



Ocean City Police Department
Standard Operating Procedure

S.O.P. – ADM 006

Effective: June 15, 2016

Subject: Reporting & Documenting Force

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish and maintain a system of reporting for all use-of-force incidents and to define the responsibilities of Department personnel associated with post use of force reporting both verbally and in writing.

II. Definitions

- A. **BlueTeam Use of Force Module:** Computer software used by the Department to administratively document information regarding use of force incidents by employees.
- B. **Temporary Restraint Device(s):** Handcuffs and flex type cuffs used to temporarily restrain the arms of a subject. The use of leg shackles and handcuffs in conjunction with a waist transport belt is considered a temporary restraint device.
- C. **Use of Force:** The amount of effort required by police to compel compliance from a person, consistent with "Use of Force" as defined in General Order 200 U-1.
- D. **Violent Person Restraint Device (VPRD):** A rope device used to temporarily restrain the legs of a violent/combatative subject.

III. Policy

In the course of providing police services to the community police officers are often faced with situations where uses of force are necessary, appropriate and unavoidable. The authority to use force carries with it the need for accountability in order to safeguard the rights of the public and preserve the integrity of the Department and its employees. Therefore, all uses of force shall be reported in a timely, complete, and accurate manner by the involved employees and shall be reviewed by both supervisory and command personnel as described in this policy.

IV. Incident Reporting, Documentation & Supervisory Review

- A. Involved Employee
 - 1. Employees involved in use of physical force greater than re-directional or escort force shall verbally report the incident as soon as possible to his/her supervisor. This verbal notification shall be performed while the employee is still at the scene of the incident to afford the supervisor an opportunity to respond to the scene to better evaluate the incident and actions of the involved employee.



The following are examples of situations which require supervisory notification and completion of a Use of Force Report:

- a. A police officer exercising police authority uses force which causes any visible or apparent physical injury, or which results in the subject saying that he or she was injured.
- b. A police officer exercising police authority uses any object, including baton, flashlight, hand, fist, or foot, to strike a blow to a subject.
- c. A police officer exercising police authority uses force which in any way causes a subject to suffer a blow to the head.
- d. A police officer exercising police authority physically removes or drags a struggling subject from one place to another or into a police vehicle.
- e. A police officer uses any aerosol irritant or inflammatory agent.
- f. A police officer exercising police authority uses force during or after which a subject loses consciousness.
- g. A police officer points a firearm at a person or uses a CEW to target a person.
- h. A police officer places a violent/combative/resistive subject into a:
 - i. Violent person restraint device (VPRD), or
 - ii. Violent person restraint chair.

The use of temporary restraint devices on compliant persons does NOT require a use of force report.

- i. A police officer, exercising police authority over a subject, discharges a firearm or deploys a CEW.
2. The involved employee's verbal notification to his/her supervisor shall include any observed or verbalized complaint of injury by the subject.
 3. Employee's involved in use of force incidents shall provide written documentation of the event in an incident report. The report must be completed and submitted prior to concluding their daily tour of duty. If the employee is unable to complete a report, the supervisor must submit the required reports within 24 hours.
 4. Employee's shall provide explicit detail of the subject's actions that required force to combat resistance. Generalizations such as: "the subject was disorderly" or "the subject resisted" are insufficient to properly document actions that would warrant the application of force.



5. The employee shall describe in detail the subject's actions and conduct, as well as, an account of all verbal commands and instructions directed at the subject to whom the force was applied. The detailed description should include, but not be limited to;
 - a. Environmental conditions
 - b. Size and stature of the subject
 - c. Assessment of subject's physical condition to include use of alcohol and/or drugs by the subject and any information to substantiate the suspicion of such use
 - d. Assessment of subject's emotional/mental stability.
6. The employee shall make every effort to utilize proper terminology to describe the defensive tactics specifically used by him/her to bring a situation under control (examples: arm-bar-takedown, open hand palm strike, vertical forearm strike).
7. The employee shall also include in the incident report:
 - a. All injuries sustained by the subject and/or employee.
 - b. Complaints of injury made by the subject and/or employee, as well as visible signs of injury to any involved party.
 - c. Medical aid provided, to include the type of treatment and the treatment provider.
 - d. Digital/video images of injuries, if taken, to include the name of the person taking the images.
 - e. Charge or charges filed against the subject (If applicable).
 - f. Name of the supervisor contacted about the use of force.
8. If the police officer encounters resistance which clearly justifies charges of resisting arrest and/or assaulting an officer, the officer will affect the appropriate charges.
9. Special Circumstances
 - a. High Risk Traffic Stops

Multiple officers who use their firearm for the sole purpose of compelling compliance during a high risk traffic stop need only report this event through one initial incident report listing all police officers who used the described compliance technique.



b. Quick Response Team Tactical Operations

Multiple team members who use their firearm for the sole purpose of compelling compliance during the operation need only report this event through one initial incident report listing all police officers who used the described compliance technique.

