

Safer Communities through Policing Excellence



USE OF FORCE TRAINING MANUAL

USE OF FORCE

Use of Force

Introduction

Possibly one of the most controversial issues in policing today is the proper application of force. Other than the odd “scuffle” as a child, many people have never been involved in an actual physical confrontation with another person. Society’s perception of police use of force is often tainted through the media, television and movies. Rarely do any of these accurately show reality.

The majority of law enforcement officers have no desire to engage in a physical confrontation during their duties. However, due to their mandate, the police are often called to deal with a violently resisting subject.

Police use of force is designed to gain control of a subject using no more force than is reasonably necessary, having regard firstly to officer safety and secondly to minimizing harm to the subject.

Police are required to control people’s behavior to one of three ends:

- courts (dealt with according to law)
- institution (hospital or similar facility)
- release (breach of peace)

Accountability

Question Where are constraints and/or rules for police use of force found?

Answer Use the acronym “C.O.P.S.”

Criminal Code

Operation Policy

Provincial Statutes

Social Acceptance

Accountability At All Levels

- criminally
- civilly
- internally

“Bottom Line”

1. Force used must be reasonable.
2. Are your actions what a reasonable, well trained prudent officer would do, faced with a similar set of circumstances.

 **Escalation of Force**

Force is escalated based upon the level of resistance or threat.

When do we escalate from non-physical force to physical force? (Verbal Judo Institute)

Acronym – “**S.A.F.E.**”



Security Breach

Officer or others in danger or threatened
Property under control threatened



Attack

Officer’s personal danger zone is threatened
Officer assaulted / pre-assault cues



Flight

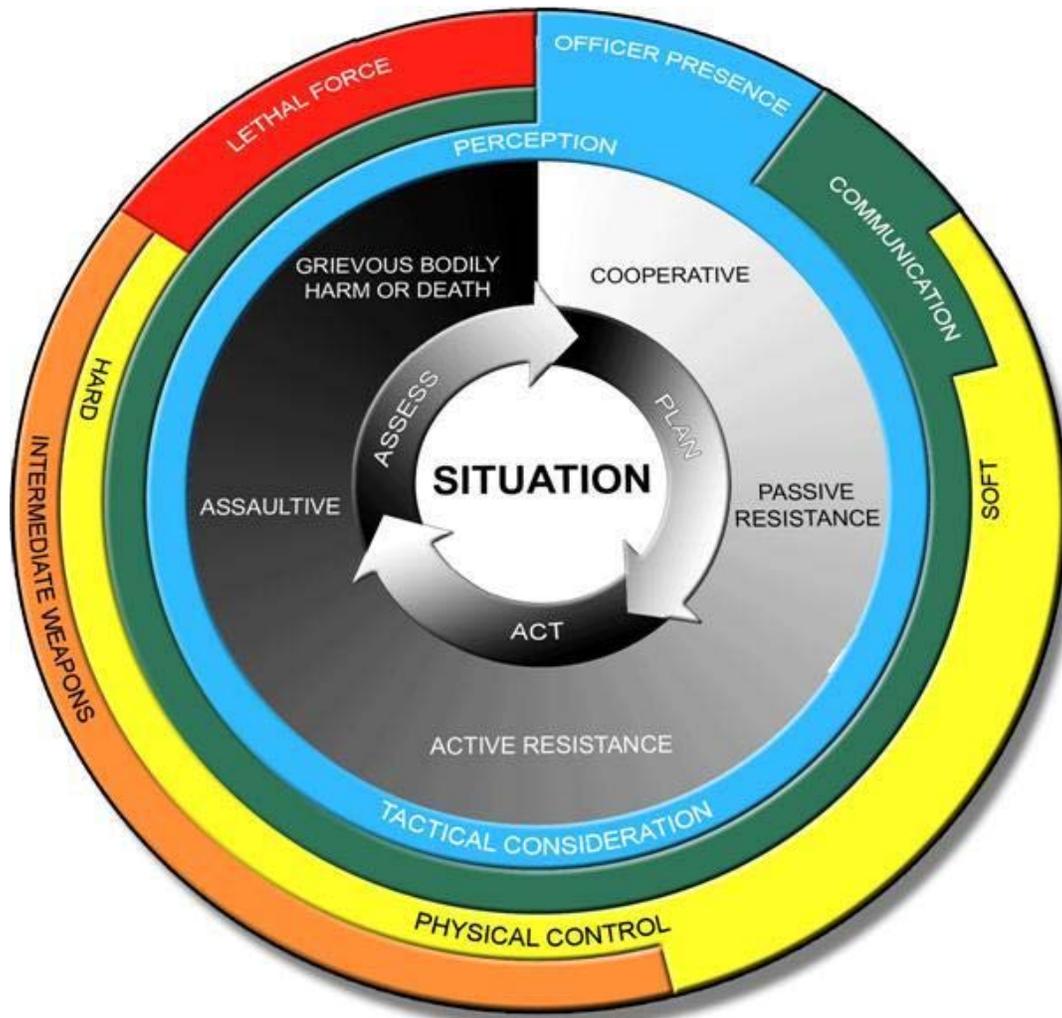
Unlawfully fleeing and verbal commands ignored, one must physically prevent the escape



Excessive repetition / non compliance

Exhausted all verbal options
Subject refuses to comply with lawful verbal commands

Use of Force Model



The officer continuously assesses the situation and selects the most reasonable option relative to those circumstances as perceived at that point in time.

1. The primary responsibility of a peace officer is to preserve and protect life.
2. The primary objective of any use of force is to ensure public safety.
3. Law enforcement officer safety is essential to public safety.

Use of Force Model

The Use of Force Model is one that both the public and police can understand and relate to. This theory is based on the concept of control. Police officers routinely deal with violent subjects and violent situations. The police role is to control this behavior, to end the violence, and have these people dealt with according to law.

It is important to note that there is no specific formula that governs a law enforcement officer's actions in particular situations. This is because every situation presents unique circumstances, such as environmental factors, officer capabilities and subject abilities. For this reason, an officer is required to assess the situation and determine the appropriate police response after reviewing the totality of the circumstances. Law enforcement officers are reminded that section 25 of the *Criminal Code* addresses the use of necessary force, provided the officer's assessment is based on reasonable grounds.

Legal Issues: Use of Force

The Criminal Code of Canada, Sec. 25(1):

Section 25

- (1) Every one who is required or authorized by law to do anything in the administration or enforcement of the law
 - a) as a private person,
 - b) as a peace officer or public officer,
 - c) in aid of a peace officer or public officer, or
 - d) by virtue of his office,
 is, if he acts on reasonable grounds, justified in doing what he is required or authorized to do and in using as much force as is necessary for that purpose.
- (2) Where a person is required or authorized by law to execute a process or to carry out a sentence, that person or any person who assists him is, if that person acts in good faith, justified in executing the process or in carrying out the sentence notwithstanding that the process or sentence is defective or that it was issued or imposed without jurisdiction or in excess of jurisdiction.
- (3) Subject to subsections (4) and (5), a person is not justified for the purposes of subsection (1) in using force that is intended or is likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm unless the person or the believes on

reasonable grounds that it is necessary for the self-preservation of the person or the preservation of any one under that person's protection from death or grievous bodily harm.

- (4) A peace officer, and every person lawfully assisting the peace officer, is justified in using force that is intended or is likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm to a person to be arrested, if
- a) The peace officer is proceeding lawfully to arrest, with or without warrant, the person to be arrested;
 - b) The offence for which the person is to be arrested is one for which that person may be arrested without warrant;
 - c) The person to be arrested takes flight to avoid arrest;
 - d) The peace officer or other person using the force believes on reasonable grounds that the force is necessary for the purpose of protecting the peace officer, the person lawfully assisting the peace officer or any other person from imminent or future death or grievous bodily harm; and
 - e) The flight cannot be prevented by reasonable means in a less violent manner.

