



FORCE OPTIONS



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I. PURPOSE

This directive:

- A. outlines the various force options and the circumstances in which they are authorized when Department members are met with resistance or threats.
- B. describes Force Mitigation and its role in the Department's response to all incidents.

II. POLICY

- A. **Sanctity of Human Life.** All incidents will be resolved with the foremost regard for the preservation of human life and the safety of all persons involved. A member's decision to use force will be made in accordance with G03-02, "Use of Force."
- B. **De-Escalation.** Department members will use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force when it is safe and feasible to do so based on the totality of the circumstances. This includes continually assessing the situation and modifying the use of force as circumstances change and in ways that are consistent with officer safety.
- C. **When Force is Authorized.** Department members' use of force must be objectively reasonable, necessary under the circumstances, and proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance offered by a subject.
- D. The Department expects members to develop and display the skills and abilities that allow them to regularly resolve confrontations without resorting to force, or by using only the amount of force required under the circumstances.
- E. Sworn members will, whenever possible, identify themselves as police officers prior to taking any police action, unless identification would jeopardize the safety of the member or others or compromise the integrity of an investigation.
- F. Members will continually assess situations and determine:
 - 1. if any use of force is necessary;
 - 2. the authorized force option based on the totality of the circumstances;
 - 3. if the seriousness of the situation requires an immediate response or whether the member can employ other force options or the Force Mitigation Principles; and
 - 4. if the level of force employed should be modified based upon the subject's actions or other changes in the circumstances. The level of force shall be de-escalated immediately as resistance decreases, provided that the member remains in control and as safety permits.
- G. Members will modify their force in relation to the amount of continued resistance offered by the subject.
 - 1. As the subject offers less resistance, the member will immediately lower the amount or type of force used.
 - 2. As the subject increases resistance, the member may increase the amount or type of force used.

- H. If the Department member is responding to an incident involving persons in need of mental health treatment, the member will act in accordance with the Department directive entitled “**Responding to Incidents Involving Persons In Need Of Mental Health Treatment.**”

III. PRINCIPLES OF FORCE MITIGATION

During all use of force incidents, when it is safe and feasible to do so, Department members will use the principles of Force Mitigation to ensure effective police-public encounters. The concepts of Force Mitigation include:

A. Continual Communication

1. Members will attempt to use verbal control techniques to avoid or minimize confrontations prior to, during, and after the use of physical force.
2. When it is safe and feasible, members will exercise persuasion, advice, instruction, and warning prior to the use of physical force.
3. Members should attempt to establish and maintain verbal communication in all police-public encounters and to continually evaluate the effectiveness of that communication. Members will:
 - a. when practical, establish and maintain one-on-one communication where only one member speaks at a time.
 - b. vary the level of assertiveness of their communication depending on the type of police-public encounter and whether a serious crime has been committed or life or property is at risk.
4. When encountering noncompliance to lawful verbal direction, members are not required to immediately use force. When it is safe and feasible to do so, members will consider:
 - a. adjusting their verbal communication.
 - b. if feasible, allowing a different member to initiate verbal communications.

NOTE: Members should refrain from giving simultaneous directions to avoid any potential conflicts.

- c. requesting additional personnel to respond or making use of the specialized units and equipment available through a notification to OEMC.

NOTE: Members will, when practical, request assistance from specialized units, including a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained officer.

B. Tactical Positioning

1. When it is safe and reasonable to do so, members should make advantageous use of positioning, distance, and cover by isolating and containing a subject and continuously evaluating the member's positioning, subject's actions, and available force options.
2. Members should attempt to establish a [zone of safety](#) for the security of the responding members and the public. The zone of safety is where:
 - a. the incident scene has been secured;
 - b. the scene can be continually monitored or adjusted to maintain safety;
 - c. the subject does not pose a continuing threat to Department members or the public;
 - d. the subject can be continually monitored; and
 - e. the subject can be contained throughout the incident.

3. Members should provide for a safe and effective route for additional requested resources to approach the incident scene.

C. **Time as a Tactic**

1. When it is safe and reasonable to do so, members should use time as a tactic.
2. In order to use time as a tactic, a zone of safety should be established for the security of responding members and the public.
3. Using time as a tactic may:
 - a. permit the de-escalation of the subject's emotions and allow the subject an opportunity to comply with the lawful verbal direction;
 - b. allow for continued communication with the subject and the adjustment of the verbal control techniques employed by the members; and
 - c. allow for the arrival of additional members, special units and equipment, and other tactical resources.

