March 16, 2022. This order explains the purpose of the form and states that a failure to accurately report military equipment may result in the loss of authorized use of that equipment. It also states that no new equipment may be acquired until the use is approved by the department's governing body. The Audit Division had six weeks between March 16, 2022 and AB 481's May 1, 2022 deadline to receive completed forms, follow up with divisions and bureaus, compile the inventory of equipment, and publish the military equipment use policy.

The Audit Division received information from 12 different bureaus and divisions, most of which completed either a separate Form 15.62.00 for each type of equipment under their control or one form for all equipment types.¹⁴ The entities with the most equipment, the Metropolitan Division and the Motor Transport Division, submitted their information in a spreadsheet rather than Form 15.62.00.¹⁵ See Appendix A for a list of the bureaus and divisions that submitted one or more Form 15.62.00.

The Audit Division compiled all of the submitted information into an inventory of 219 distinct items, separated into four categories:

- vehicles (58 items);
- firearms and ammunition (76 items);
- less-lethal and ammunition (62 items); and
- breaching equipment (23 items).

¹⁴ This figure includes the LAPD Multi-Disciplinary Collision and Investigation Team.

¹⁵ The Metropolitan Division includes the LAPD's SWAT unit and other specialized units which, compared to other entities, used a larger number of items defined as military equipment by AB 481.

The Audit Division's information compilation and review process did not include data quality control measures that ensured that the inventory and figures reported by the bureaus and divisions were accurate and verifiable. This reliance on self-reporting across multiple, disparate systems increases the risk that information being reported by the department contains errors, particularly for equipment quantities and costs.

Military Equipment Inventory Accuracy Risks

The identification of certain types of military equipment, such as firearms and vehicles, was easier for some entities because model and quantity information is maintained in centralized inventory systems within the LAPD. Less-lethal items, ammunition, and breaching equipment may be tracked using ad-hoc tracking systems developed by entities, or in some cases may not be tracked in any inventory. There are also certain cases where multiple divisions and bureaus may be tracking the same piece of equipment. For example, vehicles are centrally tracked by the Motor Transport Division, but may also be in an equipment inventory of the division or bureau that is using the vehicles. The most comprehensive systems are the Kitroom Inventory Tracking System (KITS) and the Firearm Inventory Tracking System (FITS), which are electronic inventory systems used to track firearms.

Kitroom Inventory Tracking System (KITS)

All patrol and traffic divisions have a kitroom, which is a room within the station used for the storage of equipment that is used and returned by officers, such as battering rams. KITS is a standard system widely used by LAPD divisions to track any items stored in the kitroom. Items have a barcode that is scanned into the system when someone checks out or checks in a piece of equipment. KITS shows whether an item is available or checked out, the name of the officer that has checked out the item, and the borrowing history of the item. KITS is not used to track officers' standard issue firearms.

Firearm Inventory Tracking System (FITS)

FITS is used by the Training Division to issue firearms to all officers. Items can only be checked in or out by the division's armorers. FITS is used for any standard firearm issued to an officer, including those that are privately purchased. The system maintains a full history for the firearm, including who has viewed or edited the system. The system is also used to note when a "lot" of firearms is issued to a division, at which point that division would use their own system to manage the inventory.

**AssetWorks Fleet
Focus M5**

The Motor Transport Division has their own inventory system that provides information about each vehicle. Each vehicle is assigned a unique "Shop Number." The inventory includes the year, make, model, and manufacturer of each vehicle. It also notes the division and bureau that is using the vehicle, as well as its purchase cost, operating cost, and life cycle information.

**Other/ad-hoc
tracking tools**

Some divisions and bureaus use ad-hoc or less formalized inventory tracking systems for equipment not managed within KITS, FITS, or the Motor Transport Division inventory system. This can include ammunition, less-lethal items, and breaching equipment. For example, the Training Division uses an Excel spreadsheet maintained in SharePoint to track their inventory of bean bag shotgun rounds.

To assess the overall reliability of the military equipment quantities reported in the military equipment use policy and the military equipment report, we conducted inventory verifications for select types of the LAPD's military equipment. We conducted this assessment to determine whether (1) inventory quantities reported in the military equipment use policy and military equipment report are generally consistent with inventory quantities observed at the time of this audit and (2) assess the overall reliability of the LAPD's inventory records, division and bureaus' primary source of information used to report military equipment information.¹⁶

We randomly selected ten items from the LAPD's military equipment list from the military equipment report for the year 2022.¹⁷ The resulting sample included a total of ten items across four LAPD Divisions: Training (two items), Metropolitan (six items), Gang and Narcotics (one item), and Emergency Services (one item). During each inventory verification, the audit team requested a walk-through of the inventory system, conducted a physical inventory count of the item that was on site, and compared the quantity on site to the quantity reflected in the inventory system on the day of the site visit. With the exception of items under the control of the Training Division, the divisions were not advised of the equipment selected for review in advance of the audit team site visit.¹⁸

We determined that, based on the results of the physical inventory counts, the information in the military equipment report is generally consistent with the quantities possessed by the

¹⁶ For this audit, quantities from the LAPD's policy and report were compared to the quantities observed during the physical inventory counts to determine whether the numbers reported by the LAPD's AB 481 reports were generally consistent. It was not possible for audit staff to verify the exact count of items that were reported by the LAPD for the 2021 and 2022 reporting period.