10. Firearms Discharge

In any incident where a firearm is discharged, on or off duty, by a police officer of this Department, excluding practice on an approved range or in an approved competition, the officer shall:

- a. Immediately notify his or her Commanding Officer. Additionally, the police officer shall submit a completed and detailed report of the incident within 24 hours of the discharge to the Chief of Police and to the Office of Professional Standards. Each reported discharge shall be promptly investigated through the Office of Professional Standards, and;
- b. Surrender any firearm discharged to the appropriate investigator for an official investigation. A replacement firearm shall be issued to the member by a departmental armorer, if appropriate.

11. After completing any required incident reports, the involved employee shall complete an administrative use of force report per "Section V" of this policy.

B. First-Line Supervisor

1. When practical, supervisors who are notified of a use of force by an employee shall respond to the scene of the event. Supervisors shall always respond to the scene of a use of force event where:
 - a. A firearm has been discharged
 - b. A CEW has been deployed, or
 - c. An injury has been sustained by either the involved employee or subject.
2. Upon arrival at the scene, the supervisor shall:
 - a. Note statements made by the involved employee(s) and subject(s).
 - b. Note any reported or observed injuries of subjects or employees.
 - c. Ensure photographs are taken of any injuries which are apparent, complained of, or perceived. If a citizen refuses to be photographed the supervisor shall ensure that this is documented in the incident report.



3. In the event the use of force resulted in injury to either the involved employee and/or subject, the supervisor shall make notifications to:
 - a. Command staff personnel, and;
 - b. The Office of Professional Standards for all use of force incidents resulting in serious bodily injury or death of an involved party.
4. In cases involving death or serious injury of an individual caused by an officer, the Shift Supervisor will immediately contact the Division Commander. The Division Commander shall contact the Chief of Police and cause the Office of the State's Attorney, City Solicitor and Risk Manager to be notified. An immediate preliminary investigation will be conducted internally by the Office of Professional Standards or by an outside Department at the direction of the Chief of Police.
5. Once an employee has completed and submitted a police report involving a use of force, the shift supervisor shall:
 - a. Review the report to determine if adequate information has been provided by the involved employee for approval. If the report is deficient, the supervisor shall assure the involved employee provides all necessary information to properly document the event.
 - b. Make an initial assessment of the force used in order to determine if the force complies with Department policy.
6. After a supervisor has reviewed and approved a use of force incident report, the supervisor shall notify the shift/section Lieutenant via e-mail of the approved report so command review can be initiated. The e-mail notification shall include the supervisor's assessment of the force, described with one of the below statements:
 - a. ***The use of force applied in this incident complies with Department policy, or***
 - b. ***The use of force applied in this incident does not comply with Department policy.***

V. Administrative Documentation of Force & Command Review

A. Involved Employee

In addition to the incident reporting requirements as described above, each employee who uses force shall be responsible for the administrative documentation of said force in the BlueTeam Use of Force Module. The use of force report must be completed and submitted by the employee prior to concluding his/her tour of duty for the day. If the officer is unable to make a report, the supervisor must submit the required report within 24 hours.



NOTE: A separate use of force report entry is required for each individual whom the employee applied force except in the Special Circumstances described above in Section IV, Sub-Section A,9. In those circumstances, only one use of force report entry is required listing all police officers who used the described compliance technique as well as all citizens who were the subject of the technique.

1. The employee will login to the BlueTeam software and select “Add New Incident”, then select “Use of Force” as the incident type.

2. Incident Details Page

The following fields shall be completed on the “Incident Details” page of the module:

- a. CC number associated with the complaint
- b. Date Received (Should be identical to Date & time of Occurrence)
- c. Date & Time of occurrence
- d. Address of the occurrence

After entering the above information the employee shall select “Next”

3. Summary of Incident Page

The employee will enter “**See incident report**” then select “Next”

4. Use of Force Details Page

This page contains use of force information from the incident. The employee will complete all information on the page by choosing the most appropriate selection for each data field. After the fields are complete select “Next”.

5. Involved Citizen Information Page

To enter an involved citizen, first search to determine if the citizen is already in the citizen database by entering a full or partial last name and selecting “Search”.

