

# Use of Force

## 300.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines on the reasonable use of force. While there is no way to specify the exact amount or type of reasonable force to be applied in any situation, every member of this department is expected to use these guidelines to make such decisions in a professional, impartial, and reasonable manner (Executive Law § 840).

In addition to those methods, techniques, and tools set forth below, the guidelines for the reasonable application of force contained in this policy shall apply to all policies addressing the potential use of force, including but not limited to the Firearms, Control Devices and Conducted Energy Device policies.

### 300.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Deadly force** - Force that, under the circumstances in which it is used, is readily capable of causing death or serious physical injury (Executive Law § 840).

**Force** - The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents or weapons to another person. This includes displaying firearms, chemical agents, impact weapons or electronic control weapons in order to gain compliance from another person. It is not a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed, or restrained. Any force used to subdue an individual beyond compliant that is, however, considered a use of force.

**Physical injury** - Impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

**Serious Physical Injury** - Physical Injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes death or serious and protracted disfigurement, protracted impairment of health or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ,

**Feasible** - Reasonably capable of being done or carried out under the circumstances to successfully achieve the arrest or lawful objective without increasing risk to the officer or another person.

**Display a chemical agent** - To point a chemical agent at a subject.

**Use/Deploy a chemical** - The operation of a chemical agent against a person in a manner capable of causing physical injury.

**Brandishes/Uses/Discharges a firearm** - The operation of a firearm against a person in a manner capable of causing physical injury.

**Brandishes/Uses/Deploys and impact weapon or electronic control weapon** - The operation of an impact weapon or electronic control weapon against a person in a manner capable of causing physical injury.

# Beacon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Use of Force*

---

**Uses a chokehold or other similar restraint** - Any application of sustained pressure to the throat or windpipe of a person in a manner that may hinder breathing or reduce the intake of air.

**Serious bodily injury** - Bodily injury that creates or causes a substantial risk of death; or unconsciousness; or serious and protracted disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member, organ or mental faculty.

**Objectively Reasonable** - An objective standard used to judge an officer's actions. Under this standard, a particular application of force must be judged through the perspective of a reasonable officer facing the same set of circumstances, without the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, and be based on the totality of the facts that are known to the officer at the time that the force was used.

### **300.2 POLICY**

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Officers are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied interactions and, when warranted, may use reasonable force in carrying out their duties.

Officers must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, their authority and limitations. This is especially true with respect to overcoming resistance while engaged in the performance of law enforcement duties.

The Beacon Police Department recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Vesting officers with the authority to use reasonable force and to protect the public welfare requires monitoring, evaluation, and a careful balancing of all interests.

#### **300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERVENE AND REPORT**

Any officer present and observing another law enforcement officer or a member using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intervene to prevent the use of unreasonable force.

Any officer who observes another law enforcement officer or a member use force that is potentially beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances should report these observations to a supervisor as soon as feasible.

#### **300.2.2 PERSPECTIVE**

When observing or reporting force used by a law enforcement officer, each officer should take into account the totality of the circumstances and the possibility that other law enforcement officers may have additional information regarding the threat posed by the subject.

### **300.3 USE OF FORCE**

Officers shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the officer at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

The reasonableness of force will be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene at the time of the incident. Any evaluation of reasonableness must allow for the fact that

### *Use of Force*

---

officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force that reasonably appears necessary in a particular situation, with limited information and in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving.

Given that no policy can realistically predict every possible situation an officer might encounter, officers are entrusted to use well-reasoned discretion in determining the appropriate use of force in each incident.

It is also recognized that circumstances may arise in which officers reasonably believe that it would be impractical or ineffective to use any of the tools, weapons or methods provided by this department. Officers may find it more effective or reasonable to improvise their response to rapidly unfolding conditions that they are confronting. In such circumstances, the use of any improvised device or method must nonetheless be reasonable and utilized only to the degree that reasonably appears necessary to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

While the ultimate objective of every law enforcement encounter is to avoid or minimize injury, nothing in this policy requires an officer to retreat or be exposed to possible physical injury before applying reasonable force.

#### **300.3.1 USE OF FORCE TO EFFECT AN ARREST**

A police officer or a peace officer may use reasonable physical force to effect an arrest, prevent escape of a person from custody, or in defense of self or others from imminent physical force (Penal Law § 35.30).