¹⁷ The sample excluded vehicles and personally purchased firearms that are registered as on-duty firearms.






¹⁸ Training Division has multiple facilities across Los Angeles. In order to ensure that the verification occurred at the facility where the selected equipment is stored, the Division had to be informed of the selected items.

department. However, differences in inventory tracking practices across LAPD divisions and bureaus creates data reliability risks with regard to AB 481 equipment reporting.

During our physical inventory counts, we found that inventory records **matched** physical quantities for five items (i.e., the physical quantity observed by audit staff matched the corresponding LAPD inventory record), and **did not match** for three items. We were **unable to verify** the quantities of two items – one item was not on site, and one item did not have any corresponding inventory record. The results of the physical inventory counts highlight the risks associated with the LAPD’s reliance on entities from across the department submitting AB 481 data.

Results of Physical Inventory Counts

Item	Example Image	Inventory System	Quantity in system	Quantity counted	Determination
Emergency Services Division					
.22 Caliber Ammunition		Spreadsheet	250	250	Matched
Gang and Narcotics Division					
Benelli Super 90 semi-automatic shotguns		KITS	29	29	Matched
Metropolitan Division					
50 caliber ROBAR rifle		KITS	1	1	Matched
Defense Technology MK46 Aerosol Gas Projector		Spreadsheet	10	15	Did not match
Defense Technology Less-lethal gas Tactical Pocket Grenade (T509CS)		Spreadsheet	120	143	Did not match

ALS Technologies Sting Grenade (CS) ALSG101CS		Spreadsheet	1	11	Did not match
Defense Technology 40mm Sponge Baton eXact iMpact Round XM1006		No available spreadsheet	Not in system	830	Unable to verify
12-inch strip, 2 Strand Sun Products Blasting CO		Unknown	N/A	N/A	Unable to verify
Training Division					
Federal Laboratories Federal Han-ball Grenade Model 519		Spreadsheet	1,056	1,056	Matched
12-gauge Super Sock Bean Bag round CTS2581		Spreadsheet	46,800	46,800	Matched

Our inventory verifications indicated that some of the LAPD inventory records systems that are used to track military equipment contain information quality issues, though those information quality issues appear to be more likely for less-lethal equipment and expendable ammunition. We did not identify any inventory inaccuracies for firearms during our review. For example, the Gang and Narcotics Division was able to pull a report in KITS for Benelli Super 90 semi-automatic shotguns that were selected for verification. The report indicated the number of shotguns in the division's possession, which shotguns had been issued to an employee, and the number of shotguns on site at the Gang and Narcotics Division facility.

However, for less-lethal items that are not tracked in KITS or FITS, such as chemical agents and ammunition, inventory tracking systems appear to vary in reliability. For the Defense

Technology Less-lethal gas Tactical Pocket Grenade, the Metropolitan Division relies on an internal spreadsheet to track inventory. During the audit team's site visit, the spreadsheet showed 120 grenades, but 143 grenades were counted during the physical inventory count.¹⁹ Some military equipment may not be tracked in an inventory record at all. The Metropolitan Division did not have an inventory record for its Defense Technology 40mm Sponge Baton eXact iMPact Rounds, and said that it relied on a physical inventory count for AB 481 reporting. Metropolitan Division staff also explained that for AB 481 reporting, they conducted a physical count of military equipment on site, but did not count or have a specific method to account for inventory that was stored on SWAT trucks, or already checked out and assigned to officers in the field.

LAPD Military Equipment Observed During Physical Inventory Verifications



From left to right: Sponge baton rounds at Metropolitan Division, Benelli Super 90 semi-automatic shotguns at Gang and Narcotics Division, .22 caliber ammunition at Emergency Services Division, and 12-gauge bean bag rounds at Training Division.

In addition to the data reliability issues we identified during our physical inventory verifications, the LAPD has highlighted their own concerns in a response to a supplemental information request by the City Council Public Safety Committee. On September 12, 2023, the Committee adopted the 2022 annual military equipment report but requested supplemental

¹⁹ According to the Metropolitan Division, inventory records are based on a physical inventory of less lethal equipment that it conducts every other month, which may be in part a cause of the observed discrepancy.

information for each type of vehicle in the inventory, including a breakdown of information in the “Actual 2022 Yearly Cost” column for any item that was \$200,000 or more. The LAPD’s response, published January 8, 2024, identified inaccuracies with both cost and inventory information, explaining that there was some confusion over which costs needed to be reported and that “two robotic items (47 and 49) were purchased in 2009 and should not have been included in the report as they have not been used for several years and were in the process of being decommissioned.”

The LAPD notes in its report that the Audit Division used the self-reported information submitted by the divisions and bureaus and that errors came to light only while compiling information for the supplemental request. Given that the LAPD identified these issues in examining a small portion of inventory, it is likely that other inaccuracies exist in the inventory.

