

6.0 USE OF FORCE

6.1 POLICY

It is the policy of the Buffalo Police Department to use only that amount of physical force that is objectively reasonable to achieve a legitimate law enforcement objective, including protecting a person from the imminent use of physical force, effecting an arrest or preventing an escape from custody. Any force used must be consistent with the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 35 of the New York State Penal Law. Excessive or unreasonable force shall not be used.

** This policy is written in recognition of the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Vesting officers with the authority to use reasonable force to protect the public welfare requires a careful balancing of all interests.

DEFINITIONS

A. **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 that officer at the time that the force was used.

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

C. **Physical Injury** – Impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

D. **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.

6.2 USE OF FORCE - GENERALLY

A. Members of the Department must be familiar with Article 35 of the NYS Penal Law which outlines the legal parameters for the use of physical force and the use of deadly physical force.

B. Physical force shall only be used when no other viable option is available.

C. When force is used, only that amount of force that is objectively reasonable to overcome a subject's resistance or aggression shall be employed.

D. The use of force must be reasonable and can never be reckless.

E. During an encounter in which force has become necessary, the level of resistance or aggression displayed by the subject may vary at different points in the encounter. The

level of force used by the Officer shall be adjusted to changes in the suspect's level of resistance or aggression.

DUTY TO INTERVENE

Any officer present and observing another officer using force that he/she reasonably believes to be clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force, if and when the officer has a realistic opportunity to prevent harm.

RETALIATORY FORCE

Members are prohibited from using force against persons engaged in First Amendment protected activities or to punish persons for fleeing, resisting arrest or assaulting a member, or for any other reason

DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

De-Escalation Techniques are actions taken by members that are designed to eliminate the need to use force in order to resolve any event or situation. De-Escalation Techniques include: talking to a person using a tone of voice and language that is not aggressive or confrontational; creating space or placing barriers between the member and the person; waiting the person out when circumstances permit; permitting a person to move about when safe; permitting a person the opportunity to make statements or ask questions; slowing down the pace of an incident; tactical repositioning and requesting additional resources. The guiding principles for de-escalation are patience, flexibility, and the desire to resolve each situation peacefully

DE-ESCALATION

Members should, when practicable and reasonable, avoid the Use of Force by using De-Escalation Techniques, including verbal persuasion and warnings, slowing down the pace of an incident, waiting out persons, using barriers, creating distance (and thus the reactionary gap) between the member and the threat, and requesting additional resources such as specialized units, CIT trained members, behavioral health care providers, or negotiators, before resorting to force, and to reduce the need for force. De-escalation Techniques mitigate the threats and gives officers time to utilize extra resources, and increases time available to call more officers or specialty units.

1. Members should, when practicable and reasonable, talk to the person; attempt to convince the person to comply; reduce any threat presented by withdrawing to a position that is tactically advantageous; or take actions that allow the member greater distance and time, in order to de-escalate a situation or deploy a lesser force option or no force at all.
2. Members should perform their work in a manner that avoids unduly jeopardizing their own safety or the safety of others through poor tactical decisions including, but not limited to, immediately approaching a person without proper evaluation of the situation, failing to leave sufficient space between the member and the person, closing the reactionary gap, or escalating a situation.
3. Members should not use tactics that unnecessarily escalate an encounter or create a need for force.

4. Members should de-escalate force immediately as resistance decreases.
5. If the member has no alternative to using force, the member shall use only the amount of force that is objectively reasonable to respond to the threat or resistance and shall immediately reduce the level of force as the threat or resistance lessens or stops.

CRITICAL THINKING

Prior to using force, members should use a critical thinking and decision-making framework to analyze and respond to incidents. This framework will allow members to uphold the sanctity of life and protect themselves by decelerating and stabilizing a situation to minimize the likelihood of a Use of Force incident. Using this framework, members should: 1. Assess the situation, threats, and risks; 2. Gather relevant facts about the incident; 3. Consider police powers and BPD policy; 4. Identify options and determine the best course of action; and 5. Act, review, and re-assess the situation

6.3 **USE OF FORCE CONTINUUM**

A. Members of the Department may use no more than the amount of force which is objectively reasonable to achieve a legitimate law enforcement objective. In most cases, the degree of resistance or aggression displayed by a subject will be the primary factor in determining what level(s) of force by the Officer is reasonable and authorized. A subject's reaction to an Officer's attempts at control or restraint may be broadly classified into five categories. Those categories, together with the generally authorized Officer force response options, are set forth below:

1. **Compliant/ Cooperative**

The subject generally complies with the commands of the Officer and offers no resistance. In this instance the use of force is not authorized, but customary handcuffing and escort techniques are authorized.