Section 37

- (1) Justifies everyone to use force to defend themselves or anyone under his protection from assault, if they use no more force than is necessary.

Section 27

Justifies everyone in using as much force as is reasonably necessary to prevent the commission of an offence.

Section 34

In essence Sec. 37 justifies the use of deadly force, if certain conditions exist and no less violent means are available. In other words, if a person were under a reasonable apprehension of death or grievous bodily harm, they would be justified in responding with what amounts to deadly force.

Section 26

Taking into account all sections, which govern using force, this section covers excessive force. Everyone who is authorized by law to use force is criminally responsible for any excess thereof.

Anyone using force must be able to justify his or her actions. If there is no lawful justification for using force or more force is used than is necessary, then the law enforcement officer may be subject to criminal and/or civil liability.

The phrase “grievous bodily harm” has been held to mean a bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death, causes serious permanent disfigurement, or results in long-term loss or impairment of the functioning of any bodily member or organ.

Use of Force Factors

Legal and effective methods of force occur when:

- the method is reasonable
- it is necessary
- it is not overly aggressive under the circumstances presented

In order for police to use force to control a subject, three elements **MUST** exist:

1. **WEAPON/MEANS**
Did the subject have a weapon? (ie: fist, knife, bat, gun)
2. **INTENT**
Did the subject **demonstrate INTENT**. Did words and/or actions lead you to believe the subject had the intent to cause injury or death to you or others? (ie: I'm going to kick your ass!)
3. **DELIVERY SYSTEM/ABILITY**
Did the subject have the ability to use his/her weapon? (ie: was subject sitting in car with the windows up with fists clenched or standing 3 feet away)

An assailant saying, "I will shoot you tomorrow" or "one of these days" does not constitute opportunity because the threat must be in the present and the danger or action must be imminent.

If the subject(s) has demonstrated the above noted elements, the officer is justified in using the force option most appropriate to control the subject(s). There are several considerations to keep in mind when controlling the subject(s). Below are a few of the considerations:

1. Was there a lower level of force available to gain control?
2. Did or could you identify yourself as a law enforcement officer?
3. Did or could you provide the subject(s) the opportunity to de-escalate his/her level of resistance towards you? (A warning) There is an onus on the officer, if the situation allows, to provide the subject an opportunity to de-escalate. If the subject de-escalates, the member must de-escalate their use of force.
4. Did you identify the proper risk before intervening accordingly?
5. Was the target isolated? What would you hit if you missed the subject?

Use of Force Options

1. **Officer Presence** (*blue*) - appearance, uniform, reputation, physical stature, number of officers. Many people do not feel that presence is a force option, but in actual fact, a law enforcement officer's mere presence often influences or controls a person's behavior.
2. **Communication (Dialogue)** (*green*) - verbal skills in conjunction with non-verbal skills. Suggestions, advice, directions continuing through to loud, repetitive commands, in conjunction with facial expressions, stance, eye contact, etc. Dialogue is used continually with the rest of the force options. In fact, an extremely high percentage of all encounters with offenders are resolved at this level.
3. **Physical Control Soft / Hard** (*yellow*) - there are various sub-levels of force within the empty hand option. Sub-levels of force include:
 - Escort Position (implied force)
 - Superior Physical Strength (size or numbers)
 - Balance Displacement Techniques (throws, takedowns)
 - Pain Compliance Techniques (joint locks, pressure points, etc.)
 - Empty Hand or Weaponless Impact (stuns, strikes & kicks, using various parts of the anatomy)
4. **Intermediate Weapons/Weapons of Opportunity** (*orange*) - again there are various sub-levels in this force option. This option has relevance to modern day policing as technology is always inventing new methods for less than lethal force. Attempting to categorize each intermediate weapon would be confusing and unnecessary, as the Use of Force Model would become lengthy and constantly changing. This option represents an intermediate group of weapons between empty hand control and firearms. Sub-levels of force include:
 - Oleoresin Capsicum Spray (implied force, targeted spray)
 - Flash Bang Diversion (deployment)
 - Tear Gas (warning, deployment)
 - Impact Weapons (implied force & motor dysfunction strikes)
 - Police Dogs (implied & biting)
 - Arwen Gun (implied force & impact)
 - Police Vehicles (implied & impact)
 - Taser (implied & impact)
5. **Lethal Force** (*red*) - this includes the sidearm, shotgun, and various Tactics and Rescue Unit firearms. It would also include any other weapon or technique used in a manner that is likely or intended to cause Grievous

Bodily Harm or death. (ie: intentional punch to throat or baton strike to head)

“Law enforcement officers may use lethal force only when **necessary**, that is, when the officer has a **reasonable belief** that the subject of such force poses an **imminent danger** of **death or grievous bodily harm** to the officer or to another person.”

The phrase “grievous bodily harm” has been held to mean a bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death, causes serious permanent disfigurement, or results in long-term loss or impairment of the functioning of any bodily member or organ.

Necessary (Necessity)

Necessary means no other reasonable alternative is available to you. All other available means of preventing imminent and grave danger to you or other persons have failed or would be likely to fail. There is no safe alternative to using deadly force, and without it, you or others would face imminent and grave danger of death or grievous bodily harm.

An officer is not required to place him or herself, another officer, a subject or the public in unreasonable danger of death or serious physical injury before using deadly force.

Reasonable Belief

Reasonable belief, for purposes of this guide, means, facts and circumstances, including inferences and perceptions drawn by the officer when deadly force is used. The reasonable belief or decision must be viewed from the perspective of the officer on the scene, who may often be forced to make split second decisions in circumstances that are tense, unpredictable and rapidly evolving. Reasonable belief is not to be viewed from the calm vantage point of hindsight.

It is important to note that these are **FORCE OPTIONS** not **LEVELS OF FORCE**. If we were to categorize options into levels of force, we would see somewhere between 17 and 35 sub-levels of force, depending upon interpretation. In fact, some sub-levels of force under the various force options are on par with others. Certain intermediate weapons actually represent a lower level of force than some empty hand control tactics (eg - O.C. Spray is considered a lower level of force than physically striking a person in an area likely to cause injury).

For law enforcement officers different levels of force can be justified when lower levels of force are ineffective and or inappropriate and the use of higher levels of force are not justified or appropriate.

Levels of Subject Resistance

Law enforcement officer use of force is based on control. While in the course of their duties, law enforcement officers must often deal with subjects who exhibit all different types of behavior or levels of resistance. **The level(s) of resistance exhibited by a subject determines the level of control used by the officer.**

Levels of resistance are shown in the second inner circle of the Force Options Theory diagram. Although categorized for easy recognition, it is accepted that resistance levels will frequently overlap and can't be categorized precisely.

1. **Cooperative** (*white*) - commonly known as a “Yes” person. This individual obeys all lawful orders and direction by an officer.
2. **Passive Resistance** (*light gray*) - this individual does not physically interfere with an officer's attempt at control, but does nothing to assist. Common examples of this resistance would be “dead-weight”, a protest “sit-in”, and the body going limp, refusing to leave an area and not obeying a lawful order.
3. **Active Resistance** (*gray*) - this individual doesn't physically assault the officer, but actively resists in such a manner that won't allow the officer to control. Often accompanying this type of resistance is “Verbal Non-Compliance” (refusing a lawful order or direction). Examples of this resistance are pulling away from the officer or attempting to flee.
4. **Assaultive** (*dark gray*) - this individual not only resists a Law Enforcement Officer's action, but also actually attempts to physically assault the officer. This type of resistance is sometimes preceded by “pre-assault” cues, commonly known as “Psychological Intimidation” (clenching of fists, facial expressions, threats, etc.), and verbal non-compliance. (Note: An officer would be justified to respond physically even against “pre-assault” cues).
5. **Grievous Bodily Harm or Death** (*black*) - this individual violently resists. The resistance level exhibited attempts to cause grievous bodily harm or death the officer. Examples of these actions are a subject attempting to disarm a Law Enforcement Officer where the officer fears grievous bodily harm or death or an attack with weapon the officer fears grievous bodily harm or death from.

