

	BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT	Distribution ALL PERSONNEL	General Order Number <b>3.05</b>
	POLICY AND PROCEDURE GENERAL ORDER	Original Issue Date 6/18/19	Reissue/Effective Date 10/21/21
Order Title:  <b>REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING FORCE</b>	Accreditation Standard: 1.1.2, 1.1.5	Section  3	
	Section Title RULES OF CONDUCT		
Rescinds:	<b>Rebeca Garcia, Chief of Police</b>		

*This General Order is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This General Order should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this General Order will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting*

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Bridgeport Police Department officers and their supervisors with guidelines for reporting and investigating use of force incidents.

## II. POLICY

The authority to use force carries with it the need for accountability in order to safeguard the rights of the public and preserve the integrity of the Bridgeport Police Department, as well as the jurisdiction that provides this authority. To protect citizens and employees, the Bridgeport Police Department is committed to documenting and investigating all use of force incidents. As such, it is this Department's policy that officers report ALL use of force incidents, as designated herein, in a timely, complete, and accurate manner, as prescribed by this policy. Any officer, who uses force, is a witness to a use of force incident, or who authorizes conduct leading to the use of force incident, shall not be allowed to conduct the review/investigation.

## III. DEFINITIONS

Critical Firearm Discharge: When an officer discharges a firearm. Range and training discharges, and discharges at animals, are not included under this section.

Deadly force: Any physical force that can reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical injury. Officers must understand that lethal physical force is an extreme measure and shall only be used in accordance with the law and as stated in this policy and other policies governing the use of force.

De-escalation: A decrease in the severity of force used in an incident in direct response to a decrease in the level of resistance. De-Escalation is also a tactic designed to place officers in a

position of advantage when dealing with irrational, unpredictable, or suicidal persons. De-Escalation helps officers stay focused and calm during crisis situation to bring chaotic moments to as peaceful a resolution as the suspect will afford without risking the safety of the officer or suspect.

Exigent Circumstances: Those circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to believe that a particular action is necessary to prevent physical harm to an individual, the destruction of relevant evidence, the escape of a suspect, or some other consequence improperly frustrating legitimate law enforcement efforts.

Force: Any physical strike or instrumental contact with a person; any intentional attempted physical strike or instrumental contact that does not take effect; or any significant physical contact that restricts the movement of a person. The term includes the discharge of a firearm, pointing a firearm at or in the direction of a human being, use of chemical spray, use of impact weapons, use of electronic control weapon (ECW), chokeholds or hard hands, taking a subject to the ground, or the deployment of a canine. The term does not include escorting or handcuffing a person with minimal or no resistance. Use of force is lawful if it is objectively reasonable under the circumstances to effect an arrest, or protect the officer or another person.

Harm: Injury inflicted upon a person, whether visible or not.

Hard Hand Control: Impact oriented techniques that include knee strikes, elbow strikes, punches, and kicks. Control strikes are used to subdue a subject and include strikes to pressure points such as: the common peroneal nerve (side of the leg), radial nerve (top of the forearm), or brachial plexus origin (side of neck).

Non-Deadly force: Any use of force not intended to cause, nor likely to cause, death or serious bodily harm.

Reportable Use of Force: All force used above non-resistant compliant handcuffing, with the exception of an incident involving drawing a firearm at low ready position, which, in itself, is not considered to be reportable. Handcuffing individuals to objects is a reportable use of force.

Resisted Handcuffing: When a person actively resists being placed in handcuffs and the officers must use “soft hand controls” to gain compliance by forcibly moving the subject’s wrists or arms, or to physically maneuver the subject’s body so the handcuffs can be applied. The “resistance” may range from an active struggle to a person simply “locking” his/her arms to prevent compliant handcuffing. Conversely, “unresisting (cooperative) handcuffing” occurs whenever the subject complies with the officer’s verbal commands and/or willingly allows the officers to position their arms in order to apply handcuffs, or the subject positions their arm as commanded for the application of handcuffs.

Serious bodily Injury: Injury that causes death or creates a substantial risk of death, permanent harm to health, disfigurement, permanent loss of functions by any organ in the body, or results in treatment at a medical facility. Note: minor treatment such as eye-washing, cleansing, and

bandaging; evaluation with no injury discovered; etc., will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by a supervisor, and absent extenuating circumstances, may not be designated as serious bodily harm.

Serious Use of Force: Any action by an officer that involves: 1) the use of deadly force, including all critical firearm discharges; 2) a use of force in which the person suffers serious bodily injury, or requires hospital admission; 3) a canine bite; and 4) the use of chemical spray or electronic control weapon against a restrained person.