- a. If the citizen is found in the database, click “Select” and the information will automatically populate. Updated information can be added from the main page after clicking “Finished”
- c. If the citizen is not found in the database:
 - i. Click “No Match”, add the personal information for the citizen to include, name, date of birth, gender, race, and e-mail address and click “Save” to continue.



- ii. Click “Add Address” and then “Add Phone #” to complete the information ensuring to select “Save” after entering. When this is complete, click “Finished” to continue.

6. Use of Force Incident Links Page

This page opens and displays the initial selected citizen as well as information regarding other involved citizens, officers, and witnesses.

- a. To add another involved citizen click “Add Involved Citizen” and complete the information as described in Sub-Section “5” above.
- b. Once the involved citizen(s) have been entered, the citizen’s resistance must be added by selecting “Add Resistance” in the drop down menu. Any resistances can be deleted by selecting the red “X”
 - i. Click on the appropriate resistance that this individual used against the involved employee(s), and it will be automatically added. Select all appropriate resistances.
 - ii. Once all resistances are added, click on “Return to Incident” to continue.
- c. After returning to the incident the citizen’s injuries must be added by clicking “Add Injury” in the drop down menu. Any injury entry can be deleted by selecting the red “X”
 - i. If the citizen suffered no injuries, then “No injuries were noted or visible” should be checked and then select “Apply”, and then “Return to incident.”
 - ii. If the citizen was injured, select all appropriate injuries from the drop down menu, select the location on the body where the injury occurred, and then click “Add”. If the injury was a reported “condition” then select condition as the location.
 - iii. Once all injuries are added, click on “Return to Incident” to continue.
- d. After returning to the incident, charges placed against the citizen shall be added by clicking “Add Charge” in the drop down menu. Any charge can be deleted by selecting the red “X”.
 - i. Click on the appropriate charge(s) against the citizen and it will be automatically added. Select all applicable charges.
 - ii. Once all charges are added, click on “Return to Incident” to continue.



- e. To add the involved employee(s) click “Add Me” and the entering employee’s information will be added to the report. Additional employees may be added for “special circumstances” by selecting “Add Officer” and selecting the employee from the generated list and clicking “Add”.
- f. Once the involved employee(s) has/have been entered, the force used by the employee(s) shall be added by selecting “Add Force Used” in the drop down menu. Any force can be deleted by selecting the red “X”.
- g. When entering force used, the employee should add the types of force in the same order that the force was used on the subject.
 - i. Select the appropriate force type from the drop down menu, select the location the force was used on the body diagram, indicate if the force was effective by selecting “yes” or “no” and then select “Add”
 - ii. Once all force types are added, click on “Return to Incident” to continue.
- h. After returning to the incident the employee’s injuries must be added by clicking “Add Injury” in the drop down menu. Any injury entry can be deleted by selecting the red “X”
 - i. If the employee suffered no injuries, then “No injuries were noted or visible” should be checked and then select “Apply”, and then “Return to incident.”
 - ii. If the employee was injured, select all appropriate injuries from the drop down menu, select the location on the body where the injury occurred, and then click “Add”. If the injury was a reported “condition” then select condition as the location.
 - iii. Once all injuries are added, click on “Return to Incident” to continue.
- i. To add Citizen Witnesses click “Add Citizen Witness” and complete the information as described in Sub-Section “5” above.
- j. To add employee witnesses, click “Add Officer Witnesses” and complete the entry by entering a full or partial last name. Select the appropriate employee witness from the list and click “Add”.
- k. To edit or remove any person who was added, click on the drop-down menu to the right of the name and select the appropriate choice.
- l. After entering all known/applicable information on the page, select “Next” to continue.



7. Attach Files Page

- a. Electronic files can be added to any incident including documents, photos, audio, and video. Attached files must first be saved to the computer being used before they can be attached. There is no requirement to attach files to the use of force entry.
- b. To attach a file:
 - i. Browse and choose the file to be attached
 - ii. Enter a description of the file
 - iii. Select a folder for the file from the drop down list
 - iv. Click "Attach File"
- c. After attaching selected files, or declining to attach files, click "Next" to continue to final review.

8. Review and Forward Incident

The final page of the entry allows the employee to review all of the entry information by selecting the appropriate tab at the top of the page. After the employee is satisfied with the entry he/she shall select "Forward Incident"

- a. Select "Add Recipient" and begin typing your specific Shift/Section Lieutenant's last name. Select the Lieutenant's name from the generated list and then click "Add Individual"
- b. Next, under instructions the entering officer shall type "**Ready for review.**", then click "Forward".

