



Tactical De-escalation


Berkeley Police Department
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Overview

- The goal of this training is to provide a framework for response to suspects armed with edged weapons, impact weapons, or those who are unarmed but non-compliant.
- Following basic principles will increase safety for Officers, suspects and the public.

The trigger for application of de-escalation tactics occurs when police action is not immediately necessary to protect the officer or others from harm. If force or police action is not immediately required, then officers should apply de-escalation tactics at the earliest opportunity. To apply trained de-escalation tactics, it is essential that officers understand and are able to recognize the signs of escalating behavior.

- Berkeley PD has an excellent record when dealing with people experiencing mental health crisis, armed suspects and violent non-compliant suspects.
- Berkeley PD has a culture of de-escalation. This training is designed to provide a structure for the tactical response to these incidents.



- Have you been in a situation where you would have been legally justified in using deadly force but chose not to?

Current Situation

- Since the Michael Brown shooting there has been increased scrutiny of law enforcement. The primary concern is how Police deal with unarmed non-compliant suspects or suspects armed with a weapon other than a firearm.

Sanctity of Life

Agency mission statements, policies and training curricula should emphasize the sanctity of all human life — the general public, police officers and criminal suspects — and the importance of treating all persons with dignity and respect.

Priorities of Life

- Hostages/Victims
- Innocent bystanders
- Law enforcement
- Suspect

Public Perception

Maybe 1 shot to the leg or something could be understood but 15 shots?

They lined up and shot a puny little guy with a knife. Chickens. Me and my little sister could have taken him in.

Why can't they use the bean bag rounds on his knife wielding arm to get him to drop the knife?

Public Perception

Why can't a fit, trained cop take a knife away without shooting? Are S.F. cops deliberately not trained in hand-to-hand combat and in martial arts techniques?

What's so ridiculous is that SFPD feels the need to just pump people full of lead. It's one thing to shoot to stop someone but these guys just fire, and fire, and fire like scared little kids.

Public Perception

"Failure to cooperate is not a basis to use deadly force," Burris said. "There are lots of ways to subdue a person with an edged weapon without creating a confrontation."

Can't police just throw a net on the guy?

Washington Post Study

- Washington Post study found 990 people were shot and killed by Police in 2015
- 75% of suspects were attacking an officer or another person prior to being shot. (28% were shooting at officers or someone else, 16% were attacking with other weapons or physical force, 31% were pointing a gun)

Washington Post Study

- 9% of shootings involved an unarmed suspect
- 50% of suspects had guns
- 16% of suspects had knives
- 5% tried to hit officers with vehicles
- 3% had replica firearms

Law and Policy

PC 835a. Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance.

A peace officer who makes or attempts to make an arrest need not retreat or desist from his efforts by reason of the resistance or threatened resistance of the person being arrested; nor shall such officer be deemed an aggressor or lose his right to self-defense by the use of reasonable force to effect the arrest or to prevent escape or to overcome resistance.

Deadly Force Policy U-2

- Officers shall not discharge firearms or use other lethal force in connection with police duty, except in the following circumstances:
- (a) When the officer reasonably believes that doing so is necessary to protect the officer or others from death or serious bodily injury, and, where feasible, some warning has been given
- (b) To apprehend a suspected fleeing felon:
 - (1) When necessary to prevent escape, and
 - (2) When the officer has probable cause to believe that the suspected fleeing felon poses a significant threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or others, and
 - (3) Where feasible, some warning has been given.

Less Lethal Force Policy

- Less-than-lethal munitions shall only be deployed and used by trained officers authorized by the Chief of Police.
- Except during authorized training programs, less-than-lethal force shall be deployed only at the direction of a sergeant or command officer, or the Incident Commander in a crowd situation.
- Less-than-lethal force shall only be used in the following situations, and, where feasible, after some warning has been given:
 - (a) When an act of violence is occurring, or is about to occur;
 - (b) To overcome the resistance of a physically combative person, or to gain compliance from a non-compliant person reasonably believed to be armed;
 - (c) To deter a person who is reasonably believed to be armed and is threatening to harm him/herself, another person, or an officer; or,
 - (d) To resolve a potentially violent incident not otherwise described above, when deemed reasonable by the authorizing sergeant or commander

Less Lethal Force Policy

- When practical, approval for the deployment and use of less-than-lethal force will be obtained from the Patrol Division Watch Commander. If there is no Watch Commander on duty, deployment authorization will be requested from the Duty Command Officer (DCO).
- (a) Prior to deployment, efforts should be made to ensure an appropriate medical response is available.
- (b) In the event exigent circumstances preclude prior command approval, the supervisor authorizing less-than-lethal force deployment shall notify the Watch Commander, or in his/her absence the DCO, as soon as practical.

De-escalation Defined

- As recently summarized by the U.S. Department of Justice:
- De-escalation more broadly refers to the strategic slowing down of an incident in a manner that allows officers more time, distance, space and tactical flexibility during dynamic situations on the street. Applying these specific skills increases the potential for resolving the situation with minimized force or no force at all, which reduces the likelihood of injury to the public, increases officer safety and mitigates the immediacy of potential or ongoing threats.