Force shall not be used by an officer to (Executive Law § 840):

- (a) Extract an item from the anus or vagina of a subject without a warrant, except where exigent circumstances are present.
- (b) Coerce a confession from a subject in custody.
- (c) Obtain blood, saliva, urine, or other bodily fluid or cells from an individual for scientific testing in lieu of a court order where required.

#### **300.3.2 FACTORS USED TO DETERMINE THE REASONABLENESS OF FORCE**

When determining whether to apply force and evaluating whether an officer has used reasonable force, a number of factors should be taken into consideration, as time and circumstances permit. These factors include but are not limited to:

- (a) Immediacy and severity of the threat to officers or others.
- (b) The conduct of the individual being confronted, as reasonably perceived by the officer at the time.
- (c) Officer/subject factors (e.g., age, size, relative strength, skill level, injuries sustained, level of exhaustion or fatigue, the number of officers available vs. subjects).
- (d) The effects of suspected drug or alcohol use.
- (e) The individual's mental state or capacity.
- (f) The individual's ability to understand and comply with officer commands.

### *Use of Force*

---

- (g) Proximity of weapons or dangerous improvised devices.
- (h) The degree to which the individual has been effectively restrained and his/her ability to resist despite being restrained.
- (i) The availability of other reasonable and feasible options and their possible effectiveness.
- (j) Seriousness of the suspected offense or reason for contact with the individual.
- (k) Training and experience of the officer.
- (l) Potential for injury to officers, suspects, and others.
- (m) Whether the individual appears to be resisting, attempting to evade arrest by flight, or is attacking the officer.
- (n) The risk and reasonably foreseeable consequences of escape.
- (o) The apparent need for immediate control of the individual or a prompt resolution of the situation.
- (p) Whether the conduct of the individual being confronted no longer reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to the officer or others.
- (q) Prior contacts with the individual or awareness of any propensity for violence.
- (r) Any other exigent circumstances.

#### 300.3.3 PAIN COMPLIANCE TECHNIQUES

Pain compliance techniques may be effective in controlling a physically or actively resisting individual. Officers may only apply those pain compliance techniques for which they have successfully completed department-approved training. Officers utilizing any pain compliance technique should consider:

- (a) The degree to which the application of the technique may be controlled given the level of resistance.
- (b) Whether the individual can comply with the direction or orders of the officer.
- (c) Whether the individual has been given sufficient opportunity to comply.

The application of any pain compliance technique shall be discontinued once the officer determines that compliance has been achieved.

#### 300.3.4 ALTERNATIVE TACTICS - DE-ESCALATION

When circumstances reasonably permit, officers should use non-violent strategies and techniques to decrease the intensity of a situation, improve decision-making, improve communication, reduce the need for force, and increase voluntary compliance (e.g., summoning additional resources, formulating a plan, attempting verbal persuasion).

### *Use of Force*

---

#### **300.3.5 STATE RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF OTHER RESTRAINTS**

Any application of pressure to the throat, windpipe, neck, or blocking the mouth or nose of a person in a manner that may hinder breathing or reduce intake of air is prohibited unless deadly physical force is authorized (Exec. Law § 840).

This application is subject to the same guidelines and requirements as a carotid control hold.

#### **300.3.6 USE OF FORCE TO SEIZE EVIDENCE**

In general, officers may use reasonable force to lawfully seize evidence and to prevent the destruction of evidence. However, officers are discouraged from using force solely to prevent a person from swallowing evidence or contraband. In the instance when force is used, officers should not intentionally use any technique that restricts blood flow to the head, restricts respiration, or which creates a reasonable likelihood that blood flow to the head or respiration would be restricted. Beacon Police Department

#### **300.4 DEADLY FORCE APPLICATIONS**

When reasonable, the officer shall, prior to the use of deadly force, make efforts to identify themselves as an officer and to warn that deadly force may be used, unless the officer has objectively reasonable grounds to believe the person is aware of those facts.

Use of deadly force is justified in the following circumstances involving an imminent threat or an imminent risk:

- (a) An officer may use deadly force to protect themselves or others from what the officer reasonably believes is an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.
- (b) An officer may use deadly force to stop a fleeing subject when the officer has probable cause to believe that the individual has committed, or intends to commit, a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious bodily injury or death, and the officer reasonably believes that there is an imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death to any other person if the individual is not immediately apprehended. Under such circumstances, a verbal warning should precede the use of deadly force, where feasible.

