



**2-55 USE OF FORCE: DE-ESCALATION**

**Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):**

A. Related SOP(s)

- 2-19 Response to Behavioral Health Issues
- ~~2-52 Use of Force: General~~
- ~~2-53 Use of Force: Definitions~~
- ~~2-54 Intermediate Weapons~~
- ~~2-56 Use of Force: Reporting by Department Personnel~~
- ~~2-57 Use of Force: Review and Investigation by Department Personnel~~

B. Form(s)

None

C. Other Resource(s)

None

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

SO 21-58 Amendment to SOP 2-55 Use of Force: De-escalation

**2-55-1 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for ~~officers~~ sworn personnel of the Albuquerque Police Department (Department) regarding the use of 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**

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

**2-55-3 Definitions**

For a listing of definitions specific to use of force, refer to SOP Use of Force: Definitions.

~~De-escalation~~

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~~An action to attempt to calm a situation or to prevent a situation from escalating into a physical confrontation or injury by using verbal and non-verbal techniques, including~~



~~active listening skills, tone of voice, announcement of actions, body posture, personal space, eye contact, and empathy and compassion to promote officer and individual safety, consistent with. (See SOP Response to Behavioral Health Issues.)~~

#### 2-55-4 De-escalation Techniques and Guidelines

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A. De-escalation techniques are proactive actions and approaches that an officer uses to gain voluntary compliance of the individual to reduce or eliminate the need to use force.

1. The following list of de-escalation techniques is not intended to establish an order of priority in their use by sworn personnel. De-escalation techniques shall be used when feasible, and include but are not limited to:

a. Using distance, cover, concealment, and/or time. These techniques allow an officer to:

- i. Assess the situation and their options;
- ii. Bring additional resources to the scene; and
- iii. Develop a plan for resolving the incident without using force.

b. Using intermediate barriers;

c. When feasible, requesting additional personnel and waiting for their arrival;

d. Using active listening skills by an officer to indicate engagement in conversation with an individual;

e. Employing verbal de-escalation, which may include:

- i. Communicating with the individual in a conversational tone of voice;
- ii. Beginning by asking questions rather than immediately issuing orders; and
- iii. Advising the individual that disobeying orders and posing an immediate threat to sworn personnel or others may result in the need to use force.

~~C. An officer's approach to an individual can influence whether a situation escalates, resulting in the use of force.~~

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~~1. An officer shall avoid taking unnecessary actions, including actions that escalate a situation that may lead to the need to use force.~~

~~1. An officer shall recognize that their elevated stress levels can have an adverse impact on individual interactions.~~

B. When feasible, an officer shall use advisements, warnings, verbal persuasion, and other techniques before using force.

C. When feasible, given the facts and circumstances known to the officer at the time, the officer shall attempt to de-escalate and slow down situations without increasing the risk of harm to the officer, the individual, or others.

1. When feasible, the officer should:



- a. Gather information about the incident;
- b. Assess the potential risks to the individual, the officer, and others;
- c. Coordinate resources;
- d. Communicate and coordinate a response; and
- e. Request additional resources (e.g., Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team [ECIT] sworn personnel, Mobile Crisis Team (MCT), City of Albuquerque social services, and behavioral health services) to best resolve the individual's crisis.

D. An officer's approach to an individual can influence whether a situation escalates, resulting in the use of force.

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1. An officer shall avoid taking unnecessary actions, including actions that escalate a situation that may lead to the need to use force.
2. An officer shall recognize that their elevated stress levels can have an adverse impact on individual interactions.

~~D. When feasible, an officer shall use advisements, warnings, verbal persuasion, and other techniques before using force.~~

E. Sworn personnel shall:

1. De-escalate a situation when there is no threat that would require immediate action to prevent physical harm to the officer, the individual, or others;
2. When feasible, transition to other de-escalation techniques and strategies if these techniques are ineffective in gaining compliance from individuals; and
3. Document their verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques in their use of force documentation, including:
  - a. Active listening skills;
  - b. Tone of voice;
  - c. Body posture;
  - d. Personal space;
  - e. Eye contact; and
  - f. Empathy and compassion.

F. Commands and orders are not de-escalation techniques. Sworn personnel shall not document commands and orders as de-escalation techniques in their use of force documentation.