2. **Passive/Verbal Resistance**

The subject passively resists the Officer's attempts to gain compliance or is verbally abusive, insulting or taunting and refuses to comply with the Officer's commands, but is not verbally threatening to cause imminent physical harm to the Officer or another person. The Officer shall use verbal techniques to achieve compliance and if those techniques are unsuccessful, is authorized to take physical control of the subject by grabbing, holding, and /or using customary handcuffing techniques on the subject.

3. **Active Resistance**

The subject makes physically evasive movements to defeat an Officer's attempt at control (e.g. bracing, tensing, moving away) or verbally threatens imminent harm to the Officer or another person or verbally signals an intention not to be taken into or retained in custody, providing the subject's intent to physically resist is clear. The Officer is authorized to physically restrain and take control

of the subject by grabbing, holding forcibly handcuffing and/or using pain compliance holds and/or chemical agent on the subject.

4. Physical Resistance

The subject engages in or is about to engage in resistance or aggression that is aimed directly at the Officer. This includes grabbing, pushing, punching, kicking, biting, throwing objects or any behavior in which the Officer becomes the object of the subject's actions. Physical resistance also includes that situation in which an Officer reasonably believes that the subject is using or is about to use the above degree of physical force against another person. The Officer is authorized to use the amount of force which is objectively reasonable to overcome the resistance or aggression by using chemical agent, physical skills, physical tactics or impact weapons, or any appropriate lesser means of force.

5. Deadly Resistance

The subject engages or is about to engage in such an escalated level of resistance or aggression that the Officer reasonably believes the subject's actions constitute "deadly physical force." "Deadly physical force" means physical force that, under the circumstances in which it is used, is readily capable of causing death or other serious physical injury. It may include attempts to render the Officer unconscious, grabbing for the Officer's service firearm, blows to vital organs, stabbing, shooting, or any other action that would create a likelihood of causing the Officers serious physical injury or death. This category also includes a subject who an Officer reasonably believes is using or is about to use deadly physical force on another person. This level of resistance or aggression authorizes the Officer to use the amount of force objectively reasonable to preserve life or prevent serious physical injury and includes the use of deadly physical force.

B. Although a subject's level of resistance or aggression is usually the primary factor that determines what level of force is reasonable and authorized, there may be other factors present that may reasonably cause an Officer to escalate or de-escalate the level of force used during an encounter. These factors include, but are not limited to:

1. Officer/Subject Factors (e.g. relative age, size, strength, skill level, injury/exhaustion, number of Officers versus number of subjects);
2. Influence of drugs or alcohol;
3. Presence/proximity of weapons;
4. Other tactical factors (e.g. position of advantage, cover, time for decision);
5. Availability of other viable force options.

C. PROHIBITED USES OF FORCE

1. Force shall not be used by an officer for the following reasons:

- a. To extract an item from the anus or vagina of a subject without a warrant, except where exigent circumstances are present;
- b. To coerce a confession from a subject in custody;
- c. To obtain blood, saliva, urine, or other bodily fluid or cells, from an individual for the purposes of scientific testing in lieu of a court order where required;
- d. Against persons who are handcuffed or restrained unless it is used to prevent injury, escape, or otherwise overcome active or passive resistance posed by the subject.

2. The use of a chokehold or any other similar restraint is strictly prohibited. Chokehold restraint is defined as any application of sustained pressure to the throat or windpipe of a person in a manner that may hinder breathing or reduce intake of air OR restricting the flow of blood to the brain by compressing the neck where the carotid arteries are located.

6.4 USE OF DEADLY PHYSICAL FORCE

- A. Members of the Department may use deadly physical force but only when it is necessary to defend the Officer or third person from what the Officer reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of deadly physical force.
- B. Even if the use of deadly physical force is authorized, the Officer may not be reckless in its use.
- C. Depending upon the circumstances in which they are utilized, the use of the night stick, restraining holds, police vehicles, as well as service firearms, may be construed as the use of deadly physical force.
- D. If feasible, Officers will issue a verbal warning before using deadly physical force. Verbal warnings need not be issued when the Officer believes that doing so would increase the danger to the Officer or another person.

6.5 USE OF FIREARMS

- A. Members of the Department shall discharge their firearms at a person only in those circumstances in which it is necessary to defend the Officer or another person from what the Officer reasonably believes to be the imminent use of deadly physical force. In attempting to take a suspect into custody, members of the Department shall discharge their firearms only in those circumstances in which the member reasonably believes that the use of deadly physical force by the suspect is imminent.