The phrase “grievous bodily harm” has been held to mean a bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death, causes serious permanent disfigurement, or results in long-term loss or impairment of the functioning of any bodily member or organ.

Situation Assessment – Plan/Act/Assess

This area is shown on the Use of Force Continuum in the inner circle.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The process of assessing a situation is threefold involving:

1. the situation
2. subject behaviours
3. officer's perception/tactical considerations

Careful consideration of all possible factors within each of the above categories, assists the officer in understanding and responding to situations, and in explaining to others how a particular situation was perceived, assessed and responded to.

The examples provided throughout this document are presented for the purpose of illustration and are by no means exhaustive.

During the course of their duties, an officer must constantly assess a situation, decide on a plan and subsequently act on that plan. Upon deciding on a plan, law enforcement officers have several force options in which to choose. The officer will select the option deemed most reasonable given the situation or resistance level. The "assess" process will continue throughout the situation.

It is important to recognize that two officers may respond differently to the same situation or resistance levels. Although certain factors may be the same in both situations (eg - number of subjects, demonstrated threat, environment), other factors differ (eg - officers' abilities and skills, officers' backgrounds). These latter factors affect how the officer assesses a situation and what option they believe most reasonable.

The variables are known as influencing factors.

Influencing Factors (Totality of Circumstances)

OFFICER CONSIDERATIONS

- Size
- Strength / overall fitness
- Skills
- Experience
- Age
- Fears
- Gender
- Sight, vision
- Cultural background
- Stress symptoms
- Number of officers
- Availability of back up
- Reasonable perception of subject's ability and willingness to resist
- Reasonable perception of imminent threat to public, self, or subject
- Proximity to firearm
- Position, distance, reaction time
- Disengagement
- Exhaustion, injury or disability

SUBJECT CONSIDERATIONS

- Size
- Strength
- Skills (when demonstrated)
- Age
- Gender
- Weapon(s)
- Multiple Assailants
- One subject facing one officer
- One subject facing two or more officers
- Multiple subjects facing one officer
- Multiple subjects facing multiple officers
- History of violence
- Drug-induced
- Goal-oriented
- Mental state
- Language barrier
- CPIC information
- Previous history, reputation

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Friendly or hostile territory
- Availability of physical cover
- Proximity of back-up officers
- Disengagement
- Terrain (footing, effectiveness of force options)
- Weather (footing, rain, snow, wind, visibility, effectiveness of force options)
- Lighting (visibility, daylight, darkness, effectiveness of force options)
- Physical position (rooftop, roadside, stairwell, cell area)
- Cover, concealment
- Other hazards

Legal Articulation / Use of Force Reporting

Reporting the use of force is critical. Such documentation is valuable as it provides information respecting the subject's behaviour, demeanour and condition at the time of arrest. Post-incident documentation also provides the investigating law enforcement officer with a permanent record of subject and officer actions. This is important because law enforcement officers may be called upon to provide legal justification for their actions months and perhaps even years after the event. Proper documentation of the use of force will assist law enforcement officers with this important task.

It is extremely important that law enforcement officer's reports first report the subjects resistance and then the use of force that the officers used. By reporting the subjects actions first, the report will read the way the actual incident occurred rather than reporting the officer's use of force and then justifying it with the subjects actions! If the officer requires multiple strikes to the subject the officer should ensure that they articulate what the intended result was of the strike and at which point the subject complied by whatever means was necessary.

"JUSTIFY YOUR ACTIONS"

The force used by the law enforcement officer to manage the incident can be legally justified when proper grounds to use that method are present. The facts of the situation and the influencing factors (totality of circumstances) form the picture the police must react to. Legal Articulation of these factors is described as the process by which an officer can explain clear, concise, and effectively their perception of events that occurred before, during and after a force encounter and thereby justify his/her actions. **It is important to remember the justification is based on each individual officer's perceptions at the time of the event. Equally important is the fact these perceptions may differ from officer to officer as they recount their version of the same event.**

After a force encounter of any level, others may assess the law enforcement officer's actions. This assessment may be initiated internally or by any number of external processes. The "test" the police must pass is the determination that the level of force chosen and used falls within the authorities granted peace officers under the Criminal Code of Canada, and was a reasonable level used considering the facts at hand. The "test" will be conducted by analyzing information provided by all parties involved. The information provided may be in the form of investigative statements provided by the involved law enforcement officer(s) and or witness statements. Statements from the officer(s) involved may be demanded or requested by external sources or by internal investigators.

Therefore, it is imperative the police are familiar with those authorities granted to them and the guidelines provided for them. Complete familiarization with Criminal Code use of force authorities, provincial regulations, and departmental use of force guidelines will assist the officer during the legal articulation of the use of force:

As previously noted, Section 25 of the Canadian Criminal Code deals with peace officers the authority to use force.

The Seven Tactical Principles

“Bad tactics should not be an excuse to escalate your level of force”

1. COVER

Cover is simply defined as protection for the officer from a perceived threat of injury or death. The officer's soft body armour is the most convenient cover available, if the officer is wearing it! It goes everywhere the officer does. The engine block of the officer's car, telephone poles, fire hydrants and mailboxes are other examples. Continual assessment of the environment at the scene, prior to and while confronting the individual(s) involved, will provide the officer with readily accessible cover if and/or when the officer needs it. The officer will not have to spend valuable survival time looking for cover. The officer will already have determined cover options if and/or when the situation escalates. The type of cover is dependent on the nature of the threat perceived by the officer. Ask this question when looking for and using cover. Will it prevent the threat from harming the officer?

Some confusion exists with respect to the term “concealment”. Concealment is not cover. Concealment hides the officer from the assailant. Once the officer has been discovered, concealment will not always stop the threat directed towards the officer. Examples of

concealment are, darkness, bushes, car doors, interior walls, most doors, and the list goes on. Choose cover with the limitations of concealment in mind.

When confronted with a potentially dangerous threat, move to cover first. Once behind cover, the officer may find himself better able to function mentally. A sub-conscious level of security affords the officer the ability to re-assess, plan and react properly to the threat. The officer is also physically safer! For these important reasons the officer should deal with this type of situation from cover as much as possible. Do not leave cover unless tactically necessary. Whenever possible plan ahead and look for cover as you approach a situation. If the environment provides no immediate cover, creating distance between the officer and the threat is an excellent form of cover, even when dealing with firearms. The further the officer is from the subject the odds of being struck by his rounds decrease. Prior to intervening and or during the officer's situation he should look for possible escape routes with which to tactically disengage if necessary.

Move to Cover While Responding

2. THREAT CUES

Threat cues are best defined as perceptions, either audible or visual, of a particular situation that **SHOULD** raise the officer's level of awareness and prepare him/her for any escalating confrontation that may occur. Looking for and reacting to the perceivable threat cues is a critical function of continual risk assessment. Some examples include, the subject conspicuously ignoring the officer, any exaggerated movements, ceasing all movement, and the thousand-yard stare. These are indications the subject is trying to formulate a plan in the officer's presence and not do what the officer instructs him/her to do. Threat cues may also be present throughout the environment the officer is working in. Tattoos, insignias, visible weapons and weapons of opportunity are also good examples.

