



FORCE OPTIONS



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I. PURPOSE

This directive:

- A. outlines the Department policy on use of force response options and the expectations for members when employing force options.
- B. describes the concepts of Force Mitigation and the Department's commitment to de-escalation when responding to all incidents to ensure effective police-public encounters.
- C. outlines the various force options and the circumstances in which they are authorized when Department members are met with resistance or threats.
- D. satisfies CALEA Law Enforcement Standard Chapter 4.

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, including stopping the use of force when it is no longer necessary.
- C. **When Force is Authorized.** Department members' use of force must be objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance offered by a subject, under the totality of the circumstances.
- 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 will 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. Consistent with the Department policy that all uses of force must be objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional, Department members will refrain from using force against a person who is secured and restrained with handcuffs or other restraining devices (e.g., flexible restraining devices), unless the member:
 - 1. must act to prevent injury to the Department member, the restrained individual, or another person,
 - 2. must act to prevent escape, or
 - 3. is compelled by other law enforcement objectives.
- I. 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 titled **“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 use continual communication, including exercising persuasion, advice, and instruction 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.
 - c. when appropriate, employ trauma-informed communications techniques, including using a respectful tone and acknowledging any confusion or mistrust by the subject.
- 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 or other communication techniques.
 - b. 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, as necessary and appropriate.

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

NOTE: Department members should be mindful that some subjects may be physically or mentally less able to respond to verbal direction or verbal control techniques due to a variety of circumstances, including, but not limited to, the influence of alcohol or drugs, mental health or medical conditions, or language barriers.

5. When it is safe and feasible, members will provide a warning prior to the use of physical force.

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, creating distance between the member and a potential threat, or utilizing barriers or cover. Members will continuously evaluate 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 can be established when:
 - 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 Department members and other 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 by slowing down the pace of the incident.
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.
4. When it is safe and feasible to do so, Department members will allow individuals to voluntarily comply with lawful verbal direction (e.g., allowing individuals the opportunity to submit to an arrest before force is used).

IV. LEVELS OF RESISTANCE

- 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 without the need for further intervention.
 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 pressure compliance.
 - (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 and restrictions on the use of OC spray, members will refer to the Department directive titled "**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 Spray is authorized only after obtaining approval from the Superintendent or his or her designee.

- (3) Takedown

The act of physically 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 titled "**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) Using the Taser to drive stun an active resister is prohibited.
- (d) For further guidance and restrictions on the use of a Taser, members will refer to the Department directive titled "**Taser Use Incidents.**"

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) a subject whose actions are aggressively offensive with or without weapons and (2) a subject whose actions constitute an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to a Department member or to another person.

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.

- (a) 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.
- (b) For further guidance and restrictions on the use of impact weapons, members will refer to the Department directive titled "**Baton Use Incidents.**"

(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 *and restrictions* on the use of deadly force *as a last resort*, members will refer to Department directive titled "Use of Force."
 - b. For further guidance *and restrictions* on the use of firearms, members will refer to Department directive titled "Firearms Discharge Incidents Involving Sworn Members."
 - c. Department members are prohibited from using deadly force against a person who is a threat only to himself or herself.
 - d. Chokeholds or other maneuvers for applying direct pressure on a windpipe or airway 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) Members will not use chokeholds or other maneuvers for intentionally putting pressure on a person's airway as a takedown technique, unless the use of deadly force is authorized.
 - (4) 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.
 - e. Department members will not use carotid artery restraints or any other compliance technique that compresses the blood vessels in the neck to inhibit or restrict blood flow to carotid arteries, causing the subject to lose oxygen to the brain, unless the use of deadly force is authorized.

NOTE: Holding and control techniques involving contact with the neck, but which are not intended to inhibit or restrict blood flow to carotid arteries are not defined as carotid artery restraints.

V. POST-USE OF FORCE POSITIONING AND MONITORING

- A. Department members engaged in the use of force or application of authorized restraining devices are reminded of the dangers involved with positional asphyxia and will refer to the Department directive titled "Restraining Arrestees" for specific procedures concerning the physical restraint of persons in Department custody.

- B. After gaining control of a subject, members will:
1. avoid sitting, kneeling, or standing on a subject's chest, which may reduce the subject's ability to breathe.
 2. 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.
 3. monitor a subject until transported to a secure location.
 4. request and offer medical aid to any injured Department member, bystander, or subjects consistent with the procedures outlined in the Department directive titled "**Use of Force.**"

(Items identified with *italics/double underline* have been added or revised.)

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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).