Signs of Escalation

Stages of escalation

- Calm
- Trigger
- Agitation
- Acceleration
- Peak
- De-escalation
- Recovery

Signs of Escalation

Potential aggression triggers

- Provocation from another
- Interruption of routine/award
- Having to face consequences for behavior

Signs of Escalation

Common Signs of Agitation

- Raised Voice
- Rapid Speech
- Fidgeting
- Shaking
- Balléd Fists
- Pacing
- Aggressive Posture

Verbal De-escalation

Phrases to Avoid:

- You want to go to jail?
- Calm down.
- What's your problem?
- You people...
- Come over here.
- I'm not going to tell you again.

Verbal De-escalation

Phrases to Consider Using:

- Excuse me, sir, may I talk to you?
- What can I do to help?
- For your safety and mine
- Could I ask you...?
- Would you assist me?
- You look like a reasonable person.
- What's the matter?

Verbal De-escalation

- People don't like being told what to do.
- Lower your voice
- Take the time to actively listen. Let the subject vent
- Show empathy
- Ask open ended questions
- Reflect back or paraphrase what the subject tells you
- Offer acceptable options
- Look for voluntary behavioral change

UK Approach

- Generally don't send armed officers to knife calls.
- They are able to arrest suspects without injury to officers.
- Emphasis on slowing down the incident and effective communication.
- Shields are used as a last line of defense against knives.
- Shields are also used to isolate a suspect armed with an impact weapon.

UK VS. US

- UK tactics do not automatically transfer
- Suicide by cop
- Access to weapons in patrol vehicle

Suicide By Cop

California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST, 2) identifies a SBC when "a subject "engages in behavior which poses an apparent risk of serious injury or death, with the intent to precipitate the use of deadly force by law enforcement personnel towards that individual."

Suicide By Cop (SBC)

- Spontaneous or planned

SBC Profile

- 96% of the perpetrators were male
- Ages ranged from 18-54
- Weapons ranged from firearms (46%), stabbing instruments (46%) and firearm replicas (8%)
- 58% asked to be killed by police
- 58% had a psychiatric history
- 38% had previously attempted suicide
- 50% were intoxicated
- 42% had a history of domestic violence
- 38% had a criminal history

Parou, Barry, Psy.D., "Crisis Intervention: Suicide In Progress - A Working Document", Public Safety Research Institute, 1999

SBC Warning Signs

- The subject is barricaded and refuses to negotiate.
- The subject has just killed someone, particularly a close relative, his mother, wife or child.
- The subject says that he has a life-threatening illness.
- The subject's demands of police do not include negotiations for escape or freedom.
- The subject has undergone one or more traumatic life changes (death of a loved one, divorce, financial devastation, etc.)
- Prior to the encounter, the subject has given away all of his money or possessions.
- The subject has a record of assaults.

SBC Warning Signs Cont.

- Subject says he will only surrender to the person in charge.
- Subject indicates that he has thought about planning his death.
- Has expressed an interest in wanting to die in a "macho" way.
- Has expressed interest in "going out in a big way."
- Subject expresses feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- Subject dictates his will to negotiators.
- Subject demands to be killed.
- Subject sets a deadline to be killed.

SBC Response

SBC Positive Behaviors

- Less interactive tension
- Lowered voice
- Less anger
- Less profanity
- Diminished aggressive body language
- Increased non-aggressive body language
- Diminished threats of violence
- Less hopelessness and helplessness
- Greater willingness to listen to the officer's suggestions
- Solicitation of situation outcome promises and safeguards, such as "No handcuffs, no press and I will surrender if you will..."

SBC Negative Behaviors

- Hyper-vigilance (scanning)
- Change in rate of breathing
- Counting down or up

Knife Related Incidents

Standoff vs. Attack

Tueller Drill (21 Foot Rule)

In the time it takes the average officer to recognize a threat, draw his/her sidearm and fire 2 rounds at center mass, an average subject charging at the officer with a knife or other cutting or stabbing weapon can cover a distance of 21 feet.

Video Review

Is there an immediate threat?

Who is creating that — the officer or suspect?

Can you take a little time and get more help?

C.U.T.T.

- Create Distance- Isolate the suspect and control his movement while maintaining a safe distance.
- Use Cover- Immediately move to cover. Always have an escape route.
- Transmit- Broadcast the nature of the emergency, location, request CIT/MH, less lethal and supervisor. Stage BFD
- Tactically Communicate- Establish communication with subject using CIT where feasible. Only 1 officer talks.

Tactical Principles

- Contact/ Cover
- Use of cover, position of tactical advantage
- Don't backpedal
- Escape routes
- Clear communication
- Sometimes less is more

Support Roles

- Less Lethal
- Traffic/ Crowd Control
- Support/ Arrest

Documentation

- Document efforts to de-escalate the incident
- Document resources requested and used
- Describe subject's actions and statements in detail
