



USE OF FORCE GUIDELINES



ISSUE DATE:		EFFECTIVE DATE:	
RESCINDS:			
INDEX CATEGORY:	Field Operations		

I. PURPOSE

This directive sets forth Department policy regarding sworn members' and detention aides' use of force.

II. DEPARTMENT POLICY

- A. **Sanctity of Human Life.** The Department's highest priority is the sanctity of human life. In all aspects of their conduct, Department members will act with the foremost regard for the preservation of human life and the safety of all persons involved, including Department members, members of the general public, and criminal suspects.
- B. **Public Cooperation.** A strong partnership with the public is essential for effective law enforcement. Inappropriate or excessive uses of force damage that partnership and diminish the public trust that is a cornerstone of policing in a free society.
- C. **Core Principle.** The Chicago Police Department seeks to gain the voluntary compliance of subjects, when consistent with personal safety, to eliminate the need to use force or reduce the force that is needed.
- D. **Assessing Uses of Force.** The Chicago Police Department recognizes that Department members are often forced to make split-second decisions—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation. These decisions must therefore be judged based on the totality of the circumstances known by the member at the time and from the perspective of a reasonable Department member on the scene, with similar training and experience, in the same or similar circumstances, and not with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight. Nothing in this policy requires members to take actions, or fail to take actions, that unreasonably endanger themselves or others.

III. USE OF FORCE – WHEN AUTHORIZED

- A. **Definition of Force.** Force is defined as any physical contact by a Department member, either directly or through the use of equipment, to compel a subject's compliance.
- B. **Use of Force: Objectively Reasonable, Necessary, and Proportional.** Department members may only use force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional in order to ensure the safety of a member or third person, stop an attack, make an arrest, control a subject, or prevent escape.
 - 1. Objectively reasonable: The main issue in evaluating every use of force is whether the amount of force used by the officer was objectively reasonable in light of the totality of the circumstances faced by the officer on the scene. Reasonableness is not capable of precise definition or mechanical application. Factors to be considered by the officer include but are not limited to:
 - a. whether the subject is posing an imminent threat to the officer or others.
 - b. the risk of harm, level of threat or resistance presented by the subject.
 - c. the subject's proximity or access to weapons.

2. Necessary: Department members will use only the amount of force required under the circumstances to serve a lawful purpose.
3. Proportional: Department members will use only the force that is proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance offered by a subject. The greater the threat and the more likely that the threat will result in death or serious physical injury, the greater the level of force that may be necessary to overcome it. This may include using greater force or a different type of force than that used by the subject. As the subject offers less resistance, however, the member will decrease the amount or type of force accordingly.
4. De-escalation: When it is safe and feasible to do so based on the totality of the circumstances, members will use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force. This includes continually assessing the situation and modifying the use of force as circumstances change and in ways that are consistent with officer safety. Examples of de-escalation techniques include but are not limited to:
 - a. exercising persuasion and advice, and providing a warning prior to the use of force.
 - b. determining whether the member may be able to stabilize the situation through the use of time, distance, or positioning.
 - c. requesting additional personnel to respond or make use of specialized units or equipment including crisis intervention team trained officers.
5. Prohibitions:
 - a. The use of excessive force, unwarranted physical force or unprofessional conduct by a Department member is prohibited and will not be tolerated.
 - b. Department members are prohibited from using force based on bias against a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic as outlined in the Department directive entitled "Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling and Other Bias Based Policing."
 - c. Force used as punishment or retaliation (for example, because of a perceived wrong or slight) is prohibited.
 - d. Force used in response to a person's lawful exercise of First Amendment rights is prohibited.

NOTE: First Amendment rights are not absolute and are subject to reasonable time, place, manner restrictions. Further guidance may be found in the Department's directive on First Amendment activities.

