In-Service T.Y. 2017

Date Prepared: **August 2016**
Subject: **Human Responses to High-Stress Force Encounters**

Date Revised: **TBD**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience:</th>
<th>Pre-required Student Training and/or experience (if any):</th>
<th>Method of Instruction:</th>
<th>Time Allotted:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Officers</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Video Presentation, roundtable discussion</td>
<td>Classroom Hours: 3</td>
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<tr>
<th>Summary of Instructor Qualifications to teach the class:</th>
<th>Number of Instructors required: 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must be a currently certified MPTC Defensive Tactics Instructor with at least a <strong>Level III (3)</strong> designation.</td>
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<th>Instructional Goal:</th>
<th>To enhance officer safety and effectiveness in high-stress encounters.</th>
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<th>Objectives: (Specify skills/information that will be learned and is measureable.)</th>
<th>At the conclusion of this training, students will be able to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Recognize the varying perceptions of officers, subjects, and observers involved in the same incident.</td>
<td>• Understand how the use of distance + cover = time will result in a safer and more effective use-of-force encounter.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Electronic (DVD) copy: Video copies to be kept on file with MPTC. Videos to be used:</th>
<th>Bibliography References:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• [Boston PD Bunker Hill CC]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• [Man shot on bridge after Taser]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If time permits:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• [Teen with finger gun shot]</td>
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Lesson Plan Content

Instructors shall begin the class with a brief overview and review of the MPTC Use-of-Force model and a summary of last year’s discussion regarding the use of distance, time, communication, and positioning to their benefit and to reduce the potential for needing to use physical force. (See the attachment.) The instructor will then explain to the students that the purpose of this year’s in-service is to give them a better understanding of how different the perspectives of officers, suspects and the general public can be during Use-of-Force encounters. At the completion of the block of training, instructors will have given students a better understanding of why proper training and skills and using the concept of distance + cover= time make for a safer and better-accepted use-of-force encounter.

Both videos are use-of-force incidents which occurred during actual police encounters. Instructors should explain to the students that while watching the video they should examine the incidents from the perspective of a citizen who may be a casual onlooker and also through the eyes of the police officer.

The instructor shall tell the class that the discussion is not meant to second-guess or to be a criticism of the officers involved, but solely to be a learning experience. In any use of force, even the most experienced officer can benefit and learn from a review of her or his performance after such incidents.

Video one [insert link to video] depicts an incident in which a known gang member is being taken into custody by several officers. Video two [insert link to video] is an incident which occurs on a bridge. This video is captured on the officer’s cruiser cam. It depicts an officer attempting to place an individual under arrest who violently resists, is subjected to a TASER exposure, and is ultimately shot by a second responding officer. Video one should be shown and discussed before showing and discussing video number two. (Video number three is offered in case time permits additional review and discussions.)

In both cases, the initial viewing of the videos should prompt the students to question whether or not the force used was appropriate. They should also examine what the officer did well and ways the officer could have better use distance, time, communication, and positioning to create a safer, better outcome. They should also begin to question whether or not the general public would accept or challenge the officer’s decisions. (It should be reinforced that the purpose of the class is not to get officers to insert public opinion as the primary consideration when using force. Officers should still utilize the force option that will reasonably respond to the subject’s actions and achieve a resolution to the situation. Instead, the discussion regarding public perceptions is meant to reinforce how and why the public often reacts negatively to officers’ use of force, even when applied legally and reasonably and to reinforce the benefits of utilizing smart policing (distance, time, communication, and positioning) when handling situations where physical force may be required.)
After viewing each video the instructor should break the class into smaller groups and foster a “roundtable discussion” type atmosphere. The instructor should advise the students to focus on several key points from both of the videos but address them using the following questions:

1. What did the officer(s) do well?
2. Which techniques may have been better alternatives to what the officers applied? Could they have used distance, time, communication, or positioning better?
3. Did the officers involved create the condition for more force than necessary to be used?
4. If you were a citizen observing this incident as it unfolds, what would be your initial response?
5. If you had no knowledge of what type of subject the officers were dealing with would you assume that the police where exceeding the boundaries of reasonable force?
6. Placing yourself in the position of the responding officers, how do you perceive the subjects’ actions in each of the scenarios?
7. Do you believe that the force used was in fact reasonable?
8. How would you document and explain why you used the force applied based on the subjects actions? (After getting some discussion, ask this question: If this was you, and you got sued for your involvement in this incident would you be able to adequately defend my actions and would you report support your use of force option(s) in a court of law?)
9. Does it appear that lack of training might have affected the way in which the officers involved handled the incidents? Are there other explanations?

It is important that instructors review the concepts of distance + cover= time. Instructors should also review, through discussion, the control technique taught at last year’s in-service which addressed the issue of several officers dealing with the active resistant subject on the ground and its public impression factor.

At the conclusion of the block of training, students should have a firm understanding of the differences in perception between the subject, officer and general public who may witness or be involved in a use-of-force incident and how smart policing (distance, time, communication, and positioning) can minimize the potential for the need to use physical force and minimize the perception that the force used was excessive or unreasonable. Students should also understand the importance of how a well written report will greatly assist them in explaining their actions. Finally, the hope is that by evaluating incidents in this forum officer safety will be enhanced by showing students better alternatives to handle incidents similar to the ones they were shown.

Links to DT videos

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXDjvBaTDDQ&feature=em-share_video_user](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXDjvBaTDDQ&feature=em-share_video_user)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqzJLt7w7Cw&feature=em-share_video_user](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqzJLt7w7Cw&feature=em-share_video_user)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRkXa59PdEk&feature=em-share_video_user](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRkXa59PdEk&feature=em-share_video_user)
Perceived Circumstances - the officer’s perception of the circumstances, based on the information available; including the severity of any crime, the existence of an immediate safety threat to the officer or others, and the degree of compliance / non-compliance from the subject; culminating in its identification on the Use of Force Model’s Threat Perception Categories.