IV. **LEVEL OF FORCE**

- A. **Cooperative Subject:** a person who is compliant without the need for physical force. The following force options are authorized when dealing with a cooperative subject:

1. Police Presence
 - a. Police presence is established through identification of authority and proximity to the subject. Mere police presence may result in compliant behavior by the subject.
 - b. Police presence alone is the only force option authorized for use with subjects who are fully cooperative.
2. Verbal Response
 - a. Verbal response consists of persuasion, advice, instruction, and warning in the form of verbal statements or commands that may result in compliant behavior.
 - b. Whenever it is safe and feasible, members will attempt to de-escalate confrontations by utilizing verbal control techniques prior to, during, and after the use of physical force.

- B. **Resister:** a person who is uncooperative. Resisters are further subdivided into two categories (1) passive resister; and (2) active resister.

1. **Passive Resister:** a person who fails to comply (non-movement) with verbal or other direction. In addition to the force options listed in Item IV-A for Cooperative Subjects, the following force options are authorized when dealing with a passive resister:
 - a. Holding Techniques

Holding techniques include a firm grip, grabbing an arm, wristlocks, and come-along holds (i.e., escort holds that are not elevated to compliance techniques), as well as any combination of the above.
 - b. Compliance Techniques

Compliance techniques are designed to amplify nonimpact pressure and increase the potential for controlling a subject.

- (1) The goal of applying joint manipulation and pressure point techniques to pressure sensitive areas of the body is to elicit and maintain established control through non-impact pain compliance.

NOTE: Members **will not** use a compliance technique that restricts blood flow to carotid arteries, causing the subject to lose oxygen to the brain.

- (2) Using a Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) to emit high-decibel focused sound waves to cause discomfort. Any use of the LRAD requires authorization from the Superintendent or his or her designee.

NOTE: The LRAD is not considered a use of force when used to deliver verbal messages or warnings at a decibel level not intended to cause discomfort.

c. Control Instruments

Control instruments are designed to amplify nonimpact pressure in order to increase the potential for controlling a subject. These instruments are placed mainly on the sensors of the skin covering bone. Control instruments are tools (e.g., baton) applied to joints and pressure sensitive areas of the body with non-impact pressure.

d. Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray and Capsaicin II Powder Agent Deployment

Oleoresin capsicum and Capsaicin II powder are highly inflammatory agents that occur naturally in cayenne peppers. The use of OC spray and Capsaicin II powder agent is intended to increase control by disorienting the subject and interfering with the subject's ability to resist arrest.

- (1) Oleoresin capsicum is only authorized to use against the two types of passive resisters described below AND only after the required authorization is received. No other use of oleoresin capsicum is authorized against passive resisters.

- (a) Occupant(s) of a motor vehicle who is passively resisting arrest and only after obtaining authorization from an on-scene supervisor of the rank of sergeant or above.

- (b) Noncompliant groups, crowds, or an individual taking part in a group or crowd (e.g., demonstrations, celebrations), only after obtaining authorization from the Superintendent or his or her designee.

- (2) Capsaicin II powder agent deployment is an authorized force option against passive resisters who are part of noncompliant groups or crowds **only** when used for area saturation and **only** after obtaining authorization from the Superintendent or his or her designee.

NOTE: Only Department-issued Capsaicin II powder agent projectiles and launchers may be used and only after the member has received Department-authorized training in their safe handling and deployment.

- (3) For further guidance on the use of OC spray, members will refer to the Department directive entitled "**Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Devices and Other Chemical Agent Use Incidents.**"

2. **Active Resister:** a person who attempts to create distance between himself or herself and the member's reach with the intent to avoid physical control and/or defeat the arrest.
- a. This type of resistance includes but is not limited to evasive movement of the arm, flailing arms, and full flight by running.
 - b. A subject who is attempting to avoid apprehension and who fails to comply with a sworn member's orders to reveal themselves is considered an Active Resister.
 - c. In addition to the force options authorized in Items IV-A and IV-B-1 for Cooperative Subjects and Passive Resisters, the following force options are authorized when dealing with an active resister:
 - (1) **Stunning**

Stunning is diffused-pressure striking or slapping the subject to increase control by disorienting the subject and interfering with his or her ability to resist.
 - (2) **Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray**