Bureaus and Divisions Lack Uniformity in Developing Cost Estimates

As part of the inventory reporting process, entities were tasked with reporting the costs associated with military equipment items. Form 15.62.00 instructed personnel to “include a break-down of initial costs (of obtaining the equipment), modification costs, and average (estimated) annual maintenance costs.” However, the form did not provide guidance or best practices on how to calculate or estimate these costs. Depending on the item and the division or bureau, methodologies for developing cost information and the level of detail provided for cost information varied.

The Motor Transport Division was able to provide the purchase cost, current year operating cost, and total operating cost for each vehicle because they manage and track all vehicles and their associated maintenance costs. For some entities, costs outside of direct procurement were difficult to estimate. The Training Division reported only procurement costs and did not specifically incorporate any maintenance, staffing, or storage costs. Staff at the Metropolitan Division explained that they developed a per weapon maintenance cost estimate based on the number of weapons under the division’s control and the division’s maintenance budget for weapons systems. The division developed labor cost estimates based on the number of hours it takes to service a particular weapon and staff pay rates. Metropolitan Division staff said that they would prefer detailed instructions on how to calculate costs moving forward.

The complexities of reporting the true costs for military equipment, particularly at a department as large as the LAPD, are underscored in the Gang and Narcotics Division’s 2021 15.62.00 form for the 89 Remington 870 shotguns that the Division possesses:

The Remington 870 short barrel conversions were purchased by Gang and Narcotics Division at a total cost of \$719.86 for the kits. The main bodies of the shotguns were

issued by Training Division. Training Division is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the 870 shotguns.

While Gang and Narcotics was able to identify the purchase cost of part of the shotgun, the other part was issued and maintained by the Training Division. It is not clear from the reporting instructions which entity would be responsible for reporting those costs.

The LAPD's Audit Division also detailed some of the difficulties related to cost reporting in their "Response to the Supplemental Information Request to the 2022 Annual Equipment Report," explaining that some costs were inaccurately reported in the 2022 report:

Some associated costs, such as personnel costs, are difficult to track and ascertain with precision. Additionally, there was some confusion on whether acquisition costs needed to be reported annually or only in the year in which the item was procured. The cost estimates were provided to Audit Division by the divisions and entities directly responsible for the items listed in the report and in gathering information for this supplemental request, it was determined that there were some inconsistencies with how these various entities determined cost amounts for the items.

While the LAPD will always need to rely on estimates to report military equipment costs, additional guidance could help to ensure that a consistent methodology is used across the department. According to the Audit Division, it plans to provide additional cost reporting guidance during the upcoming reporting cycle.

Guidelines for Identifying Complaints and Addressing Questions and Concerns Need Improvement

AB 481 requires the LAPD's military equipment use policy to include the procedures for members of the public to register complaints or concerns, or submit questions about the use of each type of military equipment. It also requires the department to specify how the department will ensure the public receives a response in a timely manner. To meet this requirement, the LAPD's policy has a "Complaint Procedures" section that cites the department manual section on complaints. The section notes that once a complaint is received, it will be investigated by either the Internal Affairs Division or the employee's command.

Complaints about military equipment are processed the same way as any other complaint received from the public. The public can make a complaint via phone or email, in person at any LAPD Division, or at the scene of any incident. Upon receiving a complaint, an intake supervisor gathers information from the person making the complaint and creates a file in the department's Complaint Management System (CMS). The LAPD's military equipment use policy does not explain any processes that are specific to complaints related to military equipment, but explains that it is the policy of the department to adjudicate all complaints within a year. Similarly, the policy does not include information for how the public can register questions or concerns other than by contacting the LAPD division that uses the equipment. The policy also fails to describe how those questions or concerns will be responded to in a timely manner.

AB 481 requires the LAPD's military equipment report to include a summary of any complaints or concerns received about military equipment. To identify these cases, the LAPD's Professional Standards Bureau (PSB) runs a search of all complaints related to military equipment by searching a list of 24 terms in the general description section of the complaint.²⁰ If a complaint contains a reference to a piece of military equipment from the list, PSB reviews the case and determines whether it should be categorized as related to AB 481. However, there is no formal criteria or definition by which the PSB makes determinations about what complaints relate to AB 481 equipment, which may increase the likelihood that complaints are not consistently categorized.

In an effort to automate this process and reduce the likelihood of missed cases, in May 2023 PSB proactively added a new field in CMS to identify complaints that involve military equipment and to specify the type of equipment referenced in the complaint. However, PSB is unable to run a query for this field using their reporting software because programming updates are needed to allow the CMS military equipment field to interface with the reporting software. The LAPD has a significant programming backlog that department information technology staff are working to address.

Recommendations

To reduce the risk of reporting inaccuracies related to the department's military equipment inventory, the LAPD should:

8. Develop additional guidance for LAPD entities which clarify standards for identifying and reporting military equipment quantities.
9. Develop a procedure to conduct limited verifications of, or quality control reviews of, inventory and cost information reported by LAPD entities.
10. Require entities to maintain an inventory record for any equipment types that are reportable under AB 481.
11. Develop additional guidance for reporting cost information and developing cost estimates.