- B. Members shall not discharge a firearm or shoulder weapon from or at a moving vehicle or its occupants unless the occupants of the other vehicle are using deadly physical force against you or another person by means other than the vehicle. Members shall not discharge their firearms at or from a moving vehicle when the consequences of so doing will jeopardize the safety of other members of the Department or innocent bystanders.
- C. In those circumstances in which members of the Department are justified in discharging their firearms, they are not allowed to do so recklessly.
- D. Warning shots are prohibited.
- E. Members of the Department may use their firearms for target practice or competition at an approved range. Dry firing or other forms of practice on any Departmental property, except under the personal direction of a firearms instructor, is strictly prohibited.
- F. Members of the Department may use their firearms to incapacitate wild, vicious or rabid animals consistent with the guidelines set forth in M.O.P. Chapter 2.

6.6 DRAWING WEAPONS

- A. A member of the Department is authorized to remove his/her firearm from its holster or gun mount and have it ready for immediate use, in any circumstance in which the member reasonably believes his/her life or safety may be in danger.
- B. A member of the Department may point his/her firearm at a person when the officer reasonably believes that the person poses an immediate risk of death or serious physical injury to any other person.

6.7 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – USE OF FORCE OR INJURIES TO CIVILIANS

- A. Reporting requirements shall apply whether an incident occurred on or off-duty. A member of the Department shall prepare a Use of Force Report (via Blue Team) when (s)he:
 - 1. applies any level of physical force as defined in Section 6.3 A3, A4 or A5 above on a person;
or
 - 2. uses chemical spray on or affecting a person;
 - 3. charges a subject with resisting arrest in violation of the NYS Penal Law Section 205.30.
 - a. When a member of the Department charges a subject with resisting arrest in violation of the NYS Penal Law Section 205.30, that member

shall promptly notify their immediate on duty supervisor. The on-duty Supervisor shall as soon as practical, and in any event prior to the end of their tour of duty, conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the arrest and enter their findings on the subordinate's Use of Force Report (via Blue Team).

- b. If more than one officer is involved and uses any level force as defined above, each officer shall prepare a Use of Force Report Use of Force Report (via Blue Team).
- B. In addition to a Use of Force Report, a member of the Department shall prepare a written report on an Intra-Departmental Memorandum (form P-73) whenever the member:
1. discharges his/her firearm for other than training or recreational purposes (refer to M.O.P. Chapter 3) (also see M.O.P. Chapter 8);
 2. takes any law enforcement action that results in, or is alleged to have resulted in, serious physical injury or death to another person.
- C. All reports submitted pursuant to subdivision “A” and “B” above shall be completed prior to the officer’s tour of duty and forwarded through the chain of command to the Internal Affairs Division. The Use of Force Report shall be submitted (via Blue Team). Each member in the chain of command shall review the report for completeness, accuracy and conformity with the Department’s use of force policy (via Blue Team). Each member in the chain of command shall enter their comments on the Use of Force Report (via Blue Team). The final approved report shall be completed **within 10 days** of the incident.

In the event the Use of Force Report (via Blue Team) cannot be utilized the following procedures will be followed:

The hard copy P-1374 will be completed. The on duty supervisor shall fax the P-1374 to the Internal Affairs Division at extension 5229 prior to the end of their tour of duty. If a fax is not possible, the on duty supervisor shall immediately send an email the IAD Inspector. The email shall contain an explanation for the inability to fax the report, the involved officer(s) name(s), the subject’s name, and the incident number.

- D. In the event an officer is incapacitated and unable to prepare the proper reports, the member's immediate Supervisor shall cause the reports to be prepared on the member's behalf (via Blue Team).
- E. The Internal Affairs Division shall review all such reports in relationship with Buffalo Police policy and Article 35 and make recommendations to the Commissioner. In addition, the Internal Affairs Division shall make an annual review of all such incidents and report any patterns or trends that may necessitate additional or modified training or that may require alterations in policy.

- F. The Training Academy Commander shall access Blue Team to determine if there are any training issues needing to be addressed

6.8 PERSONS INJURED RESULTING FROM THE USE OF FORCE

In all circumstances in which a person is injured by a member of the Department as a result of the use of force other than deadly physical force:

- A. the member shall have the injured person taken for medical treatment to the Erie County Medical Center, ECMC;
- B. notify his/her immediate supervisor;
- C. prepare form P-1261 (Request For Medical Attention of Injured Prisoner).