HANDS, HANDS, HANDS. Look for, demand to see, and watch the **hands**. They will deliver the threat or at the very least, telegraph the threat is about to be delivered.

3. TIME DISTANCE RATIO

Time distance ratio is also referred to as the "reactionary gap". Officer safety training has shown that a minimum of 30 feet between the officer and the subject is considered "safe" when the threat of a potential physical assault to the officer is possible. This distance is based on the premise the officer could react with the proper level of force and control the subject if he/she suddenly, without warning, charged the officer. Police proxemics is the term used to describe the distance between the officer and the subject. At any distance barriers can be a tactical advantage.

Examples of these barriers are endless but each serves the purpose of forcing the subject to go around, through, or over something before he/she can get to the officer. The reactionary gap created allows the officer more time to assess and respond appropriately to the actions of the subject.

The greater the distance, the less vulnerable the officer will feel and the greater the response time will be. The less vulnerable the officer feels, the more appropriate force option is likely to be chosen.

4. ONE PLUS ONE RULE

This rule deals with confronting and handling subjects.

"When the officer finds one subject, do not assume they are alone."

"When the officer finds one weapon, do not assume it is the only one."

Be aware of "point men", "look outs", "back-ups", prior to arriving and while on scene. The officer's plans and/or actions should be based on the continual risk assessment of the subject and the situation until the officer is sure of the number of subjects or weapons present. The officer should **REMAIN ALERT** especially after he/she feels they have control. The general philosophy is, "Do not drop your guard or relax too soon."

Continue to assess the potential risk throughout the encounter.

Remember, the officer's level of force when dealing with a subject must be based on perceived threat cues or actions, not assumed threats.

5. VERBAL COMMUNICATION

How you talk during a confrontation can affect the outcome from the start. The officer must show a "Command Presence" by the tone of his/her voice. TAKE CHARGE. This command presence alone may be enough to diffuse the situation. The courts have also made it mandatory the officer identifies himself or herself as soon as a confrontation starts. Three simple words will cover the officer in this regard. "POLICE, DON'T MOVE! ". The officer has identified himself or herself and put the onus on the subject to follow the officer's direction from this point on.

6. DE-ESCALATION

What can the officer do to lessen the danger? The officers primary concern in any confrontation is the safety of the public and him or her-self. The danger level of a situation can "escalate" beyond your control. At this point, the officer should ask them self the question "Am I in danger, am I in control? What can I do to lessen the danger to myself and those around me"? The officer can use various strategies to achieve this, whether it is through verbalization, tactical repositioning, and a call for back up or the use of specialty units. The continuous assessment of the threat level throughout the situation will determine which strategy will effectively de-escalate the danger to the officer and those around him or her.

7. WIN MENTALITY

The officer's survival is essential if he or she is to serve and protect the public and them self. This rule speaks for itself. The WIN mentality must be created and engraved in the officer's mind. Surviving can be perceived as persevering through injuries and stress to control a situation. Ideally, the officer's WIN mentality will include timely and continual risk assessment, proper planning and tactics that whenever possible will prevent injury to him or her-self and others while attempting to gain control. The officer must visualize him or her-self in control and surviving. The officer should mentally rehearse surviving any threatening situation he or she can imagine. Repeatedly visualizing success will instill the WIN mentality. The WIN Mentality will rise to the surface when the officer's safety or that of someone else is threatened.

DO NOT QUIT!

Tactical Errors to Avoid

In conjunction with the Seven Tactical Principles, there are corresponding tactical errors that have become painfully evident during the history of officer/subject confrontations.

1. Failure to skillfully find and use available cover.
2. Failure to watch the hands of the subject(s).
3. Closing the reactionary gap too soon, prior to a proper risk assessment.
4. Indecision. Acting without a plan.

5. Slow movement in open areas.
6. Failure to know where your next position is, when you move.
7. Losing sight of your objective. What is the officer trying to accomplish? Do not take foolish risks. It may not be necessary to engage in a weapon confrontation. Keep the ultimate goals in mind - safety and apprehension.
8. Being embarrassed to react safely and properly.
9. Failure to identify and locate targets. Search from near to far. Clear the area you are in before moving to the next location.
10. Failure to hit with every shot.
11. Target fixation/tunnel vision. Look around!
12. Relaxing too soon. It may not be over. Stay covered and assume nothing. Subject everything and remain ready to react.

Tactics and Strategies

BE AWARE

When performing your duties, get into the habit of constantly scanning the environment. Note potential problems.

MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT

When engaged in conversation, maintain direct eye contact that is not threatening. Eye contact in non-combative situations shows confidence, internal strength, and most importantly, respect for the other person. Be aware of cultural differences.

LOOK CONFIDENT

Criminals can be expert observers of human behavior. Keep your head up and walk with confidence and purpose. Avoid looking lost, fatigued, uncertain or preoccupied.

VOCAL CONTROL

The quality of your voice is lined to your demeanor. Anger, fear, and fatigue can easily be communicated via voice. Remain calm and in control. Vocal control involves tone, pitch, volume and tempo.

KEEP YOUR HANDS FREE

Always have at least one hand free and unoccupied. Allow the field interview stance to become a habit. Get those hands out of your pockets.

WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHING

Make sure your uniform is not restrictive. Tight clothing restricts your ability to run, move, and strike. Earrings can be torn from earlobes during a struggle. Make sure your clothing and footwear facilitate quick and free movement.

KEEP YOUR HAIR SHORT

Try to keep your hair short, especially at the back of your head. Long hair and ponytails can be used against you in a struggle. Long hair can impair vision, and be pulled allowing an assailant to easily control and immobilize you.

SURVIVAL STRESS

Survival Stress

Introduction

Select occupations such as law enforcement take on different levels and types of stress that most occupations do not experience. These types of stress may include the fear of personal injury or death, close combat encounters, deadly force issues and the fear of the unknown. These stressful encounters cause uncontrollable anxiety and emotions referred to as survival stress.

The issue here is not so much the event that causes the stress than it is the effects the stress has on our body. The body reacts naturally to stress, preparing itself for the threat. The body's preparation creates influences on the body's thinking, perception and skill performance which can present a real serious issue especially when we are required to make split second decision making processes.

The way an officer thinks, perceives and performs a skill may be greatly affected, however, with proper training and preparation, the effects can be minimized.

Background

The effects of survival stress on the body is inevitable and can never be completely eliminated, however, with proper training and preparation, the effects can be minimized. Stress causes autonomic responses which the body responds to physiologically.

Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) is responsible for triggering/controlling these responses. When the S.N.S. is activated, numerous actions follow, preparing the system and body for the stress. The S.N.S. activation stimulates the adrenal glands, which in turn responds by dumping adrenaline, hormones and chemicals into the body. These chemicals are channeled to different areas of the body providing support to the primary function needed in the effort. The effects of this chemical release may include the heart to beat faster, respirations to increase, a rise in blood pressure, tensing of muscles, dilation of pupils and perspiration to increase. Other, not so obvious symptoms may include the slowing of digestion, chemically enhanced blood entering the body to assist in clotting and the release of sugars and fats into the blood stream to help fuel the fight.

These bodily reactions to stress are no different than those responses experienced by the fleeing gazelle or the chasing lion. In both examples, the

body reacts by focusing all the body's energy and resources to chasing ahead or running away. It is this body's preparation we refer to as the "fight or flight syndrome." Though this response or "syndrome" may be effective for the fleeing gazelle on the plains of Africa, there are some definite limitations for an officer making crucial decisions in the concrete jungle.

