



# Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department

GENERAL ORDER

1.30

## USE OF FORCE – PRINCIPLES

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This directive establishes procedures and guidelines for officers' use of force. Statewide requirements on the use of deadly force are found in addendum General Order 1.30a – *LETB Uniform Statewide Policy on Deadly Force*. Additional restrictions and guidelines regarding reporting and the use of less lethal devices are found in General Orders 1.32 – *Less Lethal Devices* and 1.31 – *Use of Force Investigation, Reporting, and Review*.

### POLICY

The preservation of life is the department's highest priority, and the decision to use force shall not be made lightly. All officers of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) will uphold the United States Constitution, federal law, Indiana state law, and department policy while fulfilling their duty to protect human life, maintain civil order, and protect property. It is the policy of IMPD to accomplish its mission effectively, with the cooperation of the public, and with minimal reliance upon the use of physical force.

### DEFINITIONS

**Chokehold** - Applying pressure to the throat or neck of another person in a manner intended to obstruct the airway of the other person (*Uniform Statewide Policy on Deadly Force*, Law Enforcement Training Board, rev. 2023, pg 1).

**De-escalation** - Actions taken in an attempt to stabilize the situation in an effort to reduce or eliminate the necessity of using force against subjects (*Uniform Statewide Policy on Deadly Force* pg 2).

### PROCEDURES

- I. **Officers will attempt to de-escalate situations (e.g., the use of communication, time, distance, barriers, and continual situational awareness) to resolve encounters without the use of force when feasible.**
  - A. Officers will assess threats to avoid placing themselves or others in undue jeopardy.
  - B. Officers will look for opportunities to:
    1. Slow encounters down to gain voluntary compliance or call for additional resources (e.g., BHU, MCAT, CIT officers, etc.); and
    2. Increase distance to maximize tactical advantage and reaction time.
  - C. Officers will use their training and experience to identify barriers such as:
    1. Use of cover and concealment;
    2. Use of natural barriers in the immediate environment; and
    3. Placement of barriers between uncooperative subjects and officers.
  - D. Officers will use communication to attempt to gain voluntary compliance, such as:
    1. Clear verbal instructions;



2. Verbal persuasion and advice;
3. Non-verbal techniques for language barriers or hearing/comprehension impairments; and
4. Verbal warning prior to the use of force, when feasible.

E. Officers must never:

1. Knowingly or intentionally escalate a situation; or
2. Use taunting, insulting, harassing, or verbally abusive language that is intended to, or is likely to, provoke another person or escalate the situation.

**II. Officers will only use force that is objectively reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances.**

A. The objective reasonableness of a use of force is:

1. Based on the totality of the circumstances known by the officer at the time of the use of force; and
2. Judged from the perspective of what a reasonably prudent officer would use under the same or similar circumstances.

B. Factors to be considered in determining reasonableness include:

1. The severity of the crimes;
2. The immediate threat the suspect poses to the safety of the officers or others;
3. Whether the suspect is actively resisting or attempting to evade by fleeing;
4. The risk of harm to officers or innocent citizens the use of force poses;
5. Whether de-escalation techniques are feasible;
6. Known physical, medical, or mental impairments that hinder compliance;
7. Known effects of drugs and alcohol on the subject;
8. Applicable contextual factors (e.g., number of officers, skill level, age, size, strength, etc.);
9. Proximity of weapons or dangerous devices; and
10. Any other relevant factors.

C. Chokeholds, including lateral vascular neck restraints, are only authorized in situations where deadly force is allowed by law per General Order 1.30a – *LETB Uniform Statewide Policy on Deadly Force*.

D. When using force, officers must use only proportionate force. Proportionate force is the minimum amount of force that is required, based on the circumstances known to the officer, to achieve the officer's legitimate law enforcement objectives.

1. Officers must rely on their training, experience, and assessment of the situation to determine what level of force is proportionate. The list of factors contained in Section II.B. should guide this determination.
2. Consistent with the rule of proportionality, officers must consider the continuum of force options, and employ the least severe force option that is available to them that will resolve the situation safely. More information on the continuum of force options is found in General Order 1.32 – Less Lethal Devices.



3. The principle of proportionate force does not necessarily require officers to use the same type or amount of force as the person. The more immediate the threat and the more likely the threat will result in death or serious physical injury, the greater the level of force may be required to counter it.
4. Officers must reevaluate their response, including the use of force, as a situation develops. The use of force must be discontinued if it is no longer objectively reasonable (e.g., a suspect has ceased resistance and the incident is under control). Similarly, if some degree of force is still required but the level of force being used has become disproportionate to the need, officers must adopt a proportionate, less severe level of force.

### **III. Officers will only use force for legitimate law enforcement objectives.**

#### **A. Officers may use objectively reasonable and proportionate force to:**

1. Protect the officer or a third person;
2. Make an arrest, detention, or carry out a lawful search;
3. Overcome an assault or resistance directed at the officer or others;
4. Prevent or terminate the commission of a crime;
5. Prevent property damage or loss;
6. Prevent escape;
7. Intervene to provide medical care; or
8. Any other legitimate law enforcement purpose.

#### **B. Physical force will not be used against individuals in restraints and under control except when objectively reasonable to prevent escape, ongoing resistance, or imminent bodily injury to the subject, officers, or another person.**

#### **C. Officers may not use or threaten to use force for any of the following reasons:**

1. Solely to resolve a situation more quickly absent other factors that would make the use of force objectively reasonable and proportional;
2. To punish a person or to retaliate against them for past conduct;
3. To force compliance with an officer's request, absent other factors that would make the use of force objectively reasonable and proportional; or
4. Based upon bias against a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

### **IV. As soon as reasonably possible following a use of force, officers will evaluate the subject for injuries, request Emergency Medical Services (EMS) as needed or requested, and render appropriate aid according to their training and experience.**

#### **A. When safe and feasible, officers will:**

1. Request EMS response for any injury or sign of medical distress, unless the injuries are minor (e.g., complaint of pain, small cuts and abrasions);



2. Render aid according to their training and experience unless aid is declined. Consent should be assumed for unconscious subjects or those incapable of providing consent;
3. Place prone subjects in an upright or recovery position when appropriate and feasible; and
4. Continually observe subjects for signs of distress. EMS should be requested immediately if any of the following signs are observed or occurred:
  - a. Extreme agitation;
  - b. Violent, bizarre, or irrational behavior;
  - c. Profuse sweating;
  - d. Difficulty breathing;
  - e. Extraordinary strength beyond physical characteristics;
  - f. Unusually high tolerance to pain; or
  - g. A protracted physical encounter with multiple officers.

B. Officers will not restrain subjects who are in custody and under control in a manner that restricts their ability to breathe and shall reposition the subject into a recovery position as soon as practical.

**V. Officers will stop and report any use of force performed by themselves or another officer that violates applicable laws or department policies.**

- A. Officers must intervene to prevent or stop the use of excessive force by another officer when it is safe and feasible to do so.
- B. Any officer who directly observes or knows of a violation of this use of force policy or its addendum must report it to a supervisor as soon as practical.
- C. This directive will be reviewed annually for legality and compliance with national best practices.

**VI. Officers will receive training, at least annually, on IMPD's use of force policies and related legal updates.**

- A. Training will be designed to:
  1. Reinforce the importance of and provide techniques of de-escalation;
  2. Reinforce the principles of permissible and prohibited uses of force;
  3. Simulate actual use of force situations and conditions; and
  4. Enhance officers' discretion and judgment in use of force situations in accordance with department directives.
- B. All use of force training is documented.