6.9 USE OF AUTHORIZED LESS LETHAL SUBSTANCES /DEVICES /EQUIPMENT

Non-lethal force options such as chemical spray (C.A.P.) or a police baton/asp may be used, if “objectively reasonable” based on the subjects level of resistance or the suspects level of offensive action. THE USE OF SAPS, WEIGHTED GLOVES OR OTHER NON-LETHAL WEAPONS NOT APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT ARE PROHIBITED.

Members of the Department shall use only that type of less lethal substances, devices or equipment specifically authorized by the Department and for which they have received proper training. Officers using these devices must successfully complete an initial training course in there use before issuance.

As per the Commissioner of Police, the Buffalo Police Department will only use/train with less lethal substances, devices and equipment that have been previously training and taught in the Erie County Police Academy.

- A. The Department authorized the following less lethal equipment:
 - 1. CAP Spray
 - 2. ASP/Baton

1. USE OF CHEMICAL SPRAY

A. The Product

The only chemical agent projector (C.A.P.) to be used by an on duty member of the Buffalo Police Department is the Department issued.

B. Issuance

The Department issues authorized chemical agent projectors to those Officers trained in its use. The chemical agent projector issued by the Department is for on duty use only and it is not to be used or carried while the member is off-duty or while employed outside the Department.

C. Replacement

Requests for replacement of empty or malfunctioning chemical agent projectors shall be submitted to the Police Academy on an Intra-Departmental Memorandum (P-73), which shall include an explanation of the necessity for the replacement. When an Officer requests replacement of an empty container, a check will be made to determine if the appropriate number of reports (P-1174) have been submitted to reflect why the chemical agent container is empty. If an appropriate number of reports have not been submitted, the Officer will not be issued a replacement chemical agent.

1. Although chemical agent containers are stamped with a date on the canister, the chemical agent is effective as long as the product is able to be discharged from the canister.
2. If an issued chemical agent projector is lost by any member of the Department, the member must immediately report the loss in writing. The report shall detail the circumstances of the incident and shall be forwarded to the Training Academy through the chain of command.

D. Use

1. In General

Chemical agent projector spray is a use of force and shall be used only in conformity with the Departmental policy on use of force. Accordingly, chemical agent projector spray may be used only when its use is objectively reasonable to achieve a legitimate law enforcement objective. As a general rule, chemical agent projector spray is authorized for use on a subject when an Officer encounters “Active Resistance” or “Physical Resistance”, as those terms are defined in the Department’s Use of Force Continuum.

E. Officer Accidentally Sprayed With A Chemical Agent

In the event that an Officer is accidentally sprayed with a chemical agent, or is intentionally sprayed by another person, the safety of that Officer becomes paramount. The attempted apprehension of the suspect must be abandoned if the safety of the sprayed Officer is unduly jeopardized.

F. Decontamination

1. The arresting Officer is responsible for the decontamination of any prisoner sprayed with a chemical agent. Decontamination will be accomplished in accordance with procedures and regulations at the City Court Lock-up.
2. If the chemical agent is used indoors, occupants are to be advised to air out the room where the chemical agent was used, for at least one hour before using the room.

G. Reporting

1. A Use of Force Report (via Blue Team) must be completed any time a member of the Department discharges a chemical agent, except those discharges occurring during testing, training, a malfunction, a use against an animal or an accidental discharge with no person affected. A Use of Force Report (via Blue Team) shall be completed by each Officer using the chemical agent.
2. Accidental discharges with no person affected or uses against animals require an Intra- Departmental Memorandum with explanation directed to the Training Academy.

2. USE OF ASP/BATON

- A. The Department issues the ASP Baton to those officers trained in its use. It is for on-duty use and may not be used off-duty or while employed outside the Department.

6.10 PERSONS KILLED OR SERIOUSLY INJURED AS A RESULT OF THE USE OF DEADLY PHYSICAL FORCE

A. While on duty

In all circumstances in which a person is killed or seriously injured by an on duty member of the Department and is the result of the use of deadly physical force:

1. the member shall call for medical attention if the person is still alive;
2. the member shall immediately notify his/her immediate supervisor who shall notify the 911 Communications Lieutenant, whom will notify the Commissioner
3. the Homicide Squad shall conduct the investigation.
4. members shall follow the guidelines set out in M.O.P. Chapter 17.

B. While off duty

In all circumstances in which a person is killed or seriously injured by an off duty member of the Department and is the result of the use of deadly physical force:

1. the member shall immediately notify the law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred and shall request medical attention if the person is still alive;
2. the member shall immediately notify his/her commanding officer, or in the commanding officer's absence, the 911 Communications Lieutenant;
3. the member shall follow the guidelines set out in M.O.P. Chapter 17;
4. and if the incident occurred outside of the city, the 911 Communications Lieutenant shall send Buffalo Police personnel to investigate.