9. Completion / Duplication

- a. After forwarding the incident to the shift/section Lieutenant, the entering employee can optionally print the report, return to the main menu or duplicate the incident.
- b. Duplicating the incident will create a second entry that the employee can then edit from the BlueTeam Main Menu. To duplicate the incident in order to enter use of force details for a second or subsequent citizen(s):
 - i. Select "Duplicate Incident"
 - ii. Select "Use of Force" as the incident Type and click "Next"
 - iii. Select "OK" to duplicate and then click "Return to Main Menu". The duplicate incident is available to edit from the Main Menu.



- iv. From the duplicate entry, click the “Involved People” tab and delete the existing citizen, and then add the new citizen ensuring to complete all required fields for the involved citizen and the involved employee. Review all tabs to ensure no information is missing or inaccurate for the duplicate incident.
- v. Once the information has been entered, review and forward the incident per this policy above.

B. Command Review

1. Shift/Section Lieutenant

Shift/Section Lieutenants will receive e-mail notifications from both BlueTeam and from First Line supervisors concerning the documentation of force.

- a. When a shift/section Lieutenant is notified by a first-line supervisor via e-mail of a use of force incident, he/she shall review both the police incident report (OSSI RMS) and the use of force report completed by the involved officer in the BlueTeam use of force module.
- b. After reviewing the incident report, the Lieutenant shall login to BlueTeam, click on “Chain of Command Incidents pending your review/approval”, locate the associated use of force report and select it for review.
- c. Click “View Incident Summary” and review the report.
- d. After reviewing the report, in the “Comments/Response” section the Lieutenant shall approve or disapprove the report by clicking the appropriate selection.
- e. If the report is not approved, the Lieutenant shall select the reason, add any applicable instruction under “Comments” and then select “Forward Incident” to return the report to the sending employee for correction.
- f. If the report is approved, the Lieutenant’s assessment of the force will be described with one of the below statements entered in the “Comments” field:
 - i. ***The use of force applied in this incident complies with Department policy, or***
 - ii. ***The use of force applied in this incident does not comply with Department policy***



- g. Any time the Lieutenant is not in agreement with the first-line Supervisor's assessment, a brief explanation must be provided in the "Comments" field.
- h. The Lieutenant shall forward the report to the Division Commander for review by selecting "Forward Incident"
 - i. Select "Add Recipient" and begin typing the specific Division Commander's last name. Select the name from the generated list and then click "Add Individual"
 - ii. Next, under "Instructions" type "**Ready for review.**", then click "Forward".

2. Division Commander

- a. When a Division Commander is notified by e-mail of a use of force incident, he/she shall review both the police incident report (OSSI RMS) and the use of force report completed by the involved officer in the BlueTeam use of force module.
- b. After reviewing the incident report, the Division Commander shall login to BlueTeam, click on "Chain of Command Incidents pending your review/approval", locate the associated use of force report and select it for review.
- c. After reviewing the report, in the "Comments/Response" section the Division Commander shall approve or disapprove the report by clicking the appropriate selection.
- d. If the report is not approved, the Division Commander shall select the reason, add any applicable instruction under "Comments" and then select "Forward Incident" and will return the report to the Lieutenant.
- e. If the report is approved, the Division Commander's assessment of the force will be described with one of the below statements entered in the "Comments" field:
 - i. ***The use of force applied in this incident complies with Department policy, or***
 - ii. ***The use of force applied in this incident does not comply with Department policy.***
- f. Any time the Division Commander is not in agreement with the first line Supervisor's assessment, or the Lieutenant's assessment, a brief explanation must be provided in the "Comments" field.



- g. After making an assessment of the force, the Division Commander shall forward the report to the Office of Professional Standards for review by selecting "Forward to Prof. Standards"

C. Office of Professional Standards (OPS) Review

1. Upon receipt of a reviewed use of force report, the OPS will review the entry to ensure compliance with Department Policy.
2. Any deviation from policy noted in use of force reports shall be reviewed by the OPS and a recommendation shall be made regarding additional action. This action may involve:
 - a. Policy evaluation
 - b. Training
 - c. Counseling
 - d. Punitive measures
3. After reviewing the entry, OPS shall archive the incident.
4. The OPS shall provide periodic reports to the Chief of Police regarding all reported uses of force.

D. Chief of Police Review

The Chief of Police may request a report regarding the Department's use of force at any time. This report shall be compiled by the Office of Professional Standards.

References: General Order 200 D-1			
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