To improve the department's ability to identify complaints and improve the public's ability to work with the department to obtain a better understanding of the LAPD's military equipment, the LAPD should:

12. Develop a formal definition for military equipment use for the complaint intake, review, and reporting process.
13. Develop additional guidance clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations when responding to questions and general inquiries from the public.

²⁰ The list of terms used to query are: less lethal, less-lethal, LLM, bean bag, beanbag, shotgun, rifle, rubber bullet, projectile, riot gear, military, smoke bomb, gas, tear gas, battering ram, humvee, armored car, armored vehicle, assault weapon, truck, pepper, missile, robot, and drone.

CONCLUSION

AB 481 was passed to increase public awareness about the funding, acquisition, and use of military equipment by law enforcement agencies. As the LAPD develops future reports, it is important that the department ensures that it complies with all aspects of the law, the information in the report is reliable, and provides additional levels of transparency. This, in addition to improving the methods by which the public interacts with the LAPD on military equipment issues, will help to build trust between the LAPD and members of the public, and allow for meaningful community engagement.

RECOMMENDATION TABLE

Number	Recommendation
<i>Responsible Entity: LAPD</i>	
<i>To ensure full compliance with AB 481, the LAPD should:</i>	
1	Include product descriptions from the manufacturer in the department's annual military equipment reports.
2	Create a dedicated AB 481 webpage that includes the military equipment use policy, military equipment reports, and other relevant information.
<i>To improve transparency into the use of military equipment and provide opportunities for the public to learn additional information about military equipment, the LAPD should:</i>	
3	Break out cost information for each item of existing military equipment over a specified dollar value, specifically showing acquisition and maintenance costs.
4	Provide detailed information on the number of use instances for each type of military equipment.
5	Provide acquisition costs for equipment the department anticipates acquiring during the upcoming year.
6	Hold one or more community engagement sessions, annually after the publication of the military equipment report, with the purpose of engaging the community and allowing the public to ask questions, provide comments, and receive answers from the LAPD on military equipment issues. The community engagement session should be open to the public and separate from regular BOPC or City Council meetings.
7	Establish a formal procedure, specific to AB 481, which allows the public to communicate questions and general concerns about the use of military equipment, and describes expectations for providing a timely response to those inquiries.
<i>To reduce the risk of reporting inaccuracies related to the department's military equipment inventory, the LAPD should:</i>	
8	Develop additional guidance for LAPD entities which clarify standards for identifying and reporting military equipment quantities.
9	Develop a procedure to conduct limited verifications of, or quality control reviews of, inventory and cost information reported by LAPD entities.

Number	Recommendation
10	Require entities to maintain an inventory record for any equipment types that are reportable under AB 481.
11	Develop additional guidance for reporting cost information and developing cost estimates.

To improve the department's ability to identify complaints and improve the public's ability to work with the department to obtain a better understanding of the LAPD's military equipment, the LAPD should:

12	Develop a formal definition for military equipment use for the complaint intake, review, and reporting process.
13	Develop additional guidance clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations when responding to questions and general inquiries from the public.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

We conducted an audit of the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 481's requirements. Our audit objectives were to evaluate the LAPD's compliance with AB 481's requirements, and identify opportunities to further transparency into the LAPD's possession and use of military equipment.

SCOPE

The audit scope includes LAPD activities and reports associated with the department's implementation of AB 481 requirements. This generally covers the period of September 2021 (when AB 481 was signed into law), through August 2023 (when the LAPD submitted its annual military equipment report). However, as the law requires the LAPD to report military equipment information annually, some information referenced in this audit is related to LAPD activities that took place after August 2023.

METHODOLOGY

To complete our audit, we:

- Reviewed Assembly Bill 481 and its requirements
- Reviewed the LAPD's military equipment use policy²¹
- Reviewed the LAPD's annual military equipment report
- Developed a compliance checklist to analyze and compare the LAPD's policy and report against AB 481's requirements
- Reviewed City Council files and meetings, Board of Police Commissioners meetings, and Public Safety Committee meetings related to the LAPD's military equipment use policy and annual military equipment report
- Analyzed forms and spreadsheets submitted by LAPD divisions and bureaus for AB 481 reporting purposes
- Analyzed and compared the LAPD's 2022 and 2023 military equipment inventory lists

²¹ The LAPD's use policy consists of two separate records submitted to the Los Angeles City Council in one consolidated report. Those records included LAPD Manual Section 1/140.25, *Use of Equipment Covered by California Assembly Bill 481*, and *LAPD's first annual military equipment report*.

- Interviewed LAPD staff from the department’s Audit Division, Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy, Professional Standards Bureau, Emergency Services Division, Gang and Narcotics Division, Metropolitan Division, and Training Division
- Interviewed personnel from the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office
- Conducted a benchmarking analysis that included a review of the policies, reports, and AB 481 webpage information for the municipal police departments of San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, Fresno, Sacramento, Long Beach, and Oakland

To evaluate the adequacy of internal controls, we:

- Reviewed the LAPD’s procedures and forms for compiling inventory and cost information for the department’s military equipment use policy and annual military equipment reports, and interviewed bureau and division employees about their understanding of reporting procedures and expectations
- Conducted inventory verification checks for 10 randomly selected military equipment items from the LAPD’s military equipment inventory to determine whether physical quantities matched inventory records, and to identify possible data reliability risks

HOW WE ENSURE QUALITY

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. The Audit Services Division implemented policies and procedures to comply with generally accepted government auditing standards in July 2023. Government auditing standards require that we obtain an external peer review of our system of quality control at least once every three years. We plan to undergo an external peer review in 2025.

