



2-55 Use of Force De-escalation

2-55-1 Purpose

To establish guidelines for officers of the Albuquerque Police Department regarding using de-escalation techniques during interactions with individuals in an effort to avoid unnecessarily escalating a situation, to gain voluntary compliance from an uncooperative individual, and to reduce or eliminate the need to use Force.

2-55-2 Policy

Officers shall use de-escalation techniques when Feasible. Policing, at times, requires an officer to exercise control of a violent or resistant individual, or an individual experiencing a mental health or behavioral crisis. At other times, policing may require an officer to serve as a mediator between parties, or defuse a tense situation.

2-55-3 Definitions

See APD Procedural Orders 2-53 and APD Procedural Orders 2-19

2-55-4 De-escalation Techniques and Guidelines

- A. De-escalation techniques are proactive actions and approaches that officers use to gain voluntary compliance of individual(s) to reduce or eliminate the need to use Force. Officers shall De-escalate the amount of Force used as an individual's resistance decreases.

The following list of De-escalation techniques is not intended to establish an order of priority in their use by officers.

1. De-escalation techniques include:
 - a. Use of distance, cover, concealment, and/or time. These techniques allow officers to assess the situation and their options, bring additional resources to the scene, and develop a plan for resolving the incident without using Force;
 - b. Utilizing intermediate barriers;
 - c. Request additional personnel, and wait for their arrival, when Feasible to do so;
 - d. Use of active listening skills by an officer to indicate engagement in conversation with an individual;
 - e. Verbal De-escalation, which may include:



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- i. Communicating with the individual(s) in a conversational tone of voice while considering additional resources (e.g., CIT officers, Mobile Crisis Teams, City Social Services, Behavior Health Services) to best resolve the individual's crisis;
 - ii. Beginning by asking questions rather than immediately issuing orders;
 - iii. Advising the individual(s) of the actions that officers will take to end their crisis without the need to use Force; and
 - iv. Warning the individual that disobeying orders and posing an Immediate Threat to officers or others may result in the need to use Force.
- B. When objectively reasonable and under the totality of circumstances, officers shall attempt to De-escalate and slow down situations without increasing the risk of harm to the officer or others.

Officers should:

1. gather information about the incident, when Feasible;
 2. assess the risks to the individual(s), the officer(s) and others;
 3. coordinate resources; and
 4. communicate and coordinate a response.
- C. Should an individual fail to comply with lawful directions or commands, officers shall consider whether an individual's lack of compliance may be based upon an inability to comprehend in order to comply.

Where an officer identifies the presence of one of the following factors, they shall use de-escalation techniques in order to reduce or eliminate the need to use Force:

1. The influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
 2. Known or reasonably apparent mental illness or developmental disability;
 3. Individual is experiencing a crisis incident;
 4. Known or reasonably apparent physical disability or other medical or physical condition, including visual or hearing impairment; and
 5. Language barrier.
- D. An officer's approach to an individual can influence whether a situation escalates, resulting in a use of Force.
1. Officers shall avoid taking unnecessary actions that may escalate the need to use Force.
 2. Officers shall recognize that their elevated stress levels can have a negative or adverse impact on individual interactions.
- E. In their interaction with individuals, officers shall use advisements, warnings, verbal persuasion, and other tactics prior to using Force.



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- F. Supervisors will become involved as soon as practicable in the management of an overall response to potentially violent encounters by coordinating resources and officers' tactical actions.
- G. If the individual is, or appears to be, in a mental or behavioral health crisis, officers should attempt to De-escalate and shall otherwise follow APD Procedural Order 2-19 Response to Behavioral Health Issues.

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