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Colorado Springs Police Department

General Order 705

**Section 7: Use of Force Continuum
Force, Detention, and Arrest**

Active Date: 6/17/2013

Supersedes Date: 8/12/2002

Approved
Peter Carey
General Order

.01 Purpose

To specify principles and guidelines for the level of force and amount of force options available during non-lethal and deadly force situations.

.02 Cross Reference

[G.O. 710, Less Lethal Force](#)

[G.O. 720, Deadly Force Guidelines](#)

.03 Discussion

Police officers are given the unique right to use force against others, even deadly force, for legitimate law enforcement purposes. The right to use force carries with it a heavy responsibility not to abuse it. Police agencies have an obligation to provide their employees with the policies, training and tools necessary to accomplish their mission. An articulated continuum of force option, selectively applied, will enhance the department's ability to manage the use of force and will benefit the officer by providing guidance, resources, and options. The model, as seen in section .10, is based on the skills, knowledge and ability of the individual; the perceived threat and amount of resistance offered by a subject; and structured within a situational framework.

.04 Policy

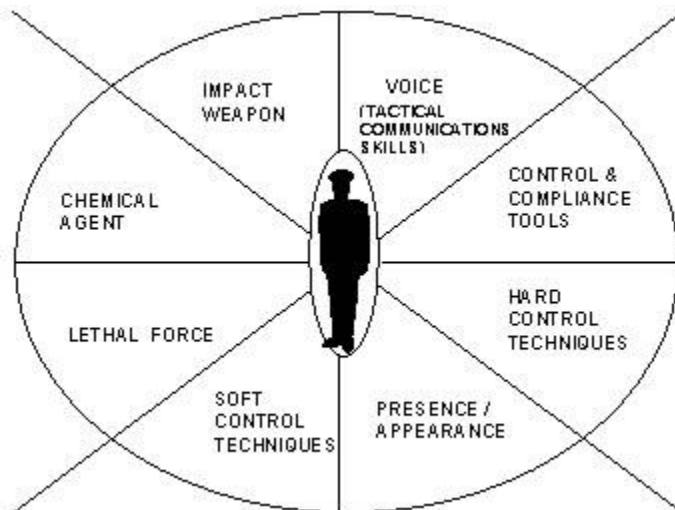
Officers of the Colorado Springs Police Department shall follow the principles of the Use of Force Continuum using the Situational Force Model. The continuum describes an escalation of force that is based on an escalation of resistance. The more resistance a subject offers, the more force and the more options of force may be exercised. When resistance stops, the officer must de-escalate, but only after temporary control is obtained, as in handcuffing. In all cases, control is a perception based on training and experience. Officers do not have to enter the use of force continuum at the lowest possible level. They may enter anywhere to maintain their safety or to control the subject, as long as they mentally consider the lower options. This judgment is also based on training and experience.

.05 Definitions

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.10 Situational Force Model

The use of force continuum uses a model which requires selection of the least violent means available relative to the situation. The officer relies upon reasoned discretion in terms of the use of force options. Which option officers use depends on many factors, but the option is generally dictated by the amount of resistance offered by the subject. This places the officer in the center of the situation. Depending upon the situation, the officer is trained to select the appropriate force option. If the situation should worsen or improve, then the officer is trained to re-evaluate the situation and select a more appropriate force option based on the officer's knowledge, skills and ability to justify the force used.



The situational force model requires selection of the least violent means available, relative to the situation. The officer relies upon reasoned discretion in making the selection.

.20 Use of Force Continuum

The use of force continuum can be seen as several general levels:

- **Presence/Appearance:**
This reflects the officer's demeanor, attitude and the legal right to be there.
- **Voice/Tactical Communication Skill:**
This requires a show of authority by communication with verbal and non-verbal dialogue. The subject must be informed of what is required and given a chance to comply. Non-verbal dialogue includes assuming an empty hand defensive position, as well as the display of a defensive weapon.
- **Soft Control, Open Hand Techniques:**
When the subject fails to respond to verbal direction or resists in a defensive manner, the officer seeks compliance by the use of physical means. This could include empty hand control, pressure compliance holds, blocking, restraining, controlling or escorting holds.
- **Control and Compliance Tools, Chemical Agent, Conducted Energy Device, and Pain Compliance Tools:**
These levels direct the use of more aggressive techniques, as well as using defensive weapons against the subject's resistance. The subject has become an aggressor, attacks the officer, or there is fear for the safety of the officer and others. Lower level techniques have been exhausted or would be ineffective. This includes chemical agents such as Oleoresin Capsicum (OC), Electronic Control Devices (ECD) and pain compliance tools such as the baton or other objects used to exert pain compliance. It should be noted that the baton controlling techniques are at a lower level than hard control techniques.
- **Hard Control, Closed Hand and Kick Tactics Techniques:**
When the above listed techniques are ineffective, or the subject becomes more aggressive, the officer seeks compliance by additional physical means. This could include strikes, kicks, stuns or takedowns.
- **Impact Systems:**
This level directs the officer to use more aggressive techniques, as well as other weapons against the subject's resistance. The situations may include multiple aggressors, a subject armed with clubs, chains, rocks or bottles, or an unarmed subject that cannot be controlled by other means. The officer may respond with non-lethal or lethal force, depending on the situation. In an urgent situation, it is possible for many things to be used as an impact weapon. The PR-24 is an option available to officers. As with the PR-24, any object used to exert physical force upon a person must be justified and must conform to the force continuum. Other optional impact weapons would include the Monadnock Auto-Lock Expandable Baton. The Specialty Impact Delivery Systems (SIM) can be used to deliver specialty impact munitions from an extended distance from the opponent, thus providing the officer with a greater reactionary gap. The two specialty impact delivery systems approved for specially trained officers and supervisors are the Remington 870, 12-gauge shotgun and the Penn Arms 40mm Launcher.