LAPD RESPONSE

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

DOMINIC H. CHOI
Chief of Police



KAREN BASS
Mayor

P.O. Box 30158
Los Angeles, CA 90030
Telephone: (213) 486-8730
TTY: (877) 275-5273
Ref #: 1.14

July 22, 2024

The Honorable Kenneth Mejia
Los Angeles City Controller
200 North Main Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, California 90012
Kenneth.mejia@lacity.org

RE: Assembly Bill 481 Audit

Dear Mr. Mejia,

We appreciate the time, effort, and resources spent by your office on the Assembly Bill (AB) 481 audit. As we have previously communicated to you, we welcome collaboration and support all efforts that increase transparency of Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD or Department) operations for the public.

In general, we agree with the facts listed in your audit, however, we respectfully disagree with your interpretation of those facts and whether the Department met the requirements of AB 481. Specifically, all findings of "Did not meet" and "Partially met" we believe are a misinterpretation of the requirements of AB 481, and we believe we met the requirement of the law. Our AB 481 policy and report were vetted by Police General Counsel of the City Attorney's Office. As they have assured us that we have met all the legal requirements of AB 481, we do not need to follow any of your recommendations to continue to comply with the law.

Our reasoning for disagreeing with your individual findings of "Did not meet" and "Partially met" are as follows:

- **Controller's Issue No. 1- Partially Met:** The Department "did not provide complete product descriptions from the manufacturer."
Response: The product descriptions in our report meet the legal requirements of AB 481. Moreover, the volume of items we have makes expanding the product descriptions burdensome and would make the report significantly longer. A longer report would make it more difficult for the public to digest and negates the spirit of the law.
- **Controller's Issue No. 2 – Partially Met:** The Department "did not provide the purpose and authorized use for each type of equipment under this definition."

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www.joinLAPD.com

Response: Specific purposes and uses were listed in the report for all 219 items. The report also included more detailed purposes and authorized uses for groups of items since similar items are used for the same thing.

- **Controller’s Issue No. 3 – Partially Met:** The Department does “not have an estimated yearly maintenance cost listed” for most of the items.
Response: Some of the items, such as ammunition or items that would just be replaced if broken, do not require maintenance and therefore do not have an estimated yearly maintenance cost to list. Therefore, listing not applicable (N/A) in the report was appropriate. Additionally, Metropolitan Division has a yearly allotment for maintenance (that was listed in the report) for all their equipment and do not break it out per item.
- **Controller’s Issue No. 4 – Partially Met:** The Department does not have complaint reporting procedures specific to AB 481 and “does not address how the department will ensure that the public will receive a timely response to a complaint or question about equipment.”
Response: Creating separate complaint procedures for AB 481 items is unnecessary since members of the public may not know that their complaint qualifies as an AB 481 related complaint. Professional Standards Bureau already has redundant procedures for capturing AB 481 complaints and as listed in the report each complaint is investigated within one year.
- **Controller’s Issue No. 5 – Partially Met:** The Department’s AB 481 policy is publicly available on the website, “but it is difficult for members of the public to find.”
Response: The Department has made the report “publicly available” and if “LAPD AB 481” is Googled, the very first response is our policy and first year report.
- **Controller’s Issue No. 12 – Did not meet:** The Department’s second equipment report is publicly available, but “not discoverable via the LAPD website’s search bar.”
Response: Again, the report is “publicly available” on the Department’s website. However, we have since moved it to be next to the policy and first year inventory report for ease of discovery.
- **Controller’s Issue No. 13 – Did not meet:** The Department submitted the second equipment report to the Los Angeles City Council, “six days past the one-year deadline [August 30, 2023].”
Response: The law is ambiguous about the due date since it states, “within one year of approval, and annually thereafter...” According to Police General Counsel, due to the ambiguity in the language, while the due date could be August 30 it could also be interpreted as the end of each year. Thus, there is no violation of AB 481 requirements.
- **Controller’s Issue No. 14 – Partially met:** The Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) meetings where AB 481 items were discussed did not provide “the general public with an opportunity to receive answers to questions or engage in meaningful discussions about LAPD military equipment with LAPD officials.”

Response: The law requires us to “hold at least one well-publicized and conveniently located community engagement meeting.” The BOPC meetings comply with this requirement.

- **Controller’s Issue No. 15 – Partially met:** According to the Controller’s Audit, “While the law does not explicitly require the LAPD to do so, the report also does not include deployment data for either the seven general equipment categories, or for the individual equipment types.”

Response: Deployment data is not required and was therefore not included in the report.

- **Controller’s Issue No. 16 – Partially met:** The Department “does not provide information about the actions taken following two sustained complaints related to military equipment reported by the Professional Standards Bureau.”

Response: While the penalties themselves are not listed in the report, there is a link to the location on our website where disciplinary penalties can be found. This is the best way to report the information as some of the complaints may not be adjudicated at the time of the report.