1. Commands may be used in addition to de-escalation techniques, but shall not be used in place of de-escalation techniques.



~~A. De-escalation techniques are proactive actions and approaches that an officer uses to gain voluntary compliance of the individual(s) to reduce or eliminate the need to use force. When force is necessary, an officer shall reduce the amount of force used as an individual's resistance decreases.~~

~~1. The following list of de-escalation techniques is not intended to establish an order of priority in their use by officerssworn personnel.~~

~~2. De-escalation techniques shall be used when feasible, and include but are not limited toinclude, but may not be limited to:~~

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~~— Using distance, cover, concealment, and/or time. These techniques allow an officer to:~~

~~— Assess the situation and their options;~~

~~— Bbring additional resources to the scene; and~~

~~a. D develop a plan for resolving the incident without using force.;~~

~~b. Utilizing Using intermediate barriers;~~

~~c. When feasible, requesting additional personnel and waiting for their arrival;~~

~~d. Using active listening skills by an officer to indicate engagement in conversation with an individual;~~

~~e. Employing verbal de-escalation, which may include:~~

~~i. Communicating with the individual(s) in a conversational tone of voice; while considering additional resources (e.g., Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team [ECIT] officerssworn personnel, Mobile Crisis Team (MCT)s, City of Albuquerque sSocial sServices, and bBehavioral hHealth sServices) to best resolve the individual's crisis;~~

~~ii. Beginning by asking questions rather than immediately issuing orders; and~~

~~iii. Advising the individual(s) of the actions that officerssworn personnel may take to end their crisis without the need to use force; and~~

~~iv. Warning Advising the individual that disobeying orders and posing an immediate threat to officerssworn personnel or others may result in the need to use force.~~

~~— When a situation is escalated, sworn personnel shall attempt to de-escalate the situation. Commands may be used in addition to de-escalation techniques, but shall not be used in place of de-escalation techniques.~~

~~B. When reasonable, given the facts and circumstances known to the officer at the time, the officer shall attempt to de-escalate and slow down situations without increasing the risk of harm to the officer, the individual, or others.~~

~~1. When feasible, the officer should:~~

~~a. Gather information about the incident;~~

~~b. Assess the potential risks to the individual(s), the officer(s), and others;~~

~~c. Coordinate resources; and~~

~~— Communicate and coordinate a response; and.~~



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-55

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~~Request additional resources (e.g., Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team [ECIT], sworn personnel, Mobile Crisis Team (MCT), City of Albuquerque social services, and behavioral health services) to best resolve the individual's crisis.~~  
d. \_\_\_\_\_

G. Should an individual fail to comply with lawful directions or commands, an officer shall consider whether an individual's lack of compliance may be based upon an the individual's inability to comprehend ~~in order to~~ or comply.

1. Where an officer identifies the presence of one of the following factors, they ~~shall~~ shall use de-escalation techniques to reduce or eliminate the need to use force:

- a. The influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
- b. A known or reasonably apparent mental illness or developmental disability;
- c. The individual is experiencing a crisis incident;
- d. A known or reasonably apparent physical disability or other medical or physical condition, including visual or hearing impairment; and
- e. A language barrier.

~~e.~~

N/A

H. If the individual is or appears to be in a mental or behavioral health crisis, an officer should attempt to de-escalate and shall otherwise follow SOP Response to Behavioral Health Issues.

~~C. An officer's approach to an individual can influence whether a situation escalates, resulting in the use of force.~~

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~~1. An officer shall avoid taking unnecessary actions, including actions that escalate a situation that may lead to the need to use force.~~

~~2. An officer shall recognize that their elevated stress levels can have an adverse impact on individual interactions.~~

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~~D. When feasible in their interaction with individuals, an officer shall use advisements, warnings, verbal persuasion, and other tactics techniques before using force.~~

~~E.l.~~ Supervisors will shall become involved, as soon as practicable, in managing an overall response to potentially violent encounters by coordinating resources and ~~officers~~ sworn personnel's tactical actions.

N/A

~~F. If the individual is or appears to be, in a mental or behavioral health crisis, an officer should attempt to de-escalate and shall otherwise follow SOP Response to Behavioral Health Issues.~~