- **Lethal Force:**

The final level or situation requires the use of additional tactics or tools against armed subjects who possess guns, knives, or other instruments; or any subject capable of inflicting serious bodily injury or death. This level allows for the use of non-lethal or the lethal force option.

.30 Level of Force vs. Amount of Force

The use of force continuum recognizes that there is a difference between the level of force, officer presence vs. firearm, and the amount of force used within each level. As an example, the officer, using reasoned discretion, decides a firearm is indicated in a particular situation. The amount of force options with the firearm could be a verbal warning, hand on the weapon, draw the weapon, point the weapon, or shoot. The use of force continuum requires selection of the least violent level available, relative to the situation, and the selection of the least amount of force necessary within each level.

.40 Levels of Resistance Encountered

The levels of resistance to which the officer must react are:

- **Psychological Intimidation** : This includes non-verbal cues indicating a subject's attitude, appearance, and physical readiness.
- **Verbal Non-Compliance**: This involves verbal responses indicating unwillingness or threats.
- **Passive Resistance** : This includes actions by a subject that hinders or prevents an officer's attempt to control, by refusing to follow verbal commands.
- **Defensive Resistance** : This includes physical actions that attempt to prevent an officer's control but doesn't attempt to harm the officer.
- **Active Aggression** : This involves physical actions of assault against the officer, or others, that are designed to prevent the officer from exercising control
- **Aggravated Active Aggression** : This involves actions that are likely to result in serious physical injury or death.

.50 Escalation/De-Escalation

It is recognized that there are many circumstances that determine whether an officer escalates or de-escalates through the force continuum:

- **Age:** An older officer may have to use a higher level of force to control a younger person who is more agile and stronger. A younger officer may be expected to use a lower level of force to control the resistance of a person who is older and weaker.
- **Size:** Refers to height and weight. A relatively small officer who must control a very large person may have to use a higher level of force.
- **Skill Level:** The officer facing a subject whose skill is equal to or higher than that of the officer may use a higher level of force when encountering resistance.
- **Disability:** When encountering violent resistance, officers who have disabilities may need to use higher levels of force quickly to protect themselves and to achieve control.
- **Unavailable Assistance:** The officer who must respond to a call when no assistance is available may use a higher level of force to control the situation.
- **Proximity of Available Weapons:** The officer who must confront a subject in his/her home or workplace is at a disadvantage because the officer will be unfamiliar with the location of weapons.
- **Environmental Awareness:** An officer's response to a given situation may be dictated by conditions over which there is no control. Some of these may include: indoor/outdoor conditions, time of day, lighting conditions, weather conditions, ground surface, bystanders, etc.

.60 Special Circumstances

Some circumstances may cause the officer to escalate very rapidly through the continuum:

- **Imminent Danger:** The officer responding to a call, having reason to believe that the subject may be armed, must be prepared to immediately escalate to the appropriate level of force.
- **Special Knowledge:** The officer knows that the person to be contacted is under the influence of alcohol/drugs, suffering from diminished mental capacity, possesses a special skill, has assumed a defensive position through body language or anything that may make the person a greater threat.
- **Injury/Exhaustion:** The officer who is injured in a confrontation but is still required to control the subject may use a higher level of force. The officer involved in a foot chase or fight prior to the actual arrest may escalate the level of force.
- **Proximity of the Officer's Firearm:** The officer must use appropriate force to protect his or her weapon and other police equipment that may be used as a weapon.
- **Multiple Subjects:** When an officer faces multiple subjects, a greater amount of force will be needed to protect the officer and to control the subjects.