



Principles to Consider Regarding the Use and Application of Force

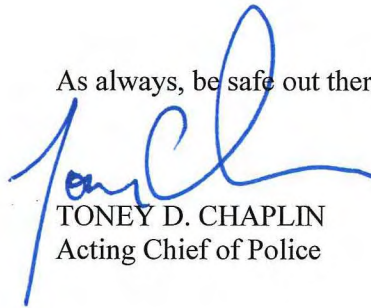
The purpose of this bulletin is to outline basic principles the Department is committed to accomplishing when officers consider making decisions regarding the use and application of force, to ensure such applications are used only to effect arrest or lawful detention or to bring a situation under legitimate control, and assist the Department in achieving its highest priority: safeguarding the life, dignity and liberty of all persons.

Officers are expected to exercise sound judgment, critical decision making when using force options and consider the points listed below when confronted with a situation that may require the use of force. Several of these points have already been put into practice and this bulletin provides officers with additional principles to consider when carrying out their duties.

- **SAFEGUARDING HUMAN LIFE AND DIGNITY.**
The authority to use force is a serious responsibility given to peace officers by the people who expect them to exercise that authority judiciously and with respect for human rights, dignity and life.
- **ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION.**
Communication with non-compliant subjects is often most effective when officers establish rapport, use the proper voice intonation, ask questions and provide advice to defuse conflict and achieve voluntary compliance before resorting to force options.
- **DE-ESCALATION.**
Officers shall, when feasible, employ de-escalation techniques to decrease the likelihood of the need to use force during an incident and to increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance. Officers shall when feasible, attempt to understand and consider the possible reasons why a subject may be noncompliant or resisting arrest. A subject may not be capable of understanding the situation because of a medical condition; mental, physical, or hearing impairment; language barrier; drug interaction; or emotional crisis, and have no criminal intent. These situations may not make the subject any less dangerous, but understanding a subject's situation may enable officers to calm the subject and allow officers to use de-escalation techniques while maintaining public and officer safety. Officers who act to de-escalate an incident, which can delay taking a subject into custody, while keeping the public and officers safe, will not be found to have neglected their duty. They will be found to have fulfilled it.
- **PROPORTIONALITY.**
When determining the appropriate level of force, officers shall, when feasible, balance the severity of the offense committed and the level of resistance based on the totality of the circumstances known to or perceived by the officer at the time. It is particularly important that officers apply proportionality and critical decision making when encountering a subject who is armed with a weapon other than a firearm.

- **CRISIS INTERVENTION.**
When feasible, Crisis Intervention (CIT) trained officers shall respond to calls for service involving individuals in mental or behavioral health crisis pursuant to current policies.
- **DUTY TO INTERVENE.**
When in a position to do so, officers shall intervene when they know or have reason know, that another officer is about to use, or is using, unnecessary force. Officers shall promptly report any use of unnecessary force and the efforts made to intervene to a supervisor.
- **FAIR AND UNBIASED POLICING.**
Members shall carry out their duties, including the use of force, in a manner that is fair and unbiased pursuant to Department General Order 5.17.

As always, be safe out there.



TONEY D. CHAPLIN
Acting Chief of Police