Oleoresin capsicum is an authorized force option against active resisters. If the active resister is part of a group or crowd, OC is authorized only after obtaining approval from the Superintendent or his or her designee.
 - (3) **Takedown**

The act of directing a subject to the ground to limit physical resistance, prevent escape, or increase the potential for controlling the subject.
 - (4) **Canines Used by Canine Handlers**

A canine under the control of a canine handler is an authorized force option when used consistent with the provisions of the Department directive entitled "**Canine Use Incidents.**"
 - (5) **Taser**
 - (a) The Taser is a device used to control and subdue a subject through the application of electrical impulses that override the central nervous system and cause uncontrollable muscle contractions.
 - (b) Only Department-issued Tasers may be used and only after the member has received Department-authorized training in their safe handling and deployment.
 - (c) For further guidance on the use of a Taser, members will refer to the Department directive entitled "**Taser Use Incidents.**"
 - (d) Using the Taser to drive stun an active resister is prohibited.

- C. **Assailant:** a subject who is using or threatening the use of force against another person or himself/herself which is likely to cause physical injury. Assailants are further subdivided into two categories.
1. The subject's actions are aggressively offensive with or without weapons. This category of assailant may include a subject who is armed with a deadly weapon but whose actions do not constitute an **imminent** threat of death or great bodily harm.
 - a. In addition to the force options authorized in Items IV-A and IV-B for Cooperative Subjects and Resisters, the following force options are authorized when dealing with this type of assailant:
 - (1) Direct Mechanical

Direct mechanical techniques are forceful, concentrated striking movements such as punching and kicking, or focused pressure strikes and pressures. These techniques can be combined with take-downs or pins against the ground or other objects.
 - (2) Impact Weapons

Impact weapons are designed to establish control by means of applying mechanical impact to a subject in order to disable elements of his or her musculoskeletal structure. Members will avoid the use of flashlights, radios, firearms, or any item not specifically designed as an impact weapon, unless reasonably necessary and no other practical options are available.
 - (3) Impact Munitions
 - (a) Impact munitions are projectiles intended to impact and incapacitate a potentially dangerous subject from a safe distance, thereby reducing resistance and gaining compliance while reducing the probability of serious injury or death.
 - i) Capsaicin II powder agent projectiles fired from a powder agent deployment system is considered an impact munition.
 - ii) The use of Capsaicin II powder agent projectiles as an impact munition requires authorization from the Superintendent or his or her designee.
 - (b) Only Department-issued impact munitions may be used and only after the member has received Department-authorized training in their safe handling and deployment.
 2. The subject's actions constitute an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to a Department member or to another person. In addition to the force options authorized in Items IV-A, IV-B, and IV-C-1 for Cooperative Subjects, Resisters, and Assailants, firearms and other deadly force responses are authorized when dealing with this type of assailant.
 - a. For further guidance on when the use of deadly force is authorized, members will refer to Department directive "**Use of Force.**"
 - b. For further guidance on the use of firearms, members will refer to Department directive "**Firearms Discharge Incidents Involving Sworn Members.**"
 - c. Chokeholds are only justified as a use of deadly force.
 - (1) A chokehold is defined as applying direct pressure to a person's trachea (windpipe) or airway (the front of the neck) with the intention of reducing the intake of air.
 - (2) Holding and control techniques involving contact with the neck, but which are not intended to reduce the intake of air, are not defined as chokeholds.

- (3) Under no circumstances will a member use a chokehold, or any lesser contact with the neck area, to prevent the destruction of evidence by ingestion.

V. POST-USE OF FORCE POSITIONING AND MONITORING

After gaining control of a subject, members will:

- A. avoid sitting, kneeling, or standing on a subject's chest, which may reduce the subject's ability to breathe.
- B. position the subject in a manner to allow free breathing. Whenever feasible, the subject will not be forced to lie on his or her stomach.
- C. monitor a subject until transported to a secure location.
- D. request and offer medical aid to any injured Department member, bystander, or subjects consistent with the procedures outlined in the Department directive entitled "**Use of Force.**"

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16-021 MWK/TSS

GLOSSARY TERMS:

1. **Zone of Safety**

The distance to be maintained between the subject and the responding member(s). This distance should be greater than the effective range of the weapon (other than a firearm) and it may vary with each situation (e.g., type of weapon possessed, condition of the subject, surrounding area).