

### **153.0 De-Escalation**

De-escalation tactics and techniques are actions taken by an officer that seek to minimize the need to use force during an incident and to increase voluntary compliance by a subject. These tactics improve the safety of the officer and the subject, reduce the likelihood of injury, improve community relations, reduce citizen complaints, and are consistent with the department's procedural justice philosophy.

De-escalation tactics shall be used whenever possible, and when such delay will not compromise the safety of the officer or a citizen, and when it is not immediately necessary for an officer to take action to prevent the officer or a citizen from being assaulted or injured. De-escalation shall also be used when time and circumstances reasonably permit, to respond to a person who is attempting to escape or to respond to a person who is committing a crime. When considering the totality of the circumstances, an officer shall use de-escalation tactics by attempting to slow down or stabilize a situation so that more time, options, and resources may become available for incident resolution. The totality of the circumstances may include, but is not limited to, the seriousness of the crime, danger to the public, and threat to officers and citizens.

It must also be recognized that when de-escalation techniques are applied, force may still be required to resolve an incident. However, de-escalation may result in lower levels of force, than if no de-escalation tactics/techniques are utilized.

When dealing with a non-compliant subject and time and circumstances reasonably permit, the officer shall consider whether the subject is affected by conditions such as:

- A. Medical issues;
- B. Mental impairment or mental health crisis;
- C. Developmental disability;
- D. Physical limitation;
- E. Communication barrier;
- F. Alcohol and/or drug use; and/or
- G. Behavioral/emotional crisis.

When time and circumstances allow for de-escalation, an officer's awareness of the above conditions shall be balanced against the totality of the circumstances when determining which de-escalation option(s) are the most appropriate to attempt to bring the situation to a safe resolution. Options to de-escalate a situation include, but are not limited to:

- A. Calling for more resources, such as:
  - 1. Additional officers/supervisors;
  - 2. A CIT officer;
  - 3. Officers equipped with less-lethal devices;
  - 4. A bi-lingual officer;
  - 5. Emergency Medical Services; and/or
  - 6. Other specialty units.
- B. Utilizing available barriers between the non-compliant subject and the officer.
- C. Containing and/or limiting the movement of the subject.
- D. Reducing the officer's threat of danger or exposure by moving to a safer position, considering:
  - 1. Distance;

2. Cover; and
  3. Concealment.
- E. Communicating with the subject from a safe position by:
1. Using verbal persuasion and explanation to promote rational decision making; and/or
  2. Giving clear direction and allowing the subject time to comply.
- F. Short term disengagement from the situation to create more time to observe the subject and plan for re-deployment.
- G. Complete disengagement when it is in the best interest of justice.
- H. Any other tactics that attempt to achieve law enforcement objectives by gaining the compliance of the subject.

To properly de-escalate a situation an officer must also consider other factors when determining what techniques will lead to resolution of an incident. These factors include:

- A. Recognizing factors that increase subject and officer escalation rather than de-escalation;
- B. Environmental considerations;
- C. Identifying limitations to the officer's ability to communicate with the subject; and
- D. Creating a plan for resolving the incident and communicating the plan to other officers/supervisors, etc.

Each officer has a responsibility to attempt tactical de-escalation efforts consistent with their training. Circumstances are unique to each event, and may dictate if an officer can reasonably de-escalate. De-escalation and related tactics will be evaluated as part of a departmental administrative investigation, use of force follow-up by supervisors and the Use of Force Screening Committee. Supervisors must explain why de-escalation would not have been appropriate or how it was used. When related to a use of force, the findings of this evaluation will be addressed as a separate matter from the incident resulting in the investigation. De-escalation will not be used to determine whether a use of force is justified or appropriate. If the Use of Force Screening Committee determines de-escalation and related tactics were not utilized appropriately, the matter will be referred to a Deputy Chief for final review.

Adopted 4/17; Revised 2/18