Expected Affects

- Increased heart rate
- Auditory exclusion
- Visual narrowing
- Increased reaction time
- Increase in respiration
- Rise in blood pressure
- Muscular tension
- Increase in perspiration

INCREASED HEART RATE:

In a survival stress situation, one of the first most obvious symptoms we encounter is a rapid, pounding heart rate. The heart's main function for sustained life is to pump oxygen rich blood through the circulatory system to receiving muscles, tissues and organs. In survival stress situations, the chemicals released by the adrenal glands enter the blood stream. This chemically enhanced blood now needs to reach the parts of the body in need of this chemical quickly. The S.N.S. activates an increased heart rate, which in turn, elevates the blood pressure. This blood is pumped at an accelerated rate through the body and is maintained as long as the threat or stress is present. When the threat is eliminated, the heart rate and blood pressure will return to normal and the adrenal glands will cease to release chemicals.

When an officer is presented with a survival issue, that heart rate could escalate to a 200 beats or more in a matter of seconds. Of course, this response is dependant on the type of threat, the officer's perception to the threat, the element of surprise and an officer's heredity. For a healthy heart this is not a health concern, however, for the unhealthy heart, a spike of this magnitude or an elevated heart rate maintained for an extended period of time could prove detrimental.

AUDITORY EXCLUSION:

The human body is equipped with five sensory systems that provide the brain with information. Under ordinary conditions all the senses perform equally well, however, under stress the brain will select the one sense that will provide the most relevant information at that particular moment.

This sensory exclusion is critical because it can limit an officer's ability in stressful situations, to receive and process important audio information. Verbal responses and shouts of surrender by a victim may go unheard and, unfortunately, result in elevated uses of force. The auditory exclusion will also exist in the assailant, so it is crucial for officers to use loud, repetitive commands when use of force options are utilized.

In understanding this process, it may take three or four commands before your assailant even begins to receive and process the requests. If minimal commands are given, officers will find assailants claiming no commands were given and that they would have complied if told to do something.

VISUAL PROBLEMS:

In most stressful situations, the vision becomes an officer's primary source of information to the body, however, due to the S.N.S. activation; the visual systems may undergo some changes that may create devastating results.

One of the effects that the vision may experience is a phenomenon known as tunnel vision. This occurs when the actual span of vision narrows as if you were looking through a tube. Unfortunately, this is a very common occurrence in police work. Officers tend to focus on a single threat so intently that they fail to see details and other possible threats around them.

S.N.S. activation inhibits monocular vision, which forces an officer to become binocular. Binocular vision will inhibit accuracy on distance shooting, but may enhance accuracy at close range.

INCREASED REACTION TIME:

An officer's reaction time is the actual time it takes the officer to perceive a threat and respond accordingly with a motor response. The quicker the response, the better chance for survival. The time it takes to respond depends on the officer's ability to process the steps in a decision making situation. All decision making circumstances are broke down into a four step process:

- 1 .Perception
2. Analyzing and Evaluating
3. Formulating a Response
4. Initiating a Motor Response

Any skip or disruption in this sequence will result in an increase in reaction and possibly a "no reaction" or freezing. Research has shown that this step processing will deteriorate when the officer's heart rate exceeds 145 BPM.

DETERIORATION OF MOTOR SKILLS:

Motor skills are classified into three categories; fine motor skills (they require hand and eye coordination and hand dexterity), complex motor skills (involve a series of muscle groups in a series of movements requiring hand/eye coordination, precision, tracking and timing) and gross motor skills (large muscle or major muscle groups).

When the S.N.S. is activated it will have a direct influence on these skills. When an officer's heart rate reaches 115 BPM, vasoconstriction and dexterity begin to deteriorate, thus inhibiting fine motor skills. These skills may include trigger squeeze and gun sight alignment. As the heart reaches 145 BPM, some of the complex muscle movements found in multiple step takedown techniques and shooting techniques begin to deteriorate. The gross motor skills are the only muscle movement that improves as the heart rate increases, due to the fact that they include or incorporate major muscle groups. These techniques may include movements of simple punches or kicks.

VASOCONSTRICTIONS:

At S.N.S. activation, vasoconstriction occurs naturally shutting down blood flow to an officer's extremities and re-routing the blood to the areas of the body in greatest need. This vasoconstriction will cause symptoms or feelings of being cold, tingy sensations and the reduction of dexterity in the fingers and toes.

Another significant implication pertains to blood loss. During S.N.S. activation, officers have received wounds to the extremities that have bled very little and were able to continue on with the fight. After the threat was gone, vasoconstriction left the body causing those not so serious wounds to bleed profusely, resulting in the officer to bleed out and die.

ADDITIONAL EFFECTS:

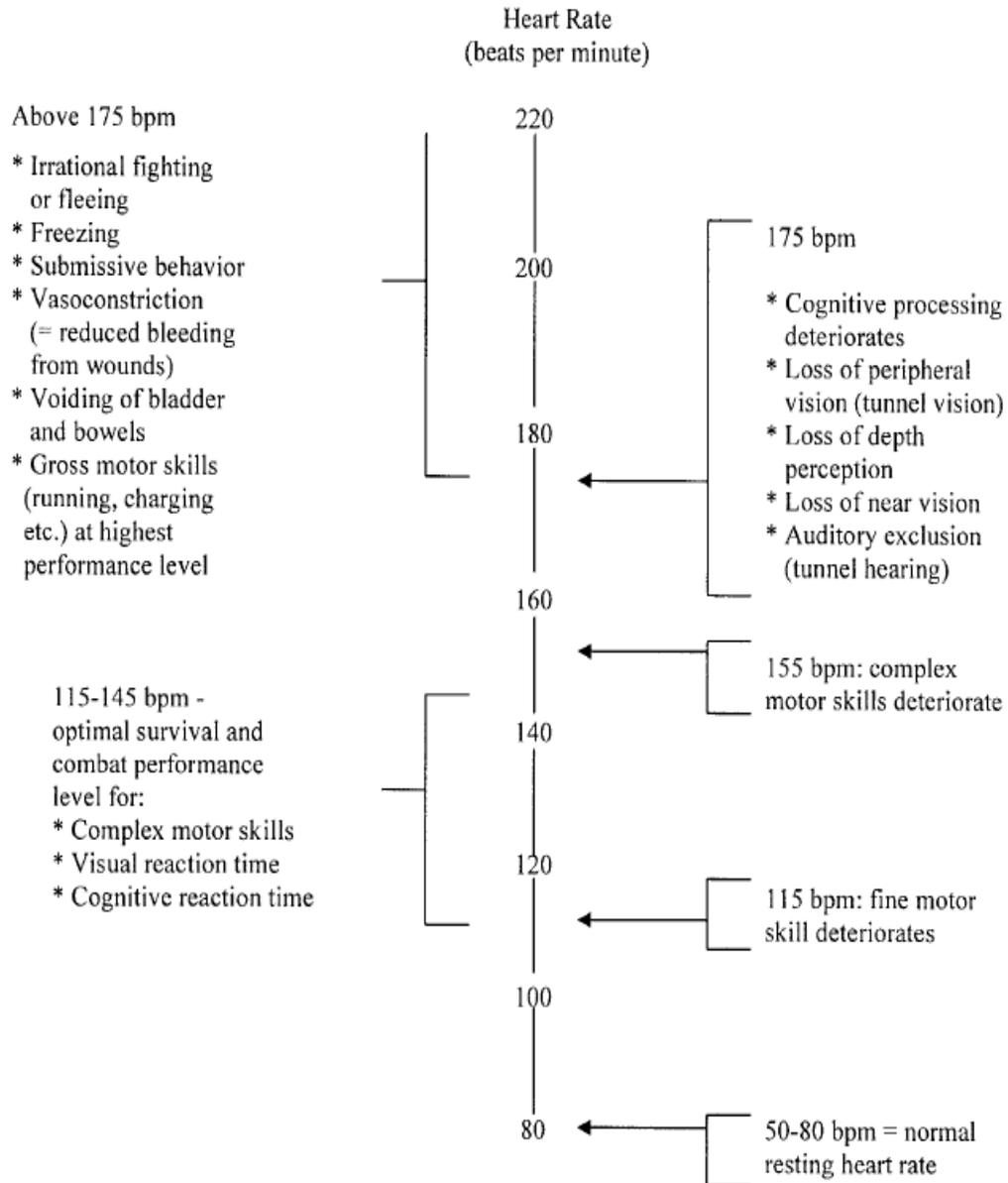
In addition the body reacts and responds by slowing down the digestive process. Digestion requires the presence of blood in the digestive organs, but during the S.N.S. activation, all the blood has been redirected to the muscles and brain. This is what causes someone to vomit during or shortly after a high stress situation.

