

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).

300.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Deadly force - Physical force which, under the circumstances in which it is used, is readily capable of causing death or other serious physical injury.

Force - The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents or weapons to another person. It is not a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed, or restrained.

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 Schenectady 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 INTERCEDE

Any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. An officer who observes another employee use force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law should promptly report these observations to a supervisor.

300.3 USE OF FORCE

Officers shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary or authorized by law 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 officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force that reasonably

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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 in the course of effecting or attempting to effect an arrest, or of preventing or attempting to prevent the escape from custody, of a person whom he or she reasonably believes to have committed an offense, may use physical force when and to the extent he or she reasonably believes such to be necessary to effect the arrest, or to prevent the escape from custody, or in self-defense or to defend a third person from what he or she reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of 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 (i.e., age, size, relative strength, skill level, injuries sustained, level of exhaustion or fatigue, the number of officers available vs. subjects).
- (d) The effects of drugs or alcohol.

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

The proper application of the carotid control hold may be effective in restraining a violent or combative individual when other force options are limited or during exigent circumstances where it reasonably appears that immediate control of a subject is necessary to:

- a. Prevent injury to an officer, the individual or others.
- b. Prevent a subject's access to weapons, deadly weapons or dangerous instruments.

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Due to the potential for injury, the use of the carotid control hold is subject to the following:

- a. The carotid control hold may only be used by those officers trained, by the Department, in the proper application of same.
- b. The carotid control hold may only be used when circumstances perceived by the officer at the time indicate that such application reasonably appears necessary to control an individual in any of the following circumstances.
 1. The individual is violent or physically resisting and the officer is in reasonable fear of physical injury, serious physical injury or death to him/herself, the individual or others.
 2. The individual, by words or actions, has demonstrated an intention to be violent and reasonably appears to have the potential to cause physical injury, serious physical injury or death to him/herself, the officer or others.
 3. It reasonably appears that the individual is attempting to access a weapon, deadly weapon or dangerous instrument or if not immediately controlled the individual will have access to a weapon, deadly weapon or dangerous instrument.
- c. The application of a carotid control hold on the following individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates that other available options reasonably appear ineffective, or would present a greater danger to the officer, the individual or others, and the officer reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of applying a carotid control hold:
 1. Individuals who are known to be pregnant
 2. Elderly individuals
 3. Obvious juveniles
- d. Any individual who has had the carotid control hold applied, regardless of whether he/she was rendered unconscious, shall be promptly examined by medical personnel and should be monitored until examined by medical personnel.
- e. The officer shall inform any person receiving custody, or any person placed in a position of providing care, that the individual has been subjected to the carotid control hold and whether the individual lost consciousness as a result.
- f. Any officer attempting or applying the carotid control hold shall promptly notify a supervisor of the use or attempted use of such hold.
- g. The use or attempted use of the carotid control hold shall be thoroughly documented by the officer in any related reports.

300.4 DEADLY FORCE APPLICATIONS

Deadly physical force may be used for such purposes only when he or she reasonably believes that:

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- a. The offense committed by such person was:
 1. A felony or an attempt to commit a felony involving the use or attempted use or threatened imminent use of physical force against a person; or
 2. Kidnapping, arson, escape in the first degree, burglary in the first degree or any attempt to commit such a crime; or
- b. The offense committed or attempted by such person was a felony and that, in the course of resisting arrest therefor or attempting to escape from custody, such person is armed with a firearm or deadly weapon; or
- c. Regardless of the particular offense which is the subject of the arrest or attempted escape, the use of deadly physical force is necessary to defend the police officer or another person from what the officer reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of deadly physical force.

300.4.1 SHOOTING AT OR FROM MOVING VEHICLES

Shots fired at or from a moving vehicle are rarely effective. Officers should attempt 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 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 that is required to be reported shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately within the Department's use of force packet.

The officer should articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances. 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).

Whenever an officer-involved shooting occurs the officer's immediate supervisor shall complete or direct the completion of a use of force packet in accordance with this policy.

SPD Force Report

300.5.1 NOTIFICATIONS TO SUPERVISORS

Supervisory notification shall be made as soon as practicable following the application of force in any of the following circumstances:

- (a) The application caused a visible injury.
- (b) The application would lead a reasonable officer to conclude that the individual may have experienced more than momentary discomfort.