Based on the reasons stated above, the LAPD is in full compliance with AB 481. That being said, many of your recommendations are worth consideration to help make the LAPD more transparent and ensure the community has a voice when the LAPD acquires AB 481 items. Specifically, we are looking to implement the following recommendations:

- **Recommendation No. 2 –** Creating a dedicated AB 481 webpage for the public.

We are already working on revamping our website in general and hope to include a dedicated AB 481 webpage.

- **Recommendation No. 6 –** Holding at least one additional community engagement session (other than a Board of Police Commissioners meeting) that discusses AB 481 items.

We have plans to engage the public in a community meeting when the next report is released. This meeting will allow for questions and meaningful dialogue.

- **Recommendation No. 8 –** Developing guidance for LAPD entities to help track inventories of AB 481 items.

Training Division keeps exemplary inventory records for AB 481 items and we plan to have them share their process with other AB 481 reporting entities within LAPD.

- **Recommendation No. 9 –** Conducting limited verifications of inventories of AB 481 items.

In the future, Audit Division will be spot checking a portion of the AB 481 items to help ensure accurate reporting.

- **Recommendation No. 10** – Requiring entities to maintain an inventory record for AB 481 items.

The audit showed that some entities conduct a manual count for AB 481 reporting purposes. Preferably, they would keep an ongoing inventory of the items on hand. As stated under Recommendation No. 8, connecting LAPD entities to share best practices will ensure that inventory records are better maintained.

- **Recommendation No. 13** – Developing additional guidance for responding to questions from the public on AB 481 items.

In conjunction with the implementation of Recommendation No. 2, we will include more information to the public on where to direct questions about specific items.

Additionally, we have already begun to implement the following recommendations:

- **Recommendation No. 3** – Further breaking out cost information in the next AB 481 report.

Audit Division was already directed to include more detailed cost information on the next AB 481 report.

- **Recommendation No. 5** – Including acquisition costs for new items in the next AB 481 report.

Although this is not specifically required by law, Audit Division was directed to include this information in the next AB 481 report.

- **Recommendation No. 11** – Developing additional guidance for reporting cost information of AB 481 items.

Audit Division has provided additional guidance to all AB 481 reporting entities related to reporting costs. This will be reflected in the next AB 481 report.

Finally, we feel that our reporting is already sufficiently meeting the suggestion in the following recommendation:

- **Recommendation No. 1** – Including a product description from the manufacturer in the AB 481 report.

As stated under Issue No. 1, the product descriptions in our report meet the legal requirements of AB 481 per Police General Counsel. The volume of items we have makes expanding the product descriptions burdensome and would make the report significantly longer. In addition to the legal advice of Police General Counsel that our descriptions are sufficient, a longer report would make it more difficult for the public to digest and negates the spirit of the law.

Finally, three of the recommendations we have no plan on implementing since they are not required by law and/or are not feasible for us to implement:

- **Recommendation No. 4** – Providing detailed information on the number of use instances for each type of AB 481 equipment is not required by AB 481.

While some of the benchmark cities used in your audit included this information, it is worthy to note that all of the agencies selected as “peers” have less than half of the number of AB 481 items possessed by LAPD therefore making it a much simpler task for those agencies to accomplish. This information is not required by law to be included in the report and while we have no plans to include it we will take the feasibility of this into consideration.

- **Recommendation No. 7** – Establishing a formal procedure, specific to AB 481, which allows the public to communicate questions about AB 481 items.

Since our AB 481 items are spread out across differing LAPD entities, it would not make sense to have a centralized place for the public to ask questions regarding the items. Directing them to police stations and the entities using the items is the best way to ensure their questions are answered by the people most familiar with the item or the incident in which the item was used.

- **Recommendation No. 12** – Developing a formal definition for military equipment use for the complaint intake, review, and reporting process is unnecessary.

The law provides a definition for military equipment. Creating our own would cause more confusion and is unnecessary since our complaint process already has duplicate systems in place to catch AB 481 related complaints either at intake or upon disposition. We are confident that all AB 481 complaints are captured in the report.

The LAPD thanks the Office of the Controller for their work on this audit as it has shown us various best practices that we intend on implementing as we strive to provide the public with better transparency. One of our Core Values is Quality through Continuous Improvement and we intend to apply this Core Value to our AB 481 reports.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Director Lizabeth Rhodes, Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy, at (213) 486-8730.

Respectfully,



DOMINIC H. CHOI
Chief of Police

AUDITOR COMMENTS ON THE LAPD RESPONSE

To provide clarity and perspective, auditors are commenting on the LAPD's written response to our audit.

LAPD Response Comment 1

- **Controller's Issue No. 1- Partially Met:** The Department "did not provide complete product descriptions from the manufacturer."
Response: The product descriptions in our report meet the legal requirements of AB 481. Moreover, the volume of items we have makes expanding the product descriptions burdensome and would make the report significantly longer. A longer report would make it more difficult for the public to digest and negates the spirit of the law.

