

**POLICY
820**

**EFFECTIVE
DATE
8-8-22**

**Eugene
Police Department**



De-escalation

820.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

When time and circumstances reasonably permit, officers shall use de-escalation techniques. De-escalation techniques provide officers the opportunity to stabilize the scene or reduce the necessity for, or the intensity of force, so that more time, options, and resources are available to resolve the confrontation. Officers should take proactive steps to eliminate the immediacy of threat, establish control, and minimize the need for force to protect everyone from harm, and reduce injury. This policy provides guidance to the expectations of the Eugene Police Department (EPD) in the application of de-escalation.

820.2 DEFINITIONS

De-escalation: Taking action or communicating verbally or non-verbally during a potential force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation without use of force or with reduction in the force necessary.

820.3 PHYSICAL FORCE

When it is objectively reasonable to do so, officers shall make every reasonable effort to de-escalate confrontations to prevent the need to use force.

Pursuant to *ORS 161.233*:

“Prior to using physical force upon another person, if the peace officer has a reasonable opportunity to do so, the peace officer shall:

- (a) Consider alternatives such as verbal de-escalation, waiting or using other available resources and techniques if reasonable, safe, and feasible; and
- (b) Give a verbal warning to the person that physical force may be used and provide the person with a reasonable opportunity to comply.”

Officers will apply use of force after attempts at de-escalation have been exhausted. When a subject’s actions create an imminent threat to the public or to officers, it is expected that officers will respond with reasonable and decisive force.

820.3.1 DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

- a. De-escalation techniques include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. The use of active listening techniques is intended to encourage a rational decision making process for the police officer and the involved subject in crisis. Use of active listening skills may include:

- Verbal acknowledgments to indicate engagement in the conversation
 - Open ended questions
 - Reflecting/ Mirroring
 - Emotional labeling
 - Paraphrasing
2. Allowing the subject appropriate time to respond to direction
 - Use requests rather than commands whenever possible
 - Use simple commands
 - Use non-compound questions
 3. When possible communicate with the subject from a safe position
 - Use distance strategically
 - Use barriers for cover/ concealment. Decreasing officer's physical exposure to potential threat by using distance, barriers cover or concealment.
 4. Ensure there are an appropriate number of personnel on scene
 - Evaluate the number of officers necessary to control the scene
 5. Containing a threat
 - Verbal containment involves communication that occupies the subject and distracts from thoughts of injury to self or others.
 - Physical containment offers control of the environment and dangers such as heights, traffic, access to weapons and other outside interference
 6. Reduce stimulus
 - Consider turning off overhead lights and spotlights
 - Consider diverting pedestrian and vehicle traffic from the area
 - Consider reducing visual presence of officers and other responders
 7. Avoiding physical confrontation, unless immediately necessary
 - Clarify potential consequences
 - Make an arrest plan optimizing available resources
 - Make a disengagement plan
- b. When available, officers shall use Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers and/or call specialized units to respond, including but not limited to those related to behavioral health (CAHOOTS), or the Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT), to assist in de-escalating the situation or devising a disengagement strategy or otherwise to assist in safely resolving the incident.
 - c. To avoid confusion, officers should establish and maintain one on one communication with the subject and avoid giving simultaneous commands through multiple officers. Consideration shall be given to officers who are present on scene to attempt to build rapport with the subject. This should be conducted in a safe

coordinated manner to lessen confusion and danger to all involved.

- d. When time and circumstances reasonably permit, officers shall assess whether a subject's lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist or an inability to comply based on factors including, but not limited to:
- Medical conditions
 - Mental health disorder
 - Developmental disability
 - Physical limitation
 - Language barrier
 - Drug or alcohol impairment
 - Mental health crisis
- e. An officer is not expected to employ de-escalation techniques that could jeopardize the safety of the community or any officer. The immediacy of a threat or the need to take immediate action to prevent death or physical injury may foreclose the utilization of de-escalation techniques by officers.
- f. When force is used, the amount of force used, including the number of officers who use force, shall be reduced as resistance decreases. Only the amount of force reasonably assessed to maintain control shall be used.
- g. Officers should consider a disengagement plan when the benefits to be gained by police intervention are clearly outweighed by the risks associated with the call. A reassessment shall be conducted to include documentation of resources provided to the individual.

820.4 TRAINING

All officers shall receive annual training designed to provide techniques for the use of de-escalation and to reinforce the importance of de-escalation to stabilize the scene or reduce the necessity for, or intensity of force, so that more time, options and resources are available to resolve the confrontation.

Chris Skinner
Chief of Police