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- (c) The individual subjected to the force complained of injury or continuing pain.
- (d) The individual indicates intent to pursue litigation.
- (e) Any application of the TASER (TM) or control device.
- (f) Any application of a restraint device other than handcuffs, shackles or belly chains.
- (g) The individual subjected to the force was rendered unconscious.
- (h) An individual was struck or kicked.
- (i) An individual alleges any of the above has occurred.

300.6 MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to booking or release, 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 he/she can be medically assessed.

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 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 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 (sometimes called "excited delirium"), 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).

300.7 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

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) Attempt to obtain a brief overview of the situation from any involved officers.
- (b) Ensure that any injured parties are examined and treated.

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- (c) 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 a property or other report.
 - 3. The recording of the interview should be distinctly marked for retention until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (d) Once any initial medical assessment has been completed or first aid has been rendered, ensure that photographs have been taken of any areas involving visible injury or complaint of pain, as well as overall photographs of uninjured areas.
 - 1. These photographs should be retained until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (e) Identify any witnesses not already included in related reports, including any officers present at the incident.
- (f) Review and approve all related reports.
 - 1. Supervisors should require that officers who engaged in the use of force submit the appropriate report.
 - 2. Supervisors shall forward all use of force reports to the Office of Professional Standards. Copies of these reports shall also be forwarded to the Administrative Services Bureau Chief and the involved officers bureau chief.
- (g) Determine if there is any indication that the individual may pursue civil litigation.
 - 1. If there is an indication of potential civil litigation, the supervisor should complete and route a notification of a potential claim through the appropriate channels.
- (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.
 - 1. Disciplinary actions will be consistent with any applicable disciplinary guidelines and collective bargaining agreements.

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

300.7.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

PLATOON LIEUTENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Platoon Lieutenant shall review each use of force by any personnel within his/her command to ensure compliance with this policy and to address any training issues.

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b. The Platoon Lieutenant should ensure that the Records Supervisor is provided with enough information to meet the use of force reporting requirements for the DCJS (Executive Law § 837-t).

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The Office of Professional Standards (OPS) Supervisor shall review all reports and report any violation of the Use of Force policy to the Chief of Police or the designed authority.

b. The OPS shall be responsible for the retention of all use of force reports.

RECORDS SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Records Supervisor shall ensure that reports are submitted 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).

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).

f. Engages in conduct which results in the death or serious bodily injury of another person.

300.8 TRAINING

Officers will receive annual training on this policy and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Training topics must include applications of use of force and conflict strategies as required by the State Use of Force Model Policy (Executive Law § 840).

Attachments

SPD Force Report.pdf



Schenectady Police Department



Use of Force Report

CLEARLY PRINT ALL INFORMATION

INCIDENT #:	INCIDENT TYPE:	SUBJECT NAME:		
		(L)	(F)	(MI)
INCIDENT LOCATION:		ADDRESS:		
INCIDENT DATE:	TIME:	DOB:	SEX:	RACE: Wh Blk Hisp
/ /	a.m. / p.m.	/ /	M F	Other-
OFFICER APPLYING FORCE:	(F)	(Rank)	PHONE: (Home)	(Other)
(L)			(Work)	
CHARGES:				