Soft Hand Control: The use of physical strength and skill in defensive tactics to control arrestees that are reluctant to be taken into custody and offer some degree of physical resistance. Such techniques are not impact-oriented and include pain compliance pressure points, takedowns, joint locks, and simply grabbing a subject. Touching or escort holds may be appropriate for use against levels of passive physical resistance.

Supervisor: A supervisor includes personnel at the rank of Sergeant and above who are assigned responsibility for supervising officers of a lower rank.

Weapon: Any instrument, article or substance, including a vehicle, which, under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted to be used, or threatened to be used, is readily capable of causing death or other serious bodily injury.

#### IV. PROCEDURE

##### A. Responsibility for Reporting

1. Officers shall, as soon as possible, notify their shift supervisor of any Level 1 Reportable use of force. In all cases, the notification shall be made **immediately**.
2. Officers shall immediately notify their shift supervisor following any Level 2, or 3 Reportable use of force.
3. Officers shall complete a Use of Force Report immediately following all reportable uses of force.
4. The completed Use of Force Report form shall be submitted to the shift supervisor prior to the officer's completion of his/her tour of duty. When completing the report, officers are also required to provide a written report explaining the details of the event. The following additional procedures shall apply:
  - a. Each officer who uses force shall submit a separate written Use of Force Report. The officer must articulate, in specific detail, the facts and circumstances surrounding the force used.

- b. Any officer who witnesses a reportable use of force shall advise a shift supervisor, or appropriate commanding officer, and shall submit required reports.
  - c. If an officer uses force on more than one subject during the same event, the officer shall complete one Use of Force Report form per suspect.
  - d. If an officer is unable to complete the report due to injury, the officer's immediate supervisor will complete it to the extent possible, by the end of that tour of duty.
  - e. A reportable use of force shall be reviewed and investigated by a supervisor of a higher rank than the officer using force (the reporting officer).
5. All use of force reports shall specify the actions of the suspect that necessitated the use of force, the reasons why the officer(s) used force, as well as any suspect or officer complaints of injury, medical treatment received, or refusal of medical treatment.
  6. The arresting officer shall notify transporting officers if force was used on the arrestee or if the arrestee has an injury or complains of pain.
  7. Shift supervisors shall investigate and report any reportable use of force as directed in Section (D) of this policy.
  8. Any officer(s) who engages in or witnesses a reportable use of force but fails to notify a shift supervisor and/or fails to complete the form as outlined by this policy, shall be subject to disciplinary action.
  9. A supervisor who uses force, authorizes the use of force, authorizes conduct leading to the use of force, or is a witness to the use of force shall not be allowed to conduct the investigation.
  10. Officers who are the subject of an allegation of excessive force shall immediately notify a shift supervisor so that they may document the incident and forward through their chain of command. This report will be provided to OIA in the event there is a citizen complaint. The supervisor shall investigate the incident in accordance with applicable policies.

## B. Force Levels

### 1. Level 1

- a. A firearm is intentionally pointed at a person; Note: a use of force report must be completed, notify supervisor immediately
- b. A weaponless defense technique is applied to a vulnerable area, excluding strikes (e.g., hair grab, pressure to mastoid or jaw line; and shoulder muscle grab).
- c. An on-duty firearm discharge to dispatch an injured animal; or
- d. A weaponless defense technique control hold is applied:
  1. Escort (elbow);
  2. Twist lock;
  3. Arm-bar; or
  4. Bent-wrist.

***NOTE: Un-resisted handcuffing is not considered a reportable use of force.***

2. Level 2

- a. Chemical agent is applied to a person.
- b. The use of an ECW involving any of the following circumstances:
  1. When one or more probes impacts or penetrates the subject's clothing or skin;
  2. When the push stun arc touches the subject's clothing or skin;  
or
  3. An ECW is fired at a person but misses.
- c. Any impact weapon, including specialty impact munitions, or any other instrument is used in an attempt to strike another person but no contact is made.
- d. The impact weapon is used for a non-striking purpose (e.g., prying limbs, moving, or controlling a person).
- e. A weaponless defense technique, other than control holds, excluding strikes to the head. Examples include:
  1. Hand/palm/elbow strikes;

2. Kicks;
  3. Leg sweeps; and
  4. Takedowns.
- f. An on-duty firearm discharge at an animal, other than to dispatch an injured animal.
  - g. Any strike to the head (except for an intentional strike with an impact weapon).
  - h. Use of impact weapons, including specialty impact munitions or any other object, to strike a subject and contact is made, regardless of injury.
  - i. A police canine bites the clothing or the skin of a subject, or otherwise injures a subject.
  - j. Any use of force which results in injuries to the subject requiring emergency medical treatment (beyond first-aid) or hospital admittance.

