

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURE**

**DATE:** JULY 8, 2020  
**NUMBER:** 1.04 - ADMINISTRATION  
**SUBJECT:** USE OF FORCE  
**RELATED POLICY:** [1.04](#), [1.05](#), [1.06](#), [1.07](#)  
**ORIGINATING DIVISION:** INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**NEW PROCEDURE:**   
**PROCEDURAL CHANGE:**  **EXTENSIVE CHANGES**  
**SUPERSEDES:** DP 1.04 – 02/28/2020

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**I. PURPOSE**

This Department procedure establishes guidelines on the use of force options available to Department personnel.

NEW

This procedure should be read and applied in context with Department Procedures 1.55 and 1.56.

**II. SCOPE**

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

**III. BACKGROUND**

The San Diego Police Department recognizes and respects the value of human life, having this as its highest priority. It is the policy and practice of the Department to train its officers to perform their duties to the highest standards. Our officers perform their duties with integrity, and make decisions that are fair, respectful, lawful, and based on good judgment. However, in the performance of their duties, officers may encounter situations where the use of force is reasonable to effect a detention or arrest, to overcome resistance, or to protect themselves or others. This protection of human life recognizes that the innocent victim and uninvolved citizen are the least able to control a dangerous situation and thus must be our highest priority. Our next priority is to the officers protecting others as well as themselves.

NEW

The San Diego Police Department is committed to achieving a safe resolution to conflict whenever possible. To this end, the Department trains its officers in tactics, techniques, and strategies to control these types of incidents using time, distance, communications, and other available resources in an effort to de-escalate encounters and gain voluntary compliance. Refer to Department Procedure 1.55 De-escalation for established requirements and guidelines on the use of de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention tactics, and other alternatives to force.

NEW

Successful resolution of an encounter requires the cooperation of a subject to provide officers with the time and opportunity to employ these de-escalation techniques. While the ultimate objective of every law enforcement encounter is to avoid or minimize injury, nothing in this procedure requires an officer to retreat or be exposed to possible physical injury before applying reasonable force.

Penal Code 834a creates a duty to submit to an arrest by a peace officer. Penal Code 834a states, "If a person has knowledge, or by the exercise of reasonable care, should have knowledge, that he/she is being arrested by a peace officer, it is the duty of such person to refrain from using force or any weapon to resist such arrest."

Penal Code 148(a)(1) makes it illegal to resist, delay, or obstruct an officer's attempt to carry out his or her duties. Penal Code 148(a)(1) states, "Every person who willfully resists, delays, or obstructs any public officer, peace officer, or an emergency medical technician, as defined in Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797) of the Health and Safety Code, in the discharge of attempt to discharge any duty of his or her officer or employment, when no other punishment is prescribed, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or by imprisonment in a county jail not to exceed one year, or by both that fine and imprisonment."

Penal Code 69(a) is a wobbler and may be charged as a felony or a misdemeanor, and says: "Every person who attempts, by means of any threat or violence, to deter or prevent an executive officer from performing any duty imposed upon the officer by law, or who knowingly resists, by the use of force or violence, the officer, in the performance of his or her duty, is punishable by a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170, or in a county jail not exceeding one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment."

Penal Code section 835a(b) authorizes an officer to use reasonable force to make a lawful arrest, prevent an escape, or to overcome resistance. Officers are not required to retreat or desist from their efforts by reason of resistance or threatened resistance of the person being arrested. The decision to use deadly force in response to a perceived imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person is one of the most critical decisions an officer will ever be called upon to make. Only force that is reasonable to overcome resistance may be used to effect a detention or an arrest, or take a person meeting the requirements of Welfare and Institutions Code section 5150 into protective custody. Additionally, officers shall not use deadly force against a person

based on the danger that person poses to themselves, if an objectively reasonable officer would believe the person does not pose an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the peace officer or to another person.

Assembly Bill 392 amends Penal Code sections 196 and 835a. This bill states that an officer is justified in using deadly force upon another person only when the officer reasonably believes, based on the totality of the circumstances, that deadly force is necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or to another person, or to apprehend a fleeing person for a felony that threatened or resulted in death or serious bodily injury, if the officer reasonably believes that the person will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless the person is immediately apprehended.

AB392 also addresses an officer's decision making, leading up to their use of force, when given the time and opportunity to do so. When feasible, officers shall take reasonable steps in the pre-planning of responses to critical incidents, taking into consideration the need for additional officers, force options and other available resources.

