



# SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



580.06

## De-Escalation and Planned Response

12-1-20

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to provide guidelines for interacting with those individuals who may be experiencing emotional or mental health crises.

### POLICY

The Sacramento Police Department is committed to providing a consistently high level of service to all members of the community and recognizing that persons in crisis may benefit from intervention. It shall be the intent of the involved peace officer(s) to resolve an incident as safely as possible to protect the public and persons involved by reducing the danger through use of tactics, techniques, and force options. This is to ensure equitable and safe treatment of all involved. A peace officer shall employ de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques when feasible and when doing so does not increase the risk of harm to peace officers or another person. When making use of force decisions, a peace officer should be mindful that subjects may be physically or mentally incapable of responding to police commands due to a variety of circumstances including, but not limited to, alcohol or drugs, mental impairment, medical conditions, or language and cultural barriers. The Sacramento Police Department (SPD) values the sanctity of human life and the freedoms guaranteed by the United States and California Constitutions. Use of force (UOF) by peace officers is of important concern to the community. The role of law enforcement is to safeguard life, dignity, liberty of all persons, without prejudice to anyone. Peace officers shall carry out duties, including UOF, in a manner that is fair and unbiased.

### PROCEDURE

#### A. DEFINITIONS

1. DE-ESCALATION - Taking action or communicating verbally or nonverbally during a potential force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation, to decrease the likelihood of the need to use force, decrease the severity of any force required, reduce the immediacy of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation with voluntary compliance. De-escalation techniques include, but are not limited to, gathering information, assessing risks, warnings, verbal and non-verbal persuasion, crisis intervention techniques, utilizing available resources (such as personnel and equipment), and tactical repositioning.
2. CRISIS INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES (CIT) - A collaborative approach to safely and effectively addressing the needs of people with mental illnesses, linking them to appropriate services, and diverting them from the criminal justice system, if appropriate. The primary goal of CIT is to improve peace officer and mental health consumer safety while reducing injuries to peace officers and consumers during law enforcement contacts. Crisis intervention techniques include using distance, time, verbal tactics, or other tactics to de-escalate a situation.

#### B. GENERAL

1. PLANNING – Peace officers should attempt to arrive at the scene with a coordinated approach based upon initial information and any pre-existing knowledge of the subject(s) or the involved parties. As additional information or factors become known to the peace officer, responding peace officers need to remain flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. Peace officers should attempt to isolate and contain subjects who are experiencing a crisis situation.



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2. TIME – Peace officers need to recognize that time is an essential element for de-escalation as it allows a peace officer the opportunity to communicate with the suspect, refine tactical plans and, if necessary, call for additional resources. Time can also provide an opportunity for the suspect to reconsider his/her actions and decisions, and aid in voluntary compliance.
3. ASSESSMENT- Peace officers should continually assess the situation as circumstances change and additional information is received. In the event of non-compliance demonstrated by the subject, peace officers should attempt to determine whether the lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist or escape, or an inability to comprehend due to environmental, physical, cognitive, or other conditions. If the subject is unable to comprehend the situation, additional resources or tactical options may be needed to safely resolve the situation (i.e. in-field mental health counselor or county clinician).
4. COMMUNICATE – Peace officers should recognize that every situation is fluid and unique, therefore ongoing communication and coordination between peace officers is critically important for effective response. Communication between peace officers can improve decision making under tense circumstances and increase effectiveness of coordinated actions. Peace officers should consider using the following tactics:
  - a. Verbal warnings
  - b. Persuasion
  - c. Re-directing
  - d. Asking open-ended questions
  - e. Giving clear and direct orders that can be received and understood
  - f. Building rapport
  - g. Perspective taking (understanding the why)
  - h. Finding the meaning behind the words
  - i. Showing empathy