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Councilman to sheriff: Quit your job

By Carrie Peyton
Times Tribune Staff

Deadly force guidelines for deputies branded as 'frightening'

An East Palo Alto councilman Thursday demanded the resignation of San Mateo County Sheriff John R. McDonald, claiming McDonald has not given his officers clear guidelines on the use of deadly force.

A. Berkley Driessel, 43, a management consultant, said the sheriff should step down because of the "frightening" lack of guidance he has given his officers.

"I'm afraid that sometime this

summer some cop is going to make a mistake and blow somebody away. . . and there will be hell to pay," Driessel said.

The sheriff was attending an FBI Academy course in Washington, D.C., and was unavailable for comment.

His public information officer, Sgt. Mike Dow, defended the office guidelines on deadly force as among "the most current and modern" in the state. Dow also said

Driessel has seen only one — the official policy on deadly force — of about 15 different documents officers are given on guidelines for use of firearms.

Driessel has long been critical of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department, the main law-enforcement agency responsible for policing unincorporated East Palo Alto.

Driessel claims patrolling in the area is inadequate.

He said he has not asked either

the East Palo Alto Municipal Council or the county Criminal Justice Council, of which he also is a member, for support in his resignation demand.

Driessel learned Wednesday that the sheriff's only specific orders on deadly force give a brief explanation of when officers should fire at criminals.

The orders advise that it is only legal to fire at fleeing felons when the felony is "a forcible and atro-

cious one which threatens death or serious bodily harm to the peace officer or to another."

The two pages of guidelines also tell officers to act in accordance with state penal code sections 196, 197 and 835(a), but give no further explanation on what is in those sections.

Driessel claimed that regulations in Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Atherton were much more specific.

Although Menlo Park Police Chief Gerald McNamara said he had no specific comment on the



Staff Photo by Joe Melena

Councilman A. Berkley Driessel

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of sheriff's regulations, he said, "I wouldn't want to have my officers operating under something that doesn't provide specific prohibitions."

Menlo Park's present guidelines, which set out seven circumstances regulating when a police officer's gun should be fired, are now being revised because McNamara did not think they were thorough enough, he said.

The county sheriff's orders on firearms were revised last December.