The U.S. Supreme Court in *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989), acknowledged that the "reasonableness" test in analyzing the use of force is "not capable of precise definition or mechanical application." For that reason, in determining whether an officer's use of force is reasonable in a particular case, it is necessary to evaluate the facts and circumstances confronting the officer at the time that force was used. All of the surrounding circumstances will be considered, including whether the subject posed an imminent threat to the safety of the officer or others, the severity of the crime at issue, and whether the suspect actively resisted arrest or attempted to flee.

The evaluation of an officer's use of force will be undertaken from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, not through the 20/20 vision of hindsight. The central inquiry in every use of force case is whether the amount of force used by the officer was objectively reasonable in light of the particular circumstances faced by the officer. When evaluating an officer's use of force, it must be understood that the officer's decision to use force is based on the totality of the circumstances known to or perceived by the officer at the time the force is used.

NEW

The Department and the community expect officers to perform their duties with integrity, and make decisions that are fair, respectful, lawful, and based on good judgment. The expectation that officers will use reasonable force also carries the responsibility for other officers to verbally and/or physically intervene if the force necessary to overcome resistance has been achieved, as required by Department Procedure 1.56 Intervention Duties.

#### IV. **DEFINITIONS**

A. Active Resistance – Physically evasive movements to defeat an officer's

attempt at control, including bracing, tensing, running away or verbally signaling an intention to avoid or prevent being taken into or retained in custody.

- B. Assaultive Behavior - behavior that consists of aggressive physical opposition to being physically controlled and conveys a threat of injury to the officer; or, behavior that consists of a threat of attack conveyed through aggressive physical actions or aggressive physical actions coupled with verbal threats. Verbal threats alone do not constitute assaultive behavior. Assaultive behavior can be directed at the officer or others.
- C. Compliant Behavior - behavior that complies with the officer's verbal commands.
- D. Crowd Control and Mobile Field Force Techniques - levels of force that include close range strikes with an impact weapon. These strikes are designed to redirect or move a subject who fails to follow verbal commands. The amount of force used in delivering the strike should be reasonable given the circumstances. The intent of the technique is to move a subject backwards or to the side.
- E. Deadly Force - force that creates a substantial risk of causing death or serious bodily injury.
- F. De-escalation - encompasses a variety of strategies and/or techniques designed to reduce the immediacy of a threat, minimize the need for force, and gain voluntary compliance from a subject. Refer to Department Procedure 1.55 De-escalation for established requirements and guidelines on the use of de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention tactics, and other alternatives to force.
- G. Defending Force - the force needed to stop assaultive behavior against an officer or another person. This level of force generally involves impact strikes by the officer. Impact strikes can be delivered either by personal body weapons (e.g., hands, feet, knees, etc.) or impact weapons (e.g., PR-24, OPN, Baton, Flashlight). Due to the potential for serious injury, intentional strikes with an impact weapon are prohibited from being directed at the head, face or throat of the subject unless the subject's actions and behavior pose an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or others.
- H. Distraction Techniques - acts used to divert or redirect a subject's focus away from resistive behavior in order to assist the officer in gaining control of the individual. Distraction techniques may include an open-handed strike and/or knee strikes that specifically target the lower body, such as the buttock or thigh area. These are controlled strikes, using a lower level of force. These lower level types of strikes are not intended, nor likely to cause serious injury.

NEW

Personal body weapons may be used under these constraints, when lesser controlling force has not been effective, or the officer reasonably believes lesser controlling force will not be effective. If a distraction technique proves ineffective, a different distraction technique or force option should be considered.

I. Force - the act of gaining and/or maintaining control of a subject or situation.

NEW

J. Intervention - the act of attempting to prevent or attempting to stop the unreasonable use of force by another member. Intervene means to come between so as to prevent or alter a result or outcome. Refer to Department Procedure 1.56 Intervention Duties for established requirements and guidelines on members who observe or become aware of another member's use of unreasonable force.

K. Life-threatening Behavior - behavior likely to cause serious bodily injury or death.

L. Passive Resistance - behavior that consists of a refusal to comply with verbal commands and does not convey a threat of physical resistance to the officer or another person.

M. Verbal Control - a tactic used when encountering compliant behavior. Such control consists of the officer's mere presence, requests, explanations and orders.

## V. **PROCEDURES**

A. Force, as defined above, may be used to effect an investigative detention or arrest; control a subject who is in lawful custody; prevent an escape; or, protect the officer, the subject, or another person from injury or death. Any time force is used, the officer shall apply a level of force that is reasonable for the situation.