***Note: For the purposes of this order, an evaluation by a medical professional to assess a complaint of injury is not emergency medical treatment.***

3. Level 3

- a. Any use of force resulting in death.
- b. Any critical firearm discharge regardless of injury.
- c. Any force which creates a substantial risk of causing death;
- d. Any force which causes serious bodily injuries as identified in this policy.
- e. Any intentional impact weapon strike to the head.
- f. Chokehold or neck restraint is applied that does not result in the loss of consciousness.
- g. Any use of force investigation that is elevated to a Level 3 by a Sergeant or other supervisory personnel.

### C. Referral/Transport for Medical Attention

1. Arresting and transporting officers shall ask prisoners, against whom force was used, whether they are injured or ill.
2. A suspect shall be examined by a physician or qualified health care provider prior to interrogation or prisoner processing for purposes of detention when suffering from, or complaining of, injury or illness or when, among other instances, the individual:
  - a. Is struck on the head or other body parts with an impact weapon or other hard object;
  - b. Is restrained about the neck or throat;
  - c. Is sprayed with a chemical agent;
  - d. Is subject to an ECW application;
  - e. Is struck with any non-deadly weapon projectile such as an ECW dart;  
or
  - f. Is bitten by a police canine.
3. An injured prisoner shall not be admitted to, or held in, detention without being examined and released by a physician or qualified health care provider.
  - a. Whenever there is doubt concerning the need for medical attention, it should be resolved through examination of the subject by a physician or qualified health care provider.
  - b. Refusal of treatment shall be documented and verified by the officer and attending physician or qualified health care provider.

### D. Supervisory Responsibilities

1. General
  - a. The Supervisor, after being notified of a use of force, shall immediately respond to the scene and conduct a preliminary investigation into the use of force.
  - b. The supervisor, after being notified of a Level 3 Officer Involved Shooting, shall follow the procedures set forth in General Order 3.10, Officer Involved Shooting.

- c. While at the scene of a use of force, the supervisor shall visibly inspect the subject(s) for injury, interview the subject for complaints of pain, and ensure that the subject receives needed medical attention.
- d. While at the scene of a use of force, the Supervisor will photograph or videotape all claimed or visible injuries, and all areas where the officer reports striking the subject. Photographs of the subject shall be taken even when there are no signs of injury.
- e. The Supervisor shall, within a reasonable amount of time after being notified of a reportable use of force, obtain a CFS number from Dispatch.

2. Level 1 Use of Force

- a. When notified of a Level 1 use of force, the sergeant shall do the following:
  - 1) Respond to the scene;
  - 2) Investigate as necessary
  - 3) Document and review the officers Use of Force Report form;
  - 4) Obtain, review, and sign the completed Use of Force Report form from each officer prior to the end of the tour of duty;
  - 5) Evaluate the basis for the use of force and determine whether the officer's actions were within Department policies; and
  - 6) Forward a copy of the signed completed Use of Force Report form to his/her Shift Commander (lieutenant) prior to the end of the tour of duty.
- b. The Shift Commander (lieutenant and captain) shall review the Use of Force Report and the supervisor's findings and:
  - (1) If necessary, return the report to the sergeant to correct any identified deficiencies; or
  - (2) Approve the report and forward it through the chain of command to the Chief or designee for filing within seven (7) calendar days.
- c. The Chief or designee may in his or her discretion return the Level 1 use of force investigation to the supervisor for further review and



investigation.

3. Level 1 and 2 Use of Force

- a. When notified of a Level 2 use of force the supervisor will respond to the scene on a priority basis and shall do the following:
  - 1) Document, as necessary, the scene of the incident;
  - 2) Interview any physician or qualified health care provider concerning the injuries sustained and their consistency with uses of force reported;
  - 3) Collect or cause to be collected all evidence of use of force;
  - 4) Identify and interview witnesses other than officers as appropriate;
  - 5) Obtain, review, and sign the completed Use of Force Report form from each officer s prior to the end of the tour of duty;
  - 6) Summarize his or her investigation and findings.
  - 7) Forward a copy of the signed completed Use of Force Report Form to the Shift Commander (Lieutenant and Captain) prior to the end of the tour of duty; and
- b. The Chief or designee shall review a supervisor's Level 2 reports/reviews within thirty (30) calendar days or when feasible.
- c. The Chief or designee shall review all Level 2 Use of Force Investigations and findings made by the supervisor.