Auditor Comment

The LAPD's policy complied with 3 of the 5 requirements in Section 7070 (d). The policy did not provide the quantity sought for 42 of the 219 inventory items, nor did it provide complete product descriptions from the manufacturer. We considered the "description of each type of equipment" and "product descriptions from the manufacturer" requirements in Section 7070 (d) as distinct requirements of the law, and did not conclude that the "description" column in the policy's inventory list satisfied both requirements.

LAPD Response Comment 2

- **Controller's Issue No. 2 – Partially Met:** The Department "did not provide the purpose and authorized use for each type of equipment under this definition."
Response: Specific purposes and uses were listed in the report for all 219 items. The report also included more detailed purposes and authorized uses for groups of items since similar items are used for the same thing.

Auditor Comment

The LAPD's policy provided a column in the inventory list that combined "purpose" and "authorized use" into one category. Audit staff considered "purpose" and "authorized use" to be two separate requirements of the law. The information provided in the column is limited to only a few words for several equipment items. The policy only provided detailed "purpose" and "authorized use" descriptions for the seven general categories of equipment.

LAPD Response Comment 3

- **Controller’s Issue No. 3 – Partially Met:** The Department does “not have an estimated yearly maintenance cost listed” for most of the items.
Response: Some of the items, such as ammunition or items that would just be replaced if broken, do not require maintenance and therefore do not have an estimated yearly maintenance cost to list. Therefore, listing not applicable (N/A) in the report was appropriate. Additionally, Metropolitan Division has a yearly allotment for maintenance (that was listed in the report) for all their equipment and do not break it out per item.

Auditor Comment

AB 481 required the LAPD's policy to contain estimated annual maintenance costs for each of the 219 items on its inventory list. A total of 137 out of 219 items did not have a provided estimated maintenance cost.

LAPD Response Comment 4

- **Controller’s Issue No. 4 – Partially Met:** The Department does not have complaint reporting procedures specific to AB 481 and “does not address how the department will ensure that the public will receive a timely response to a complaint or question about equipment.”
Response: Creating separate complaint procedures for AB 481 items is unnecessary since members of the public may not know that their complaint qualifies as an AB 481 related complaint. Professional Standards Bureau already has redundant procedures for capturing AB 481 complaints and as listed in the report each complaint is investigated within one year.

Auditor Comment

The LAPD's policy did not contain clear procedures or contact information for members of the public who would like to submit a question or concern specific to military equipment. Furthermore, the policy did not address how the LAPD ensures that members of the public will receive a timely response to their question or concern.

LAPD Response Comment 5

- **Controller’s Issue No. 5 – Partially Met:** The Department’s AB 481 policy is publicly available on the website, “but it is difficult for members of the public to find.”
Response: The Department has made the report “publicly available” and if “LAPD AB 481” is Googled, the very first response is our policy and first year report.

Auditor Comment

The policy posted on the department's Reference Library webpage is a proposed draft policy dated April 2022 that is not the department's active policy. Given that the final and active policy is difficult for the public to access, audit staff concluded that a "partially met" determination for this requirement was appropriate.

LAPD Response Comment 6

- **Controller’s Issue No. 12 – Did not meet:** The Department’s second equipment report is publicly available, but “not discoverable via the LAPD website’s search bar.”
Response: Again, the report is “publicly available” on the Department’s website. However, we have since moved it to be next to the policy and first year inventory report for ease of discovery.

Auditor Comment

The LAPD’s military equipment report was only available on a BOPC agenda page at the time of the audit. Members of the public were required to manually identify the correct BOPC meeting agenda in order to locate the report.

LAPD Response Comment 7

- **Controller’s Issue No. 13 – Did not meet:** The Department submitted the second equipment report to the Los Angeles City Council, “six days past the one-year deadline [August 30, 2023].”
Response: The law is ambiguous about the due date since it states, “within one year of approval, and annually thereafter...” According to Police General Counsel, due to the ambiguity in the language, while the due date could be August 30 it could also be interpreted as the end of each year. Thus, there is no violation of AB 481 requirements.

Auditor Comment

AB 481 states that law enforcement agencies that receive approval for a policy shall submit a report "within one year of approval, and annually thereafter..." The LA City Council approved the LAPD's policy on August 30, 2022. The law required the LAPD to submit its annual equipment report to City Council by August 30, 2023. The LAPD submitted its report to City Council on September 5, 2023. Audit staff agrees that the required timeline for future equipment reports is ambiguous and only required on an undefined, annual basis.

LAPD Response Comment 8

- **Controller’s Issue No. 14 – Partially met:** The Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) meetings where AB 481 items were discussed did not provide “the general public with an opportunity to receive answers to questions or engage in meaningful discussions about LAPD military equipment with LAPD officials.”
Response: The law requires us to “hold at least one well-publicized and conveniently located community engagement meeting.” The BOPC meetings comply with this requirement.

Auditor Comment

While public comment periods were available at meetings where the AB 481 report was discussed, members of the public did not have an opportunity to engage in direct discussions or ask questions of LAPD officials about military equipment.

LAPD Response Comment 9

- **Controller’s Issue No. 15 – Partially met:** According to the Controller’s Audit, “While the law does not explicitly require the LAPD to do so, the report also does not include deployment data for either the seven general equipment categories, or for the individual equipment types.”
Response: Deployment data is not required and was therefore not included in the report.