NEW

B. Before approaching a subject, when given the time and opportunity, and based on the totality of circumstances, officers shall use de-escalation strategies or techniques consistent with Department Procedure 1.55, De-escalation, to persuade the subject to voluntarily comply or to reduce the need to use a higher level of force. When officers encounter subjects that do not voluntarily comply, reasonable levels of force may be used to achieve a successful resolution consistent with this procedure

C. Officers should use caution when using a takedown technique on a handcuffed prisoner. There is potential for injury since the prisoner's hands are behind his or her back, and they have no way of breaking his or her fall. If possible, when the person is handcuffed, officers should consider other controlling methods prior to a

takedown.

NEW

- D. The use of canines, Tasers, extended range impact weapons, and standard impact weapon techniques may be used to control an actively resisting subject reasonably believed to possess, or have immediate access to, a deadly weapon.
- E. Officers should maintain control of enforcement situations. Officers who are not readily identifiable as police officers, whether on or off-duty, shall identify themselves as police officers, when it is safe to do so or if identification would not jeopardize the safety of the officer or others. Additionally, where feasible, when apprehending a fleeing person for a felony that threatened or resulted in death or serious bodily injury, where the Officer reasonably believes the person will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless immediately apprehended, Officers shall make reasonable efforts to identify themselves as peace officers and warn that deadly force may be used, prior to the use of force. Subjects should not be allowed to gain the advantage in a physical confrontation. Officers may need to use a force option which is greater than the subject's force level and which is reasonable under the circumstances.
- F. The use of force by an officer can be viewed as a matrix of force options that can be used in response to a subject's actions and behavior. It is the totality of the circumstances that an officer considers when using force. The matrix is a guide designed to assist officers in understanding how force can fluctuate and can assist officers in documenting the subsequent force used. The force matrix illustrates the relationship between a subject's actions and the officer's response.
- G. An officer's decision to use force is based upon the totality of the circumstances and various factors that pertain to officers and/or subjects. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 1. Age;
  - 2. Availability of other options;
  - 3. Ground fighting
  - 4. Confined spaces
  - 5. Distance between subject(s) and officer(s)
  - 6. Whether the subject is under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
  - 7. Whether the subject has a physical, mental, developmental, or intellectual disability;

NEW

8. Prior contacts with the subject or awareness of any propensity for violence;
9. Whether the subject appears to be resisting, attempting to evade arrest by flight, or is attacking the officer(s);
10. Environmental factors such as location/terrain/lighting conditions;
11. Number of subjects/officers;
12. Nature of offense;
13. Opportunity/Time, provided by subject, to allow for de-escalation;
14. Proximity to weapons;
15. Size;
16. Skill;
17. Strength/endurance;
18. Language barriers;
19. Training and experience of the officer;
20. Whether the subject is armed or perceived to be armed;
21. Crowd control situations; and
22. Any other exigent circumstances.

H. Use of Firearms

1. Officers shall not discharge any firearm in the performance of their duties, except as authorized by this Department procedure.
2. No officer shall discharge a firearm in the performance of duty except:
  - a. During authorized training at a target range;
  - b. When the officer has a reasonable belief that a subject (or animal) poses an imminent threat of death or serious bodily

injury to the officer or another person;

NEW

c. When necessary to apprehend a fleeing suspect if there is probable cause to believe the suspect has committed a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of death or serious bodily injury, and the officer reasonably believes the suspect is armed with a deadly weapon and the suspect will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless immediately apprehended; or,

d. As permitted by Department Procedure 6.09, Handling of Injured Animals.

3. A verbal warning to submit to the authority of the officer shall be given prior to the use of a firearm, if feasible, and if doing so would not increase the danger to the officer or other persons.

4. Officers shall exercise the utmost care in their handling and use of firearms while engaged in the performance of their duties and while exercising their option to carry a loaded and concealed weapon while off- duty. Factors that should be considered before an officer discharges a firearm include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. The life-threatening behavior perceived by the officer;

b. Immediacy of the threat;

c. Suspect(s) age, size, skill, injury, or disability;

d. Environment (field of fire);

e. The presence of and perceived capabilities of the suspect's weapon;

f. Officer's current level of training and capability with their weapon;

g. Type of crime.