4. Level 3 Use of Force

- a. In cases involving a Level 3 or a serious use of force as defined by this policy, the supervisor shall:
  - 1) Immediately respond to and secure the scene;
  - 2) Insure that officers and citizens receive appropriate medical attention;
  - 3) Notify the dispatch that an officer has been involved in a confirmed Level 3 use of force;
  - 4) Document, as necessary, the scene of the incident;

- 5) Secure, or cause to be secured, all evidence of use of force for appropriate processing by the investigative units;
  - 6) Identify witnesses, both officer and civilian, and insure that they are segregated for interview by investigating units; and
  - 7) As soon as possible or when the scene is declared safe, secure the weapon(s) used by the involved officer(s).
- b. Dispatch will immediately notify the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police will initiate an Internal Affairs investigation to determine whether the officer(s) followed Department policy.
  - c. The supervisor, after being notified of a Level 3 officer involved shooting, shall follow the procedures set forth in General Order 3.10, Officer Involved Shooting.

E. Patrol Division Lieutenant

1. Ensure that the supervisors respond to the scenes of reportable use of force as required.
2. Review Use of Force investigations submitted by the immediate supervisor, and:
  - a. Verify that all applicable Use of Force Report Forms and accompanying paperwork were submitted within the specified timelines;
  - b. Ensure that the Use of Force Report Forms and accompanying paperwork were reviewed and signed by the immediate supervisor; and
  - c. Verify that the use of force is reported accurately and completely, and that all information concerning the incident/arrest is consistent in all reports.
    - 1) Where there are discrepancies between the reports, or the Supervisor determines that further investigation is required, he/she shall return the investigation to the appropriate supervisor for corrections, clarification, and additional investigative steps as needed.
  - d. Whether the officer engaged in reasonable de-escalation measures prior to using deadly force

- e. Whether any unreasonable conduct of the officer led to an increased risk of an occurrence of the situation that precipitated the use of deadly force.
3. Once the investigation is approved, determine the disposition for each allegation of use of force:
  - a. Justified, Within Department Policy – a use of force is determined to be justified, and during the course of the incident the subject officers did not violate a Department policy;
  - b. Justified, Policy Violation – a use of force is determined to be justified, but during the course of the incident the subject officers violated a Department policy;
    - i. Justified, Training Opportunity – a use of force is determined to be justified, no Department policy violations occurred, but the investigation revealed tactical error(s) that could be addressed through non-disciplinary, tactical improvement training; or
    - ii. Not Justified, Not within Department Policy – a use of force is determined to be not justified, and during the course of the incident the subject officer violated Department policy.
4. The Lieutenant shall submit findings to the appropriate Division Captain. The investigation along with the conclusion shall be submitted to the Chief within seven (7) working days after the incident.
5. The Chief shall hold supervisors accountable for the quality of their performance reviews and investigations.
6. Appropriate non-disciplinary corrective action and/or disciplinary action will be taken when a supervisor fails to conduct a timely and thorough investigation, neglects to recommend appropriate corrective action, or neglects to implement appropriate corrective action.

F. Raid and Warrant Situations

1. Each officer who uses force will fill out a separate reportable use of force report form including pointing of firearms at subjects during raids, or execution of search and/or arrest warrants.
  - a. Officers are advised that the reportable use of force report does not take the place or substitute for the completion of a Incident Report.

An incident report should be prepared and the Call For Service number (CFS) must be included in the Use of Force Report Form.

- b. The use of force investigations shall be conducted in accordance with and pursuant to applicable Department policies.

#### **G. Reporting Use of Force**

The department shall document and maintain a record of any incident in which an officer reports or is aware of an unreasonable, excessive, or illegal use of force as specified in this policy. This record shall include, at minimum, the name of the officer(s) involved; the date, time, and location of the incident; a description of the circumstances; and the names of any victims and witnesses present, if known.

#### H. Training

1. The Department shall coordinate and review all use of force policies and training to ensure quality, consistency, and compliance with applicable law and Department policy. The Department shall provide the appropriate training that will enhance the abilities of supervisors to conduct effective, complete, and thorough use of force investigations.

#### I. Annual Report Review

The Use of Force Monitor is responsible for conducting an annual review of all use of force reports and providing the Chief of Police and all operational units with report findings.