<p>[1] Nature of Contact (Circle all that apply)</p> <p>A. Arrest B. Field Interview C. Attempt to Control D. Traffic Stop E. Transport F. EDP G. Other: _____</p> <p>[2] Force Used By Officer (Circle all that apply)</p> <p>A. Resistant Handcuffing B. Leg Restraints C. Defensive Tactics (list all techniques used: e.g., Kumara, bent-wrist lock, Bar-Hammer, etc.) _____ D. O.C. Spray E. Strikes (indicate type below, and point of impact on suspect's body) i. Elbow to _____ ii. Fist to _____ iii. Hand to _____ iv. Knee to _____ v. Kick to _____ F. Taser (must complete Form SPD 126A – Taser Report) G. Impact Weapon (indicate type below, and point of impact on suspect's body) i. Expandable Baton to _____ ii. Other: _____ to _____ H. Police K-9 (indicate type below, and point of impact on suspect's body) i. Not bitten ii. Bitten on _____ I. Firearm pointed @ subject (indicate type below) i. Pistol ii. Shotgun J. Firearm fired @ subject (indicate type below, and point (if any) of impact on suspect's body) i. Pistol shot to _____ (or missed ___) ii. Shotgun shot to _____ (or missed ___) K. Other: _____ L. Threatened use of force (indicate letters): _____</p>	<p>[3] Reason Force Used: (Circle all that apply)</p> <p>A. Subject attacked another person B. Subject attacked officer C. To effect an arrest D. To prevent an escape from custody E. To prevent a crime F. To restrain for subject's safety G. Refused to comply w/ verbal commands H. Other: _____</p> <p>[4] Subject's Resistance (Circle all that apply)</p> <p>A. Passive Resistance (uncooperative, refuses to comply w/ commands) B. Active Resistance/Combative (physically interferes/resists, verbally/physically indicates intent to assault, attempts to injure) C. Used/Threatened Deadly Physical Force</p> <p>[5] Subject Impairment (Circle all that apply)</p> <p>A. None B. Alcohol C. Drugs D. Psychological E. Other: _____ F. Unknown (explain): _____</p> <p>[6] Effects of Force on Subject (Circle all that apply)</p> <p>A. No visible injury B. Minor Visible Injury (redness, swelling, abrasion) C. Serious Visible Injury (gunshot, laceration, fracture) D. Unconscious E. No complaint of injury F. Complaint of injury G. Injury w/ hospital treatment H. Injury w/ hospital admission I. Fatality J. Other: _____</p>
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[7] Officer's Observations of Subject's Condition
(Circle all that apply & indicate location on body)

A. No injuries or medical conditions observed
 B. Difficulty Breathing
 C. Abrasions: _____
 D. Bruising: _____
 E. Taser Probe marks
 F. Laceration: Minor / Severe

 G. Bleeding: Minor / Moderate / Heavy

 H. Stab wound: Minor / Severe

 I. Gunshot wound: _____
 J. Incoherent
 K. Fracture: Internal / Compound

 L. Other: _____
 M. Pre-existing injuries of above (indicate letters): _____

[8] Complaints Made By Subject
(Circle all that apply)

A. None
 B. Pain (Location: _____)
 C. Injury (Location: _____)
 D. Burning (Location: _____)
 E. Difficulty breathing
 F. Dizziness
 G. Nausea
 H. Numbness (Location: _____)
 I. Other: _____

[9] Subject Medical Treatment:
(Circle all that apply)

A. None necessary
 B. Refused treatment
 C. Treated @ scene
 SFD / MAS / Other: _____
 D. Treated @ hospital and released
 Ellis / St. Clare's / Other: _____
 E. Admitted to hospital
 Ellis / St. Clare's / Other: _____
 F. O.C. spray decontamination

[10] Photo(s) of subject *(attach to form)*

1. Taken by: _____
 2. Taken of (Location(s): _____
 _____)

[11] Force Used By Subject *(Circle all that apply)*

A. None
 B. Hands
 C. Fist
 D. Elbow
 E. Knee
 F. Kick
 G. Weapon (Type: _____)
 H. Other: _____

[12] Officer's Condition *(Circle all that apply & indicate location on body)*

A. No injuries or medical conditions observed
 B. Difficulty Breathing
 C. Abrasions: _____
 D. Bruising: _____
 E. Laceration: Minor / Severe

 F. Bleeding: Minor / Moderate / Heavy

 G. Stab wound: Minor / Severe

 H. Gunshot wound: _____
 I. Incoherent
 J. Fracture: Internal / Compound

 K. Other: _____
 L. Pre-existing injuries of above (indicate letters): _____

[13] Other Officers Present ___ Yes ___ No

1. _____, _____
 Rank Last name First Name
 2. _____, _____
 3. _____, _____
 4. _____, _____
(If additional officers present, note in narrative or on SIR Supplement form)

[14] Civilian Witnesses ___ Yes ___ No

1. _____
 Last Name First Name Address Phone #
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
(If additional witnesses present, note in narrative or on SIR Supplement form)

Narrative:

Officer's Signature: _____	Date: / /	Reviewing Supervisor's Signature: _____	Force Used: <input type="checkbox"/> Proper <input type="checkbox"/> Improper	Date: / /
Print Name: _____		Print Name: _____		