NEW

5. Firearms are found to be generally ineffective in stopping vehicles. Firearms shall not be discharged at a vehicle solely in an attempt to disable the vehicle, without Incident Commander approval. Officers shall consider the ramifications when shooting at moving vehicles, such as:

a. Moving vehicles present a rapidly changing field of fire;

b. If the driver is incapacitated, the vehicle would be uncontrolled; or,



- c. The action could create a danger to the public that outweighs the need to use deadly force.
- d. Shooting through barriers such as auto glass consisting of several layers of laminated safety glass, can affect the trajectory and effectiveness of a projectile. The glass fragmentation created by the projectile travelling through auto glass exposes the officer, civilian bystanders and others inside the vehicle to the potential of serious eye, inhalation and laceration injuries.

NEW

- 6. Officers shall not discharge a firearm from a moving vehicle or at an occupant of a vehicle unless:
  - a. The officer has probable cause to believe that the subject or the vehicle poses an **immediate threat of death or serious physical harm to the officer and there is no reasonable alternative for the officer to avoid the harm**; or,
  - b. The officer has probable cause to believe that the subject or the vehicle poses an **immediate threat of death or serious physical harm to other persons**.

NEW

- 7. Officers shall not knowingly position themselves in the path of a moving vehicle and will make reasonable efforts to move out of the path of a moving vehicle when time and opportunity permit.
- 8. Warning shots present a danger to the officer and other persons. They are prohibited, except under exigent circumstances when:
  - a. The officer has a reasonable belief that a subject (or animal) poses an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person; or
  - b. The warning shot is necessary to apprehend a fleeing suspect if there is probable cause to believe the suspect has committed a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of death or serious bodily injury, and the officer reasonably believes the suspect is armed with a deadly weapon and the suspect will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless immediately apprehended.
- 9. Firearms are not designed or intended for use as impact weapons and shall not be used to strike another person, except when necessary to protect the officer or another person from death or serious bodily injury.

## **VI. REPORTING THE USE OF FORCE**

A. Officers who use force shall ensure that detailed, accurate reports (arrest, detention, or ARJIS-9) describing the force used and all the circumstances and facts surrounding the use of that force are prepared, including, but not limited to, factors listed in the Force Matrix section of this procedure. In addition, force effectiveness statistical data is also collected whenever force is used. To facilitate this, officers will complete a Use of Force, BlueTeam entry.

### **B. Reportable Force**

For reporting purposes, the following are considered use of force incidents requiring a report:

1. Any force option, control hold, or weaponless defense technique applied to a person, or any force that causes injury or complaint of injury to either the officer or the subject being restrained;
2. Discharge of a firearm in an official capacity;
3. Discharge of a Taser;
4. Use of the baton, police nunchaku (OPN), or other impact weapons where the suspect has been struck;
5. Use of any type of chemical agent (mace, OC, etc.);
6. Use of a police service dog, when a bite or other injury occurs;
7. Use of any restraint device, to include a cord cuff, WRAP restraint device, safety control chair or restraint car seats, as outlined in Department Procedure 6.01;
8. When the officer overcomes physical resistance to applying the handcuffs;
9. Use of "specialty munitions," as defined in Department Procedure 1.36, Use of Specialty Munitions; and,
10. The pointing of a firearm at a person to gain compliance.

C. Officers who use a force option shall personally prepare the appropriate report (arrest, detention, ARJIS-9) documenting their use of force, except when an SDPD investigator interviews the officer and his/her statements (regarding the force used) are documented in the investigator's report.

- D. In the event San Diego Police Department officers are involved in a situation with an outside agency, the SDPD officer responsible for writing the report shall request documentation describing the outside agency officers/deputies use of force options.
- E. Whenever physical force used by an officer results in an injury that necessitates medical treatment of any person, the officer shall immediately contact a field supervisor (Refer to Department Procedure 6.01, Handcuffing, Restraining, Searching, and Transporting Procedures).
1. The field supervisor shall evaluate the circumstances surrounding the incident.
  2. The field supervisor shall notify the Watch Commander and/or field lieutenant.
  3. If the Watch Commander or field lieutenant deems the incident to be of significant magnitude, including but not limited to, a use of force resulting in great bodily injury, Internal Affairs shall respond and conduct an on-scene investigation.
  4. If Internal Affairs responds to the scene, the Watch Commander shall immediately telephone the Police Officers' Association and report the general nature of the incident.
  5. All statements made by the subject regarding his/her alleged or apparent injury should be documented.
  6. Photographs shall be taken to document the existence or absence of injury to the subject, officers, or other persons. Photographs shall also be taken of any damage to the clothing or personal property of the subject, officers, or other persons at the scene. The photographs shall be impounded as evidence.