C. Use of Deadly Force: Necessary to Prevent Death or Great Bodily Harm. The following additional policies apply to the use of deadly force:

1. Definition of Deadly Force. Deadly force is force by any means that is likely to cause death or great bodily harm. It includes but is not limited to:
 - a. firing of a firearm in the direction of the person to be arrested.
 - b. firing of a firearm at a vehicle in which the person to be arrested is riding.
 - c. intentional striking of a subject's head with an impact weapon.

- d. application of a chokehold, defined as applying direct pressure to a person's trachea (windpipe) or airway (front of the neck) with the intention of reducing the intake of air.
2. Last Resort. The use of deadly force is a last resort that is permissible only when necessary to protect against an imminent threat to life or to prevent great bodily harm to the member or a third person. Consistent with this requirement, a sworn Department member may use deadly force only when such force is necessary to prevent:
 - a. death or great bodily harm from an imminent threat posed to the sworn member or to another person.
 - b. an arrest from being defeated by resistance or escape, where the person to be arrested poses an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to a sworn member or another person unless arrested without delay.
 3. Definition of Imminent Threat. A threat is imminent when an objectively reasonable officer would believe that:
 - a. a suspect is acting or threatening to cause death or serious physical injury to the officer or others;
 - b. the suspect has the means or instruments to do so; and
 - c. the suspect has the opportunity and ability to use the means or instruments to cause death or serious physical injury.
 4. A sworn member is justified in using deadly force to stop a dangerous animal only when the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to the safety of the sworn member, another person, or another animal and no reasonably effective alternatives appear to exist.
- D. **Prohibitions on the use of firearms.** The use of firearms in the following ways is prohibited:
1. Firing warning shots.
 2. Firing at subjects whose actions are only a threat to themselves (e.g., attempted suicide).
 3. Firing solely in defense or protection of property.
 4. Firing into crowds. However, this prohibition does not preclude the use of deadly force directed at a specific person who is near or among other people, but the use of deadly force in such circumstances is only permitted in the limited circumstances when such force is reasonably necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm to the sworn member or to another person, and no reasonable alternative exists.
 5. Firing into buildings or through doors, windows, or other openings when the person lawfully fired at is not clearly visible, unless directed at a specific location and such force is reasonably necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm to the sworn member or to another person.
 6. Firing at or into a moving vehicle when the vehicle is the only force used against the sworn member or another person, unless such force is reasonably necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm to the sworn member or to another person.

NOTE: When a vehicle is the only force used against a member, the member will not place themselves in the path of the moving vehicle and will make every effort to move out of the path of the vehicle.

IV. Medical Attention

- A. Once the scene is safe and as soon as practical, whenever an individual is injured, complains of injury, or requests medical attention, Department members:
 - 1. shall immediately request emergency medical services (EMS) from the Chicago Fire Department via the Office of Emergency Management and Communication (OEMC).
 - 2. may provide appropriate medical care consistent with their training to any individual who has visible injuries, complains of being injured, or requests medical attention. This may include providing first aid and/or arranging for transportation to an emergency medical facility.
- B. Members shall treat injured persons, whether another officer, member of the public, or suspect, with dignity and respect.

V. Duty to Intervene and Report.

- A. **Ensure Compliance.** All Department members are obligated to ensure compliance by themselves and other members with Department regulations, policies, and the law.
- B. **Intervention, Notifying Superiors, Supervisory Intervention.** If a member knows that another Department member is using force against a subject which is in violation of this directive, the member will:
 - 1. verbally intervene on the subject's behalf; and
 - 2. contact a supervisor, as soon as practicable;
 - 3. if a supervisor, issue a direct order to stop the violation.
- C. **Written Reporting Obligation.** Consistent with the Department directive entitled "**Complaint and Disciplinary Procedures**," Department members who have knowledge of the use of force against a subject in violation of this directive will submit an individual written report to a supervisor before reporting off duty on the day the member becomes aware of the misconduct.
- D. **Accuracy and Candor.** Department members will be responsible at all times:
 - 1. for truthfully and completely describing the facts and circumstances concerning any incident involving the use of force by Department members.
 - 2. for articulating the specific facts to explain the member's own decision to employ a particular use of force.