The body's muscles automatically tense up preparing itself for the fight or flight. This in turn will activate perspiration to increase with the purpose of cooling the body. The body automatically works harder, which creates heat. A cooler body will perform more efficiently.

Chemicals are released into the body/blood which will assist in the clotting of blood in the event of an injury. Sugars and fats are also released into the blood to provide the necessary fuel for the fight.

And finally, brain activity increases so the extra sensory information occurring during a stressful situation can be processed more quickly.

This graph indicates the skills that breakdown with heart rate increase.



Effects of hormonal induced heart rate increases
("Physiology of Close Combat", 2002).

Variables to prevent SNS Activation

As officers responding to a stimulus we are controlled and forced to respond in certain ways. Regardless of how well we are prepared, we are still behind the “eight ball” because we are reacting (which is a much slower process) to an action that is, for the most part, preplanned. We must remain alert and ready for an attack when it comes. Many officers involved in life and death encounters have stated that they initially felt surprised when attacked! This is a common reaction, but it can be costly! When faced with violence, our response must be instantaneous. Feelings of surprise can slow reaction response time even more so. If you are mentally prepared for an attack you will waste no time on your response, thus increasing your survival odds.

As stated earlier, the activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System is an unavoidable occurrence; however, there are things that an officer can do to help minimize the physiological effects.

- Perception of threat
- Commitment to deadly force
- Reactionary gap (time/distance)
- Tactical breathing
- Fitness level
- Mental preparation
- Nutrition
- Scanning
- Wear body armour
- Train

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF THREATS:

Stress is related to how we interpret and react to events. Events in themselves are not stressful; it is how we perceive them. People may react differently to the same situations, with one person interpreting a situation as very stressful, while another person may not. Levels of experience and numbers of encounters with certain circumstances play an important role in our response. Perception levels can be changed by being confident in tactics, survival skills and shooting abilities.

COMMITMENT TO DEADLY FORCE:

If an officer hasn't already, he must take a serious look at the issue of having to take someone's life. That thought alone will cause great levels of stress throughout a career, but if an officer is not convinced or has questions as to what he /she would do in a deadly force situation, they are endangering themselves as well as the lives of others. With all things considered faith, religion and murder vs. killing must be weighed but in this career a total commitment to deadly force must be adopted when the situation presents itself.

MAINTAINING THE REACTIONARY GAP:

The reactionary gap is the distance between the officer and the subject required to formulate a reaction to an action. The distance, or gap, will vary depending on the type of threat presented. Regardless of the situation, this gap must be maintained. The reactionary gap provides an officer with numerous tactical advantages, however, the most important is reducing the element of surprise.

The reactionary gap will provide the time and distance needed to prepare a tactical response to an attack. Knowing that reaction is slower than action, we must allow our body this distance to provide a cushion for the decision making process.

BREATH CONTROL/MUSCLE RELAXATION:

One of the key elements to controlling your heart rate, staying relaxed and releasing stress can be accomplished through a simple technique of controlled breathing. When our bodies are under stress, we tend to breathe more quickly, however, the breaths are shallower. With this type of breathing, we are depriving our body of adequate oxygen at a time it is in greatest need of it.

In times of stress, we need to make conscious efforts to breathe in a more controlled state in attempt to re-establish control of our heart rate and provide the organs and brain with the needed oxygen to function. Inhale through your nose for a count of four seconds, hold that breath for four seconds and then relax your tongue and forcibly control the exhale for a four second count. Repeat this process for several cycles at which time you should actually feel yourself returning to normal.

KEEPING FIT/EXERCISE:

Studies indicate that most police officers maintain a level of fitness much less than that of the general population. The main reason for this is the lack of actual physical activity required to do the job. If an officer does not have the desire or motivation to maintain a fitness program off the job, an unfit, unhealthy body is

inevitable. Officers may also choose to deal with stressors by over eating, smoking or abusing alcohol.

Physically fit officers can cope with dramatic increases in heart rates due to stress or physical exertion more efficiently. Heart rates stabilize and decrease faster which aids in the reacquisition of fine and complex motor skills. Besides feeling better and looking better, physically fit officers perform better due to their sense of self achievement and confident mental attitude.

MENTAL REHEARSAL:

Mental rehearsal can be a valuable tool in preparing you for a life threatening encounter. Mental rehearsal is the process of mentally visualizing and rehearsing how something should be done prior to actually doing it. What this rehearsal does for the body is it connects thought processes with physical activity.

Most of us are equipped with the physical tools, (cx. defensive tactics, shooting skills, etc) to get the job done but, if we cannot connect them to a mental rehearsal under stress, a life and death decision process may occur to slow, with hesitancy and with errors. The concept of mental rehearsal is to experience the situation before it actually occurs. By creating "real life" scenarios to different situations, you can walk yourself through the decision making process.

NUTRITION:

A surprising amount of the stress that we may experience on a daily basis can be linked to the chemicals we consume by way of eating, drinking or inhaling.

The heart, lungs and organs become stressed and due to the imbalance, can only perform at a reduced stamina. A diet which consists of caffeine, nicotine, high sugars and fats should be reduced or eliminated in attempt to minimize this chemically enhanced stress. A well balanced diet will provide the body with the necessary nutrients to function effectively.

SCANNING:

The visual problems discussed earlier as a result of the S.N.S. activation are uncontrollable, however, a simple technique of scanning can overcome the effects of tunnel vision.

In a stressful situation an officer should practice looking side to side and up and down, doing this will increase the field of vision. This scanning process will provide more visual cues and or threats that may be overlooked during the tunnel vision occurrence.

WEARING OF BODY ARMOUR:

The wearing of body armor provides no guarantee to an officer in deadly force encounters, however, it can help control stress levels and provide valuable elements to survivability.

The first issue is obvious, if you are wearing a vest and are shot; you stand a better chance of surviving and finishing the fight. The wearing of body armor also provides a sense of security and confidence. Knowing that you are somewhat protected going into a situation, your anxiety (stress) level may be lower, creating an ideal environment for decision making process.

TRAINING:

Training is crucial for survival stress inoculation. Training must provide stress and tension, must reflect real life situations and must occur often to be effective.

Scenario-based training provides this realism while enabling officers the time necessary to understand and learn the tactics that they will use in the field.

Critical Stress Amnesia

Critical Stress Amnesia can be defined as the physiological basis and the implications of memory loss during extreme survival stress situations.

