



EXCELLENCE IN POLICING INITIATIVE

Use of Force Policy Core Principles

Attorney General Directive 2020-13 revises New Jersey's Use of Force Policy for law enforcement and now requires all 38,000 New Jersey law enforcement officers to adhere to the following seven principles:

1. The Sanctity of Human Life:

Officers must make every effort to preserve and protect human life and the safety of all persons; respect and uphold the dignity of all persons at all times; and never deploy force in a discriminatory manner.

2. De-Escalation & Force as a Last Resort:

Officers must focus on de-escalation techniques including use of verbal commands. Force must only be used as a last resort and only when necessary to accomplish lawful objectives, when other steps cannot achieve such objectives. Force shall never be used as a retaliatory or punitive measure.

3. Reasonable, Necessary, and Proportional Force:

In situations where officers are authorized to use force, they shall use the least amount of force that is reasonable, necessary, and proportional to safely achieve a lawful law enforcement objective.

4. Deadly Force as a Last Resort:

Even where force is authorized, deadly force shall only be used as an absolute last resort and in compliance with the strict conditions set forth in the new policy.

5. Duty to Intervene:

Every officer has an affirmative duty to take steps to prevent illegal or excessive uses of force by other officers and to immediately report any such incidents.

6. Duty to Render Medical Assistance:

After any use of force, officers shall promptly provide medical assistance to any injured person, and request emergency medical assistance if needed or requested. Officers must also monitor individuals for potential medical intervention after any officer uses force.

7. Duty to Report and Review Uses of Force:

Every use of force must be reported using the statewide Use of Force Portal, and all uses of force must undergo a meaningful command level review, including review by the law enforcement chief executive.

The new policy will be implemented through a massive retraining effort, pursuant to which every officer in the state will receive multiple days of interactive training, including scenario-based training that requires them to address many of the circumstances that most often lead to improper or excessive uses of force. The impact of the new policy will be monitored using a first-in-the-nation, statewide Use of Force Portal, which will include detailed data on every police use of force in the state, and a version of which will be available to the public in 2021.





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Best-in-Class Use of Force Training

On December 21, 2020, New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal issued AG Directive 2020-13, a new statewide Use of Force Policy. Recognizing that a new policy alone cannot change actual policing practices, the Attorney General's Office has developed a new scenario-based training that incorporates two of the premier training programs in the country: ICAT and ABLE (described below). This new two-day training will use real life situations to reinforce the key principles of the new policy, including the need to de-escalate; critical and strategic decision-making; tactics to reduce or eliminate the need to use force; and intervention to prevent other officers from improper behavior. All 38,000 New Jersey law enforcement officers will be required to complete this training by the end of 2021.

Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT)

Created by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

A major recurring issue in policing is officer use of force in situations when subjects are behaving erratically and often dangerously, but do not possess a firearm, such as when they are experiencing mental health or substance use crises.

ICAT training is designed to equip police officers with the skills to respond to these volatile situations, by providing them with the skills needed to safely and effectively manage these encounters, especially in the critical first few moments after officers arrive.

ICAT then integrates these skills and provides opportunities to practice them through video case studies and scenario-based training exercises.

Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE)

Created by Georgetown University and others

Even where written policies require officers to intervene to prevent a fellow officer's misconduct, to help another officer prevent mistakes, or to take action to help another officer take care of their health and wellbeing, it can be very difficult to intervene in practice.

Officers frequently face high-stress, high stakes decisions.

ABLE adapts intervention principles from other professions such as medicine to the policing context.

Drawing from social science research and proven learning methods, ABLE training teaches officers specific tools and skills on how to perform these interventions in the field.

New Jersey Office of the Attorney General

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Valued Partners & Contributors

Law Enforcement Partners

- Camden County Police Department
- County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey
- Hispanic American Law Enforcement Officers' Association
- National Coalition of Latino Officers
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- Newark Police Department
- New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers' Association
- New Jersey County Jail Warden's Association
- New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice
- New Jersey Fraternal Order of Police
- New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police
- New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association
- New Jersey State Police
- New Jersey State Troopers Fraternal Association
- New Jersey State Troopers Non-Commissioned Officers Association
- New Jersey State Troopers Superior Officers Association
- Police Executive Research Forum
- Sheriff's Association of New Jersey
- Union County Prosecutor's Office

Community Partners

- American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU-NJ
- Association of Black Women Lawyers
- Benchmark Analytics
- Capital City Community Coalition
- City of Newark, Clergy Affairs
- Coalition for a Safe Community
- Georgetown Law, Innovative Policing Program, Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) Project
- Islamic Society of Basking Ridge
- Latino Action Network
- National Action Network, New Jersey Chapter, NAN-NJ
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP New Jersey State Conference
- NAACP-Atlantic City Branch
- New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice
- Newark-North Jersey Committee of Black Churchmen
- Rutgers School of Criminal Justice
- Salvation and Social Justice