6.11 DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS - REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A. BPD Firearms Report - Intra-Departmental Memorandum - E-Mail Message

Whenever a member discharges a firearm(s) while on duty, other than in practice or at a firearms range, (s)he shall immediately report the incident to the Supervisor on duty in the District in which the incident occurred, except that if the discharge occurred in the headquarters building, the 911 Communications Lieutenant shall be notified. The member must also immediately report the incident to his/her own Supervisor. The member's command will be responsible for obtaining an event number and transmitting an E-Mail message reporting the incident. The member shall prepare a report on an Intra-Departmental Memorandum prior to reporting off duty, relating the details of the incident. The Intra-Departmental Memorandum shall be addressed to the Commissioner, attention to the appropriate Commanding Officers in the chain of command. The member shall also prepare a Firearms Use Report (BPD-1) according to the instructions on that form and before the member reports off duty.

B. Investigation by Commanding Officer - Intra-Departmental Memorandum

The Commanding Officer of the member discharging the firearm shall conduct a complete investigation of the incident and review said incident against Buffalo Police policy and Article 35 and file a report on an Intra-Departmental Memorandum. The report shall be addressed to the Commissioner, attention the appropriate District/Division Commanding Officer in the chain of command.

Distribution: Original and copy of form BPD-1, the member's Intra-Departmental Memorandum and the Commanding Officer's Investigation Report on an Intra-Departmental Memorandum shall be sent to the appropriate District/Division Chief; third copy to command files.

C. Action by the District/Division Chief

The District/Division Chief shall carefully examine all reports. They shall make further inquiry as they deem appropriate. The Chief shall make recommendations concerning training, discipline, approval of the member's action, or other appropriate action on an Intra-Departmental Memorandum for the Commissioners final review and decision.

D. Incidents Occurring While Off Duty

1. If a member discharges a firearm while off duty, whether intentionally or accidentally, the member shall notify the police authorities in the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred, and (s)he shall also be responsible for submitting a Firearms Use Report (Form BPD-1) and an Intra-Departmental Memorandum to his/her commanding officer, except that no such notification or report need be made if the officer was legitimately engaged in target practice or hunting.
2. If a member intentionally or accidentally discharges a firearm while off duty and the result is an injury to himself/herself, or injury or death to another, the member shall immediately contact the law enforcement authorities in the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred. Medical attention shall be requested and the scene of the incident preserved (refer M.O.P. Chapter 17). The member must immediately contact his/her Commanding Officer, or in the Commanding

Officer's absence, the 911 Communications Lieutenant, and shall as soon as practicable there after, complete a Firearms Use Report and an Intra-Departmental Memorandum.

E. Investigating Incidents Occurring Outside the City

Whenever a member of the Department intentionally or accidentally discharges their firearm while outside the city, other than when legitimately involved in hunting or target practice, the 911 Communications Lieutenant or the Duty Inspector will determine whether a member of the Buffalo Police Department will respond to the incident based on the following:

1. the apparent surrounding circumstances;
2. the severity of the injuries, if any;
3. the possibility of criminal conduct by the member;
4. the distance from the City.

6.12 ADMINISTRATIVE DUTY

At the discretion of the Police Commissioner or his/her designee, any member involved in a shooting or any other incident resulting in death or serious physical injury to another, may be temporarily assigned to administrative duty. Administrative duty, for purposes of this section, is any assignment that does not ordinarily require the making of arrests. Assignment to administrative duty is in no way a punitive measure and shall be used when it tends to advance the mission and goals of the Department.

6.13 ANNUAL INSTRUCTION ON USE OF FORCE

All members of the Department authorized to carry weapons shall receive a copy of the Department's use of force policies as established in this section and shall receive instruction on these policies during their annual firearms qualification at the Firearms Unit.

6.14 DCJS Reporting requirements

In addition to any reporting requirements already contained in the Manual of Procedures (Chapter 3 - 6.0 Use of Force), if the circumstances of any incident meet the below definitions, a Blue Team Use of Force report shall be submitted to IAD following current directives.

- **Display a chemical agent** – To point a chemical agent at a subject.
- **Use/Deploy a chemical agent** – The operation of the 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 an 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.

- **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 intake of air OR restricting the flow of blood to the brain by compressing the neck where the carotid arteries are located.

- **Conduct that Resulted in Death**

- **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.

IAD will be responsible for filing the mandatory reporting to DCJS following the current reporting mechanism.