Officers who encounter an extremely stressful situation will consistently exhibit difficulty in transferring information into long term memory. Particular memory related phenomenon in traumatic situations include:

1. During the actual incident there is usually a "sensory overload" combined with a "fixation" on some particular aspect of the critical incident, often to the exclusion of all else.
2. Immediately after the incident, "post-incident amnesia" will often result in a failure to remember the majority of the information observed in the incident.
3. After a healthy night's sleep there is usually a "memory recovery" which will result in the remembering the majority of what occurred, and this memory is probably the most "pure."

4. Within 72 hours the final and most complete form of memory will occur, but it will be at least partially "reconstructed" (and therefore somewhat "contaminated") after the inevitable process of integrating available information from all other sources (media).

Legal Articulation (After Major Incident)

- An officer will fixate on major threat cues but cues on the periphery of the visual system may not be processed into memory. This explains why individuals sometimes fail to remember "seeing" individuals or cues immediately adjacent to the threat.
- Make copious notes
- Be aware that your memory will be altered by stress and your inability to remember is a direct result of Survival Stress.

MODULAR TRAINING

Modular Training

Each police officer will receive Use of Force Training utilizing the modular training program. The program consists of four modules with two modules being facilitated each year, one of these being Module 1. The modular training will be formatted in the following cycle.

- Year 1 – Modules 1 and 2
- Year 2 – Modules 1 and 3
- Year 3 – Modules 1 and 4

Module 1 - Firearms

Module 1, Firearms, offers each officer practical training with their service pistol, Sig Sauer P226 40 Calibre and the Remington 870 shotgun.

This training will enhance the officer's skills in the following areas:

- Drawing the pistol
- Firearms manipulation
- Instinctive shooting
- Deliberate aimed shooting
- Types of loading/unloading
- Stoppages and malfunctions
- Barricade shooting
- One handed shooting
- Positional shooting (prone, kneeling and seated)

Officers will be required to meet the required standard in all courses of fire which include: Instinctive Course of Fire, Semi-Auto Standard Course of Fire and Shotgun Course of Fire.

Module 2 – Control Tactics / Baton / Weapons Retention

Module 2, Control Tactics/Baton/Weapons Retention offers each officer practical training in tactics that will enable the officer to effectively control a situation by properly selecting the appropriate application of force.

Police use of force is designed to gain control of a subject using no more force than is reasonably necessary, having regard first to officer safety and secondly to minimizing harm to the subject.

This training will cover the following topics:

Control Tactics

- Tactical Positioning
- Handcuffing
 - Standing
 - Kneeling
 - Prone
- Searching
- Pressure Points
 - Infra Orbital
 - Mandibular Angle
 - Hypoglossal
 - Jugular Notch
- Defense for One/Two Handed Grab
- Arm Lever Takedowns
 - Straight Arm Bar Takedown
 - Transport Wrist Lock
 - Bent Arm Bar

- Alternate Bent Arm Bar
- Escapes
 1. Headlock
 2. Neck Restraint
 3. C-Clamp Choke
 4. Mount Position
 5. Guard Position
 6. Side Mount
 7. Guard/Arm Shoulder Lock
 8. Face to Face/Arm Shoulder Lock
 9. Behind/Arm Shoulder Lock
- Defence against Edge Weapons

BATON

- Carry Positions
 - Vertical
 - Outside the Arm
 - 2 Handed Carry
- Draws
 - Cross Draw
 - Strong side Draw
- Blocks
 - High/Low Block
 - Strong Side/Support Side Block
 - Middle Block

- Baton Retention
 - One/Two Handed
- Strikes
 - Forward/Reverse Strike
 - Middle Strike

Weapons Retention

- Same Side/Opposite Grab
- Two Handed Grab
- Rear Grab
- Retrieval Techniques
 - Front /Rear
 - Figure Four/Opposite Side

Module 3 – Room Entries / REACT

Module 3, Room Entries/REACT will offer practical training in room clearing techniques. One set of tactics for standard room entries that officers perform on a daily basis while the other consists of Rapid Entry Active Criminal Threat tactics which can be described as the swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to ongoing, life threatening situations where delayed response could otherwise result in death or grievous bodily harm to innocent persons.

The officers will be assessed on their skills and tactics during scenario-based training exercises.

Module Requirements:

- Hallway with adjacent rooms
- Training Red Guns
- Simunition Training Weapons
- Simunition Marking Cartridges
- Realistic Training Targets
- Protection Face Shields
- Training Mannequin

ROOM ENTRIES

The Officer will be briefed on the situation and will be required to take appropriate action as they make entry into the area. Officers will be assessed on the following skills: approach, weapon handling, verbal communication, room entry, threat areas and target identification.

Upon completion of the scenario, the instructor will perform a tutorial walk through in order to assess the entry and address the skills/tactics observed. Instructors should reference the *seven tactical principles* while performing the critique while allowing the student to articulate/justify their actions.

REACT

Members will conduct maneuvers in Contact Team formations. The formations will include 2, 3 and 4 member teams with the objective of neutralizing the threat (ie. direct to threat).

Drills to include:

- Movement (hallways/stairways)
- Room Entries (Key-off principle)
- Apprehension of suspect

Members will also perform maneuvers in Rescue Team formations. The formations will include 3 and 4 member teams with the objective of extraction/evacuation of victims and innocent persons.

Drill to include:

- Extraction of victim

Instructors will critique members addressing such areas as formations, tactics, and safe manipulation of firearms.



Module 4 – Use of Force Continuum / Survival Stress / High Risk Vehicle Stops

Module 4, Use of Force Continuum/Survival Stress/High Risk Vehicle Stops is a tutorial session that provides each officer with materials relating to these subjects. The RNC Use of Force Continuum will be reviewed along with the psychological effects of Survival Stress. Tactics for High Risk Vehicle Stops are also reviewed to ensure officers have a good understanding of the concepts.

POSITIONAL ASPHYXIA

In Custody Deaths

Positional Asphyxia

One of the biggest fears surrounding law enforcement today is having a subdued individual die while in our custody.

This syndrome called “sudden in-custody death” often reveals that previous to the death, the subject engaged in a violent struggle with the police with the subject displaying unresponsive behavior. In most cases the force used by police was not sufficient enough to cause the death. Due to the nature of the death, officers must justify their actions, which are often viewed by the public with some suspicion.

It was once believed that many of the sudden in-custody death cases could be explained solely through a little known phenomenon called positional asphyxia.

We will examine factors found to precipitate positional asphyxia and recommendations to ensure subject safety and minimize the risk of death.

Positional asphyxia - death as a result of body position that interferes with one’s ability to breathe - as it occurs within a confrontational situation involving law enforcement officers.

The ability to breath involves the interaction of:

- the chest wall
 - the diaphragm
 - muscles of the rib cage and abdomen
- interference with any of these could cause asphyxia (reduced oxygen)
 - one of the variables that is important when restraining individuals is the position of the arrested person; particularly a facedown position for an extended period of time after a violent struggle.
 - in this position the subject has difficulty breathing, which disturbs the body chemistry, setting up a situation where the heart goes into standstill.

Basic Physiology of a Struggle

Officers restrain a subject in the maximal restraint position.

A person lying on his stomach has trouble breathing when pressure is applied to his back.

The solution seems simple: get the pressure off of the back. Often though, the situation is compounded by a vicious cycle of subject resistance and officer restraint:

- Subject is restrained facedown and breathing may become difficult.
 - Weight is applied to the subject's back. The more weight, the more severe the compression.
- The subject struggles more violently, due to a natural reaction to oxygen deficiency.
- Subsequently, the officer applies more compression to subdue the subject.