Auditor Comment

Section 7072 (a) (1) requires the LAPD to produce an annual report that provides a summary of how each type of military equipment was used in the prior year. "Type" is defined in the law as "each item that shares the same manufacturer model number." As stated in the audit report, the LAPD provided general summaries for seven broad categories of equipment and did not provide specific information or data about how equipment was used in the prior year.

LAPD Response Comment 10

- **Controller’s Issue No. 16 – Partially met:** The Department “does not provide information about the actions taken following two sustained complaints related to military equipment reported by the Professional Standards Bureau.”
Response: While the penalties themselves are not listed in the report, there is a link to the location on our website where disciplinary penalties can be found. This is the best way to report the information as some of the complaints may not be adjudicated at the time of the report.

Auditor Comment

AB 481 requires that military equipment reports provide the actions taken in response to violations of the department's military equipment policy. The two sustained complaints referenced in the audit were described in the LAPD equipment report as "adjudicated," but the actions taken in response to the two sustained complaints were not contained in the report.

LAPD Response Comment 11

- **Recommendation No. 1 –** Including a product description from the manufacturer in the AB 481 report.

As stated under Issue No. 1, the product descriptions in our report meet the legal requirements of AB 481 per Police General Counsel. The volume of items we have makes expanding the product descriptions burdensome and would make the report significantly longer. In addition to the legal advice of Police General Counsel that our descriptions are sufficient, a longer report would make it more difficult for the public to digest and negates the spirit of the law.

Auditor Comment

Six out of seven police departments in the audit's benchmark analysis provided product descriptions from the manufacturer in their policies and reports. We recommend that the LAPD include manufacturer's descriptions in annual equipment reports to provide the public with a greater level of transparency into the equipment used by the department, and reduce the department's risk of non-compliance with AB 481.

LAPD Response Comment 12

- **Recommendation No. 4** – Providing detailed information on the number of use instances for each type of AB 481 equipment is not required by AB 481.

While some of the benchmark cities used in your audit included this information, it is worthy to note that all of the agencies selected as “peers” have less than half of the number of AB 481 items possessed by LAPD therefore making it a much simpler task for those agencies to accomplish. This information is not required by law to be included in the report and while we have no plans to include it we will take the feasibility of this into consideration.

Auditor Comment

AB 481 states that "the public has a right to know about any funding, acquisition or use of military equipment by state or local government officials..." Providing the public with additional information about the LAPD's military equipment use would assist the public and the LAPD's governing body in understanding how frequently the LAPD uses military equipment. All six of the benchmark police departments that had released an equipment report at the time of the audit included equipment use data in their reports.

LAPD Response Comment 13

- **Recommendation No. 7** – Establishing a formal procedure, specific to AB 481, which allows the public to communicate questions about AB 481 items.

Since our AB 481 items are spread out across differing LAPD entities, it would not make sense to have a centralized place for the public to ask questions regarding the items. Directing them to police stations and the entities using the items is the best way to ensure their questions are answered by the people most familiar with the item or the incident in which the item was used.

Auditor Comment

The LAPD's policy and report do not provide sufficient information about how members of the public can submit a question or concern about military equipment, and no contact information is provided. This is significant given the size and complexity of the department, and because it may not always be clear which LAPD entities possess which military equipment items. Establishing a formal procedure for accepting and responding to AB 481-

related questions and concerns would help to ensure that the department can effectively respond to inquiries from members of the public.

LAPD Response Comment 14

- **Recommendation No. 12** – Developing a formal definition for military equipment use for the complaint intake, review, and reporting process is unnecessary.

The law provides a definition for military equipment. Creating our own would cause more confusion and is unnecessary since our complaint process already has duplicate systems in place to catch AB 481 related complaints either at intake or upon disposition. We are confident that all AB 481 complaints are captured in the report.

Auditor Comment

Our recommendation is for the LAPD to develop a formal definition for "military equipment use." We believe this would help the department to ensure it consistently captures and reports on complaints involving military equipment, rather than relying only on keyword based searches.

Appendix A – LAPD Bureaus and Divisions That Submitted One or More Form 15.62.00

Custody Services Division
Emergency Services Division
Gang and Narcotics Division
Multi-Disciplinary Collision and Investigation Team
Robbery and Homicide Division
Training Division
Central Bureau
South Bureau
Valley Bureau
West Bureau



Audit Services Division

The Office of the Controller was created by the Los Angeles City Charter as an independent office, and is headed by the Controller: the elected auditor, paymaster, and chief accounting officer for the City of Los Angeles. Under the Controller's leadership, the Office's Audit Services Division performs audits, investigations, and other oversight functions to help provide transparency, accountability, and improve City services for all Angelenos.

Audit Team

Michael Bauer, Controller Audit Analyst
Andrea Lynn, Sr. Controller Audit Analyst
Nicholas Ketter, Audit Manager
Devang Panchal, Director of Auditing

Contact

Phone: 213.978.7200

Email: controller.mejia@lacity.org

Website: controller.lacity.gov

Copies of our audit reports are available at controller.lacity.gov/audits