However, an officer shall not use deadly force against a person whose actions are a threat solely to themselves or property unless the person poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to officer or others in close proximity.

Imminent does not mean immediate or instantaneous. An imminent danger may exist even if the suspect is not at that very moment pointing a weapon at someone. For example, an imminent danger may exist if an officer reasonably believes that the individual has a weapon or is attempting to access one and intends to use it against the officer or another person. An imminent danger may also exist if the individual is capable of causing serious bodily injury or death without a weapon, and the officer believes the individual intends to do so.

# Beacon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Use of Force*

---

#### **300.4.1 MOVING VEHICLES**

Shots fired at or from a moving vehicle are rarely effective and involve considerations and risks in addition to the justification for the use of deadly force.

When feasible, officers should take reasonable steps to move out of the path of an approaching vehicle instead of discharging their firearm at the vehicle or any of its occupants.

An officer should only discharge a firearm at a moving vehicle or its occupants when the officer reasonably believes there are no other reasonable means available to avert the imminent threat of the vehicle, or if deadly force other than the vehicle is directed at the officer or others.

Officers should not shoot at any part of a vehicle in an attempt to disable the vehicle.

#### **300.5 REPORTING THE USE OF FORCE**

Any use of force by a member of this department shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately in a case report and a Subject Management / Use of Force Report. A separate Subject Management / Use of Force Report is required from each officer who used or directed the use of force and absent exigent circumstances shall be completed before the officer goes off duty. The officer should articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances. Any suspect complaints of injury, medical treatment received, or refusal of medical treatment shall be specified in the Subject Management / Use of Force Report. To collect data for purposes of training, resource allocation, analysis and related purposes, the Department may require the completion of additional report forms, as specified in department policy, procedure or law (Executive Law § 840).

#### **300.5.1 NOTIFICATIONS TO SUPERVISORS**

Supervisory notification shall be made as soon as practicable following the application of force.

#### **300.6 MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Once it is reasonably safe to do so, medical assistance shall be obtained for any person who exhibits signs of physical distress, has sustained visible injury, expresses a complaint of injury or continuing pain, or was rendered unconscious. Any individual exhibiting signs of physical distress after an encounter should be continuously monitored until the individual can be medically assessed. Individuals should not be placed on their stomachs for an extended period, as this could impair their ability to breathe.

Based upon the officer's initial assessment of the nature and extent of the individual's injuries, medical assistance may consist of examination by an emergency medical services provider or medical personnel at a hospital or jail. If any such individual refuses medical attention, such a refusal shall be fully documented in related reports and, whenever practicable, should be witnessed by another officer and/or medical personnel. If a recording is made of the contact or an interview with the individual, any refusal should be included in the recording, if possible.

The on-scene supervisor or, if the on-scene supervisor is not available, the primary handling officer shall ensure that any person providing medical care or receiving custody of a person following any use of force is informed that the person was subjected to force. This notification shall include a

### *Use of Force*

---

description of the force used and any other circumstances the officer reasonably believes would be potential safety or medical risks to the subject (e.g., prolonged struggle, extreme agitation, impaired respiration).

Individuals who exhibit extreme agitation, violent irrational behavior accompanied by profuse sweating, extraordinary strength beyond their physical characteristics, and imperviousness to pain, or who require a protracted physical encounter with multiple officers to be brought under control, may be at an increased risk of sudden death. Calls involving these persons should be considered medical emergencies. Officers who reasonably suspect a medical emergency should request medical assistance as soon as practicable and have medical personnel stage away.

See the Medical Aid and Response Policy for additional guidelines.

#### **300.6.1 ADDITIONAL STATE REQUIREMENTS**

An officer should take steps to obtain medical attention for a person who reasonably appears to be mentally ill and is behaving in a manner that is likely to result in serious harm to the person or to others.

Officers should document requests for medical or mental health treatment as well as efforts to arrange for such treatment.