## **VII. ASSEMBLY BILL 953**

Assembly Bill 953 (AB 953), also known as the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) of 2015, requires law enforcement agencies to collect data on all stops, detentions, and searches. This includes consensual searches and instances where force was utilized. In order to capture this data, a new application will be available for every event generated through the Department's MPS and Intranet systems beginning July 1, 2018. There is a template to collect the required data in the F: Drive under Templates/Patrol Based Forms/PD-953, if the database application is temporarily unavailable. The data documented on this form shall be entered into the electronic application prior to the end of officer's shift unless exigent circumstances exist.

Under this mandate, the data collected will include the date, time, and duration of the stop, the location, perceived race or ethnicity, perceived gender, perceived LGBT, perceived or known disability, English fluency, perceived age, and the reason for the stop, detention, or search. The reason for the stop may be generated from a call for service, a traffic violation, reasonable suspicion or knowledge that the person was engaged, or about to engage in criminal activity and conclude with the actions taken by the officer. These actions will describe the basis of the search, whether or not contraband or other evidence is discovered, the reason for and type of property seized and the results of the stop or detention. The data collected under RIPA replaces the data previously collected from vehicle stop data cards.

- A. When completing a detention and/or arrest report, officers will ensure the narrative includes that a RIPA entry was submitted for every person being arrested or detained.
- B. Supervisors will verify officers have documented the RIPA entry in their narrative prior to approval.

# SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT GUIDELINE

## Use of Force Matrix

NEW



Compliant Behavior	Passive Resistance Behavior	Active Resistance Behavior	Assaultive Behavior	Life Threatening Behavior
<p>Touch Verbal Control (Orders, explanations, requests, officer's presence)</p>	<p>Impact Weapons – Close Range strikes with an impact weapon may be used in crowd control situations as outlined in this procedure.) Impact Weapon Control Holds (PR-24, OPN, ASP, flashlight) Control Holds (other than with impact weapons), Pain Compliance, Pressure Points, Body Weight, Physical Strength</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Touch Verbal Control (Orders, explanations, requests, officer's presence)</p>	<p>Takedown Techniques, Distraction Techniques, Chemical Agents (OC spray may be used on a spitting person to assist officers in gaining control.)</p> <p>Canine, Taser, Extended Range Impact (ERI) and Impact Weapons <b>may be used as defined in section V.D. of this procedure</b></p> <p>Impact Weapons –Close Range strikes with an impact weapon may be used in crowd control situations as outlined in this procedure.) Impact Weapon Control Holds (PR-24, OPN, ASP, flashlight) Control Holds (other than with impact weapons), Pain Compliance, Pressure Points, Body Weight, Physical Strength</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Touch Verbal Control (Orders, explanations, requests, officer's presence)</p>	<p>Hard Impact Weapons (PR-24, OPN, ASP, flashlight) Personal Body Weapons (head, hands, elbow, knees and feet)</p> <p>Takedown Techniques, Distraction Techniques, Chemical Agents (OC spray may be used on a spitting person to assist officers in gaining control.), Canine, Taser, Extended Range Impact (ERI) and Impact Weapons</p> <p>Impact Weapons – Close Range strikes with an impact weapon may be used in crowd control situations as outlined in this procedure.) Impact Weapon Control Holds (PR-24, OPN, ASP, flashlight) Control Holds (other than with impact weapons), Pain Compliance, Pressure Points, Body Weight, Physical Strength</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Touch Verbal Control (Orders, explanations, requests, officer's presence)</p>	<p>Firearms Hard Impact Weapons (Blows to the head, face, neck and throat are prohibited unless defending against life-threatening behavior as defined in this procedure.)</p> <p>Hard Impact Weapons (PR-24, OPN, ASP, flashlight) Personal Body Weapons (head, hands, elbow, knees and feet)</p> <p>Takedown Techniques, Distraction Techniques, Chemical Agents (OC spray may be used on a spitting person to assist officers in gaining control.), Canine, Taser, Extended Range Impact (ERI) and Impact Weapons</p> <p>Impact Weapons – Close Range strikes with an impact weapon may be used in crowd control situations as outlined in this procedure.) Impact Weapon Control Holds (PR-24, OPN, ASP, flashlight) Control Holds (other than with impact weapons), Pain Compliance, Pressure Points, Body Weight, Physical Strength</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Touch Verbal Control (Orders, explanations, requests, officer's presence)</p>

Reasonable Force Under the Totality of the Circumstances

