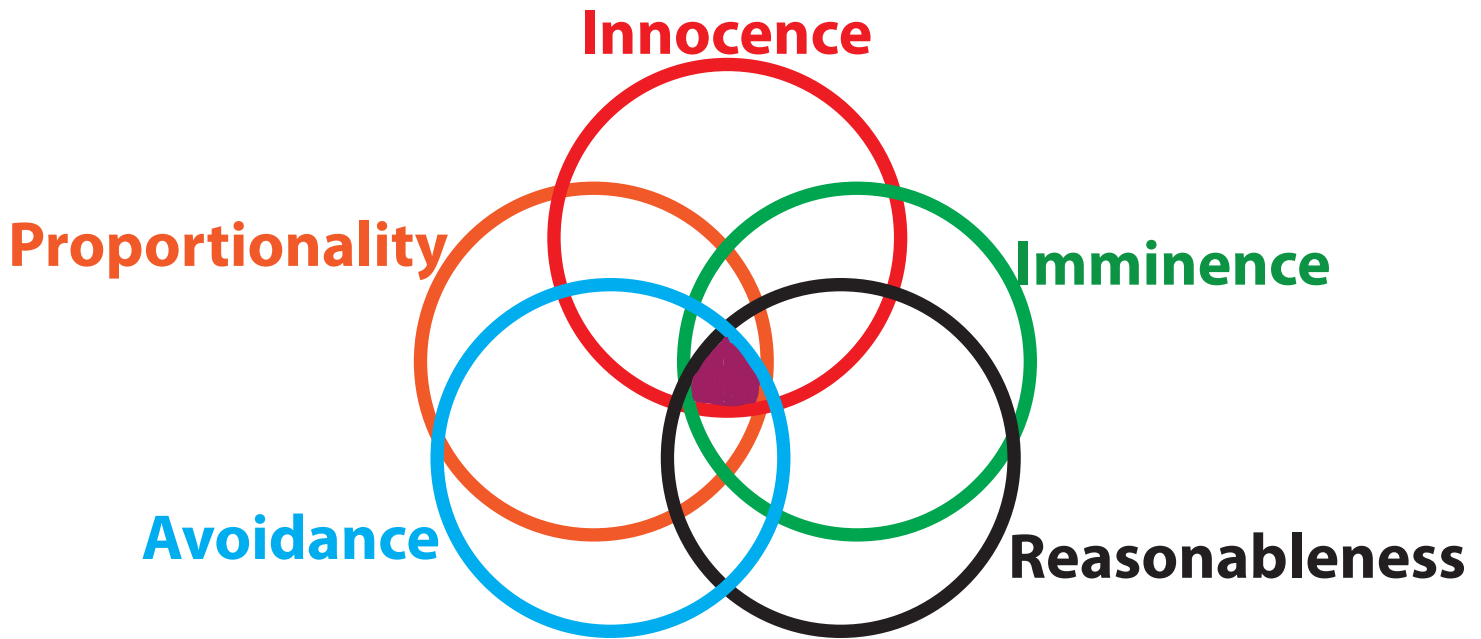


The Five Elements of Self Defense



Innocence
You can't start the fight.

Proportionality
The law puts any use of force into one of two buckets: the non-deadly force bucket, or the deadly force bucket. Deadly force can kill or cause serious bodily injury. Non-deadly force is any lesser force.

Avoidance
Could you have safely avoided the fight? California is a "Soft" Stand Your Ground State, meaning there may be circumstances whereby you are expected to retreat if retreating is safely available.

Imminence
The law allows you to defend yourself from an attack that's either happening or about to happen very soon, meaning within seconds. It's not intended to justify vengeance for some past act of violence, nor to "stop" a speculative future attack that you have time to avoid by other means.

Reasonableness
I like to call this the "umbrella" element because it overlays the other four.

Everything that you perceive, decide, and do in defense of yourself or others must be reasonable and prudent, given the circumstances you faced, the information you knew, and your abilities (or disabilities).