#### **300.7 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

When practicable a supervisor should respond to the scene of a use of force incident. When a supervisor is able to respond to an incident in which there has been a reported application of force, the supervisor is expected to (Executive Law § 840):

- (a) Ensure that the officers involved receive any assistance necessary.
- (b) Obtain the basic facts from the involved officers. Absent an allegation of misconduct or excessive force, this will be considered a routine contact in the normal course of duties.
- (c) Ensure that any injured parties are examined and treated.
- (d) When possible, separately obtain a recorded interview with the individual upon whom force was applied. If this interview is conducted without the individual having voluntarily waived his/her *Miranda* rights, the following shall apply:
  - 1. The content of the interview should not be summarized or included in any related criminal charges.
  - 2. The fact that a recorded interview was conducted should be documented in the case report and Subject Management / Use of Force Report.
  - 3. The recording of the interview should be retained until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (e) Once any initial medical assessment has been completed or first aid has been rendered to either officers or the individual upon whom force was applied, ensure that photographs have been taken of any areas involving visible injury or complaint of pain, as well as overall photographs of uninjured areas.

# Beacon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Use of Force*

---

1. These photographs should be retained until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (f) Identify and, if possible, interview any witnesses, including any officers present at the incident.
- (g) Ensure that any member who used force completes the appropriate report and review and approve all related reports.
- (h) Evaluate the circumstances surrounding the incident and initiate an administrative investigation if there is a question of policy noncompliance or if for any reason further investigation may be appropriate.
- (i) Review each use of force by any personnel within his/her command to ensure compliance with this policy and to address any training issues. This review and the results thereof shall be documented in the Supervising Officer's section of the Subject Management / Use of Force Report.
  1. Failure to adhere to use of force guidelines shall subject a member to disciplinary action consistent with any applicable disciplinary guidelines and the collective bargaining agreement.
- (j) If the shift supervisor participated in or directed the use of force the responsibilities of the supervisor shall be moved to the designated Lieutenant. If the Lieutenant is unavailable the shift supervisor shall complete his or her normal duties under this policy but the Lieutenant shall review the use of force, review and approve the Subject Management / Use of Force report and complete the Supervising Officer's section and complete as many of the above items as circumstances permit.

In the event that a supervisor is unable to respond to the scene of an incident involving the reported application of force, the supervisor is still expected to complete as many of the above items as circumstances permit.

#### 300.7.1 DESIGNATED LIEUTENANT RESPONSIBILITY

Supervisors shall forward all Subject Management / Use of Force Reports to the Lieutenant designated by the Chief of Police.

The Lieutenant shall:

1. Review each use of force to ensure compliance with this policy and to address any training issues.
2. Submit reports to the DCJS when an officer (Executive Law§ 837-t)
  - (a) Brandishes, uses, or discharges a firearm at or in the direction of another person.
  - (b) Uses a carotid control hold or similar restraint that applies pressure to the throat or windpipe of a person in a manner that is reasonably likely to hinder breathing or reduce intake of air.
  - (c) Displays, uses, or deploys a chemical agent or control device, including but not limited to oleoresin capsicum (OC), pepper projectiles, tear gas, batons, or kinetic energy projectiles (see the Control Devices Policy).



### *Use of Force*

---

- (d) Brandishes, uses, or deploys an impact weapon.
- (e) Brandishes, uses, or deploys an electronic control weapon, including an electronic stun gun, flash bomb, or long-range acoustic device (see the Conducted Energy Device Policy).
  - (a) Engages in conduct which results in the death or serious bodily injury of another person.

### **300.8 TRAINING**

Officers shall receive annual training on this policy and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Subject to available resources, officers should receive periodic training on guidelines regarding vulnerable populations, including but not limited to children, elderly, pregnant persons, and individuals with physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities.

#### **300.8.1 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

Required annual training shall include:

- (a) Legal updates.
- (b) De-escalation tactics, including alternatives to force.
- (c) The duty to intervene.
- (d) The duty to request and/or render medical aid.
- (e) Warning shots (see the Firearms Policy).
- (f) All other subjects covered in this policy (e.g., use of deadly force, chokeholds and carotid holds, discharge of a firearm at or from a moving vehicle, verbal warnings).
- (g) Applications of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and negotiation, and any other training required by the Municipal Police Training Council Use of Force Model Policy (Executive Law § 840).

### **300.9 POLICY AVAILABILITY**

This policy shall be readily available to the public upon request and shall be posted on the department website (Executive Law § 840).