PREDISPOSING FACTORS TO POSITIONAL ASPHYXIA

Certain factors may render some individuals more susceptible to positional asphyxia, particularly when placed in a facedown position after a violent struggle:

Obesity (beer belly)

Alcohol and high drug use (cocaine, PCP, amphetamines)

An enlarged heart (renders an individual more susceptible to a cardiac arrhythmia under conditions of low blood oxygen and stress)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSITIONAL ASPHYXIA

Labored breathing

Gurgling or gasping noises when attempting to breath

Period of silence after an intense struggle

Unconsciousness

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION Why prone out a subject if this position contributes to positional asphyxia?

ANSWER Law enforcement officers across North America will almost without exception attempt to get a combative subject in the prone position. In order to gain control and handcuff a combative person, law enforcement officers are taught to first take the person to the ground in order to gain control and then apply handcuffs. The ground can be used as a stable platform that an officer can use to establish a mechanical advantage. Officers will work to position him or herself behind the subject, where the danger posed by the subjects "weapons" (hands, feet, knees, elbows, teeth etc.) is significantly reduced and the officer is best able to manipulate control of the subject safely and efficiently.

QUESTION It is documented that the quicker control is gained by police and the subject removed from the prone position, the better his chances of survival are. What is the best way to get control fast?

ANSWER It would appear the fastest and safest ways to gain control are the TASER and team tactics. Training in both is extremely paramount.

QUESTION How can law enforcement officers work as a team once they have gained control of the subject?

ANSWER It is extremely common (and well documented) when a person is physically involved in a struggle to get tunnel vision or become goal oriented, where the goal is for the threat to show signs of stopping or giving up. Teamwork is important in these instances. It is important for all the law enforcement officers that are involved in a struggle with a subject to firstly, be aware of the signs and symptoms of exited delirium and positional asphyxia and secondly, to be aware and alert all those involved in the struggle that control (i.e. hands and legs cuffed) is gained. Once control is gained, the subject should be immediately taken off his stomach (if he was proned out), and depending on the circumstances either placed in supine position, side position (attempting left side down), the recovery position or placed in a seated position.

If the number of law enforcement officers attempting to control the subject allow, a law enforcement officer should be situated by the subject's head area. This law enforcement officer would be responsible for viewing any signs of distress and/or injury to the subject. When possible this is the best solution, however in a dynamic situation it may not be feasible. Each law enforcement officer needs to be aware and watch for control to be gained and/or respiratory distress and immediately notify his/her colleagues accordingly.

QUESTION What about hog-tying or modified hog-tying a subject?

ANSWER Research into hog-tying (modified or not) a subject and the effect this has on the Subject's ability to breathe is somewhat controversial. Many experts agree that any form of hog-tie can interfere with the ability for the subject to breathe, particularly if the subject is obese. Hog-tying a subject is dangerous.

QUESTION What is the difference between prone containment and prone restraint?

ANSWER Prone containment is the brief physical holding of an individual prone for the purposes of gaining quick control of an aggressive and agitated individual. Law enforcement officers need to prone out a subject for the purpose of gaining quick control. Prone restraint is the extended restraint (either physical or mechanical) of an individual. This may include holding an individual past the time of immediate struggle. All law enforcement officers need to understand that once control is gained and the subject's limbs are mechanically restrained, the subjects' position should be changed from prone to one that will not interfere with normal respiration.

QUESTION What effect does weight on the subjects back have?

ANSWER Normal respiration is extremely difficult when a person (especially one who is obese), is positioned prone and handcuffed, with the weight on his back. This position tends to compress the persons diaphragm, which needs to expand in order for air to fill the lungs. It is vital for all law enforcement officers to have a thorough understanding of this effect.

The tragedy lies in the fact that once a subject is proned with pressure and/or weight being applied to his/her back; the struggle to escape and continue the altercation can quickly give way to a struggle to simply breathe. It is highly unlikely that the law enforcement officer would be able to tell the difference.

Even in a situation where a subject continues to struggle, once a subject is under control with the use of restraints, it would be prudent, with proper training, for the arresting officers to immediately change the subject's position that enhances proper breathing. Once a subject's hands and legs are mechanically (cuffed) restrained, his ability to cause harm to himself or others can be controlled by law enforcement officers.

Due to the nature of the law enforcement officer's job and the need to control subjects, we need to place subjects in the prone position in order to gain control and restrain them. Putting as many safeguards into effect as possible will enhance the safety and well being of these subjects and possibly prevent future loss of life.

DOCUMENTATION

Officers involved in these types of situations should collect information that may assist in any civil or criminal action.

NOTE THE FOLLOWING

Nature of the post-arrest restraint procedure. Type of restraint used.
How long was subject face down and/or restrained.
How was the subject transported? What position during transport?
How long did the transport phase last? What observations were made of the subject's condition?

EXCITED DELIRIUM

In Custody Deaths

Excited Delirium

Excited Delirium is described as:

“A state of extreme mental and physiological excitement, characterized by extreme agitation, hyperthermia, hostility, exceptional strength and endurance without apparent fatigue” (Source: Morrison, A. & Sadler, D. (2001). Death of a psychiatric patient during physical restraint. Excited Delirium—a case report. *Medicine Science and Law*, 41(1), pp. 46-50).

According to the medical literature, there appears to be three specific groups of people who are most prone to sudden and unexpected death proximal to restraint attributed to excited delirium:

1. Those who are suffering from psychiatric illness (bipolar, schizophrenia). This is also noted in a study where both agitated and non-agitated subjects suffering from schizophrenia died suddenly and unexpectedly (Rosh, Sampson, & Hirsch, 2003.)
2. Those who are chronic illicit stimulant substance abuse users (cocaine, methamphetamines) including marijuana and alcohol.
3. Combination of mental illness and substance abuse.

Excited Delirium includes a series of bizarre behaviors, which include:

- Psychosis
- Violent behavior
- Extraordinary strength
- Hallucinations
- Undressing in public
- Hiding behind bushes, trees or cars
- Hearing voices
- Seizures
- Thrashing after restraint
- Yelling
- Hyperactivity
- Extreme paranoia
- Incoherent shouting
- Vigorous resistance
- Flight behavior (typical)
- Unintelligible speech / animal sounds
- Overheating (hyperthermia)

- Sweating
- Bizarre and violent behavior (often thrashing out at glass or shiny objects)
- Impervious to pain (O.C. spray, pain compliance techniques ineffective)
- Hot to touch / no sweat (bone dry)
- Self-inflicted injuries

Subjects who exhibit these symptoms are among those most likely to be at an increased risk of death following a struggle with the police.

When law enforcement officers are dealing with those experiencing excited delirium, both manias specific to psychiatric illness, as well as drug induced psychosis, often present themselves outwardly in the same manner. Based on the basic level of medical training provided to law enforcement officers, it is unreasonable to expect to make any medical assessment to differentiate between the three causes of excited delirium.

POLICE ACTIONS

1. We still have to get control of subjects.
2. Realize the subjects presenting these signs and symptoms are in a medical emergency. When possible call for ambulance assistance (advanced life support is best) before intervention.
3. Weigh the need for immediate control against the risk to the subject.
4. ****Remove the subject from the maximal prone position as soon as possible****.
5. Do not allow ambulance to transport in the maximal prone position.
6. Go with ambulance and brief emergency room staff.

Getting control of a subject in the state of excited delirium is usually no easy task. However, once control is gained you must be very aware of jeopardizing the subject's safety by placing him in a position that interferes with his ability to breathe – positional asphyxia.

CONCLUSION

PREVENTION OF SUDDEN IN-CUSTODY DEATHS STARTS WITH KNOWLEDGE OF EXCITED DELIRIUM AND RESTRAINING METHODS. REGARDLESS OF THE SUBJECT'S BEHAVIOUR ONCE IN POLICE CONTROL, WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR SAFETY.

EXCITED DELIRIUM IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY AND NEEDS TO BE TREATED AS SUCH.