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Required Elements in Use of Force Incident Reports

Per DGO 5.01, VII, B, 1, "Any reportable use of force shall be documented in detail in an incident report, supplemental incident report or statement form. Descriptions shall be in clear, precise and plain language and shall be as specific as possible.

When the officer using force is preparing the incident report, the officer shall include the following information:

- The subject's action necessitating the use of force, including the threat presented by the subject;
- Efforts to de-escalate prior to the use of force; and if not, why not;
- Any warning given and if not, why not;
- The type of force used;
- Injury sustained by the subject;
- Injury sustained by the officer or another person;
- Information regarding medical assessment or evaluation, including whether the subject refused;
- The supervisor's name, rank, star number and the time notified.

In the event that an officer cannot document his/her use of force due to exceptional circumstances, another officer shall document this use of force in an incident report, supplemental incident report or statement form at the direction of a supervisor."

Additional Report Writing Considerations:

It is appropriate for an officer to describe what he/she saw another officer *doing* related to a use of force, however officers should refrain from ascribing intentions as to *why* the officer was doing it. The *why* should be documented by each officer using a force option.

It is important to document when and why the application of force is de-escalated or stopped.

Avoid canned or boilerplate language. For example if an officer reports his actions were due to "officer safety," explain the *relevant articulable facts* (ie, subject would not keep hands out of pockets, bulge in clothing, specific verbal threats, 1000 yard stare, boxer's stance, ignored lawful commands, etc.) in plain language that everyone can readily understand.


WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief of Police

Per DB 17-080, sworn members are required to electronically acknowledge this Department Bulletin in HRMS.