Perceived Subject Action (s) - the subject action (s) as perceived by the reasonable officer that designate the subject at one or more of the Use of Force Model’s compliant / non-compliant categories.

Reasonable Officer Response (s) - the “balanced” response (s) appropriate for the reasonable officer’s selection from the Use of Force Model’s identified response categories, in order to maintain or gain subject compliance and control.

These five categories and their color correlation include:

- **Strategic** - the first level on the Use of Force Model, establishing the broad “mind set” for the officer, represented by the blue baseline on the Threat Perception Color Code. The contemporary officer must maintain this functional foundation, centered upon patterns and principles designed to enhance the overall status of safety. The professional officer is engaged in duties that require a higher level of awareness, based on observation and perceptions, than most any other professions. Day after day our activities include the observance of hundreds of individuals and vehicles and the critical observation of the enforcement environment. *Think Strategically.*

- **Tactical** - the second level on the Use of Force Model, is depicted by the color green. At this level, the officer perceives an increase in threat potential within the contact environment, evolving into the deployment of safety tactics. This increase in risk generally occurs when an officer initiates various types of police action. Accordingly, the officer applies accepted safety strategies relative to the enforcement encounter. For example, the officer has selected a vehicle for a traffic stop and now practices the appropriate tactics such as calling in the stop prior to turning on the “blue lights”, proper cruiser positioning, etc. or when an officer approaches a subject on the street to investigate some type of suspicious activity. The tactical skills that would be deployed in this situation would be those foundation skills that Defensive Tactics Instructors promote such as proper stance, distance and positioning. *Act Tactically.*

- **Volatile** - the third level on the Use of Force Model utilizing the color yellow to indicate an activated level of alertness and threat potential. Here the officer is confronted with the presence or potential of increased threat intensity, severity, etc., within the enforcement encounter.

This activated alertness might involve an agitated and angry operator of the motor vehicle that was just stopped or a very animated subject who is not happy that the officer has stopped him for questioning.
• **Harmful** - at this level on the Use of Force Model the color orange denotes an accelerated perception of danger directed toward the officer or others. The officer must initially deploy defensive force toward the goal of eventual subject compliance and control.

An officer may perceive the risk as being harmful when the operator from the stopped motor vehicle jumps out of the vehicle, rolls up his sleeves and assumes a fighting stance. This harmful risk might also be perceived when the subject being questioned takes off his hat, clenches his fists and calls over another subject who is sitting nearby.

Harmful risk may also include dispatch to a domestic disturbance or a bar fight.

• **Lethal** - the highest level on the Use of Force Model correlates to the most intense color in the [Threat Perception Color Code](#), red. Although the potentially lethal degree of threat is least frequent, its recognition remains most crucial for officer safety and societal security.

Lethal risk may include dispatch for shots fired, finding spent shell casings on the sidewalk at a disturbance call or a blood stained hallway at the call of a serious assault.

One must realize each officer/citizen contact is potentially unpredictable. At the onset of any police action, there is a level of risk present. This risk may increase and/or decrease as the confrontation continues, mandating that the officer continue to perceive, assimilate and adapt to these potential changes in the risks and dangers.

The five categories of Perceived Subject Action(s) include:

• **Compliant** - represents the vast majority of officer/citizen contacts. Such cooperation is generally established and maintained via cultural acceptance, verbalization skills, etc.

• **Resistant (Passive)** - the preliminary level of citizen non-compliance. Here, the citizen, although non-compliant, offers no physical or mechanical energy enhancement toward the resistant effort.

• **Resistant (Active)** - the subject’s non-compliance is increased in scope and/or intensity. The subject’s non-compliance now includes energy enhanced physical or mechanical defiance.

• **Assaultive (Bodily Harm)** - the officer’s attempt to gain lawful compliance has culminated in a perceived or actual attack on the officer or others. The officer makes the reasonable assessment that such actions by the subject would not result in the officer’s or other’s death or serious bodily harm.

• **Assaultive (Serious Bodily Harm/Death)** - the officer’s attempt to gain lawful compliance has culminated in the perception of an attack or the potential for such an attack on the officer or others. The officer makes the reasonable assessment that such actions by the subject could result in serious bodily harm or death to the officer or others.
The five categories of Reasonable Officer Response(s) include:

- **Cooperative Controls** - include contemporary controls developed to preserve officer safety and security, including: communication skills, restraint applications, etc.

- **Contact Controls** - includes countermeasures designed to guide or direct the non-compliant subject. These "hands on" tactics would include an elbow/wrist grasp, Hand Rotation Position, Escort Position, etc.

- **Compliance Techniques** - includes countermeasures designed to counter the subject's enhanced degree of resistance. These tactics could include the Control and Restraint Techniques, Takedowns, Pressure Points and Distraction Techniques, OC spray, etc. **Using the TASER in a DRIVE STUN or PROBE DEPLOYMENT would be justified as a Compliance Technique based on a departments policy and procedures.**

- **Defensive Tactics** - includes countermeasures designed to counter the subject's perceived non-lethal assault on the officer or others, regain control, and assure continued compliance. These tactics could include Weapon / Weaponless Strikes, etc. **Using the TASER in a DRIVE STUN or PROBE DEPLOYMENT would be justified as a Defensive Tactics Technique based on a departments policy and procedures.**

- **Deadly Force** - includes countermeasures designed to counter an assault, which is perceived as lethal or could cause great bodily harm to the officer or others. These tactics could include the use of a firearm, lethal strikes, etc.