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|  | RUTGERS UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT WRITTEN DIRECTIVE SYSTEM | | 12:11 |
| | DE-ESCALATON | | |
| | Effective Date: 06-16-2020 | | Supersedes: |

12:11-1 PURPOSE

To outline the guidelines and procedures for De-Escalation. It is further the purpose of this directive to supplement and not supplant the provisions of Directive 1:8 – Use of Force and those enumerated elsewhere within Chapter 12 of the Written Directive System.

12:11-2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to employ de-escalation tactics and techniques, when safe and appropriate and without compromising law enforcement priorities, in order to reduce the likelihood of the need to use force during an incident and increase the likelihood of a positive resolution.

This directive establishes guidelines for officers with regard to de-escalation during a police interaction. This directive applies to all uses of force, whether officers are on- or off-duty. This directive incorporates the Critical Decision-Making model (CDM) that is the core of the Department's use of force training.

12:11-3 GENERAL

- a. When safe and feasible under the totality of circumstances, officers should attempt to slow down or stabilize the situation so that more time, options and resources are available for incident resolution. Officers should utilize appropriate tactical and officer safety principles to avoid unreasonably placing themselves at risk.
- b. When safe and feasible under the totality of the circumstances, officers shall attempt to slow down or stabilize the situation so that more time, options and resources are available for incident resolution without force.
- c. Officers may only use force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and as a last resort.
- d. Officers will use de-escalation and force-mitigation tactics and techniques whenever safe and feasible to do so. It should be every officer's goal to resolve all situations without using force. To make this more likely, officers must use de-escalation and force-mitigation tactics and techniques whenever doing so will not put the officer or another person at undue risk.
- e. De-escalation may take the form of scene management, team tactics, and/or individual engagement. Even when individual engagement is not feasible, de-escalation techniques including scene management and team tactics such as time, distance, and shielding, should still be used unless doing so would create undue risk of harm to any person due to the exigency/threat of a situation.
- f. De-escalation tactics and techniques are actions used by officers, when safe and feasible without compromising law enforcement priorities, that seek to minimize the likelihood of the need to use force during an incident and increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance.

- g. When safe and feasible under the totality of the circumstances, officers shall attempt to slow down or stabilize the situation so that more time, options and resources are available for incident resolution.
- h. The overall goal of this policy is to promote thoughtful resolutions to situations and to reduce the likelihood of harm to all persons involved. De-escalation is reviewed and evaluated under the totality of the circumstances present at the time of the incident.
- i. An officer's awareness of these possibilities, when time and circumstances reasonably permit, should then be balanced against the facts of the incident facing the officer when deciding which tactical options are the most appropriate to bring the situation to a safe resolution.
- j. Mitigating the immediacy of threat gives officers time to utilize extra resources and increases time available to call more officers or specialty units.

12:11-4 PROCEDURES

- a. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Officers Shall Use De-Escalation Tactics in Order to Reduce the Need for Force.
- b. Officers shall conduct a threat assessment so as not to precipitate an unnecessary, unreasonable, or disproportionate use of force by placing themselves or others in undue jeopardy.
- c. Team approaches to de-escalation are encouraged and should consider officer training and skill level, number of officers, and whether any officer has successfully established rapport with the subject. Where officers use a team approach to de-escalation, each individual officer's obligation to de-escalate will be satisfied as long as the officer's actions complement the overall approach.
- d. Officers will use de-escalation and force-mitigation tactics and techniques whenever safe and feasible to do so. It should be every officer's goal to resolve all situations without using force. To make this more likely, officers must use de-escalation and force-mitigation tactics and techniques whenever doing so will not put the officer or another person at undue risk and consistent with the Critical Decision-Making (CDM) model. Properly utilizing the CDM model is critical in determining when and how to appropriately use de-escalation and force-mitigation, including but not limited to *Tactical Communication*, *Tactical Positioning* and *Time as a Tactic*.
- e. Selection of de-escalation options should be guided by the totality of the circumstances with the goal of attaining voluntary compliance; considerations include:
 - 1. **Communication** – Using communication intended to gain voluntary compliance.
 - 2. **Time** – Attempt to slow down or stabilize the situation so that more time, options and resources are available for incident resolution.
 - Scene stabilization assists in transitioning incidents from dynamic to static by limiting access to unsecured areas, limiting mobility and preventing the introduction of non-involved community members
 - Avoiding or minimizing physical confrontation, unless necessary (for example, to protect someone, or stop dangerous behavior)

- Calling extra resources or officers to assist, such as CIT or Less-Lethal Certified officers
- 3. **Distance** – Maximizing tactical advantage by increasing distance to allow for greater reaction time.
- 4. **Shielding** – Utilizing cover and concealment for tactical advantage, such as:
 - Placing barriers between an uncooperative subject and officers
 - Using natural barriers in the immediate environment
- f. Officers will provide clear instructions and warnings whenever feasible before using force. Whenever safe and feasible, officers should not use force immediately when encountering noncompliance with lawful verbal directions. Instead, whenever safe and feasible, before using force, officers should:
 1. Provide clear instructions and warnings;
 2. Seek to communicate in non-verbal ways when a verbal warning would be inadequate (such as when the person does not speak English, or is unable to hear or understand warnings);
 3. Indicate the consequences of refusing to comply with a mandatory order, including that force will be used unless the person complies; and
 4. Give the person a reasonable amount of time to comply.
- g. Officers must consider an individual's mental, physical, or other incapacities. Officers must, when feasible, consider whether a person's failure to comply with an officer's command is due to a medical condition, mental impairment, physical limitation, developmental disability, language barrier, drug interaction, behavioral crisis, or other factors beyond the individual's control. In these situations, officers should consider whether specific techniques or resources would help resolve the situation without force.

12:11-5 TRAINING

Officers shall receive training on the Critical Decision-Making (CDM) model as part of semi-annual training in the Use of Force as well as during in-service training. In addition, this training includes when and how to appropriately use de-escalation and force-mitigation, including but not limited to *Tactical Communication*, *Tactical Positioning*, and *Time as a Tactic*.

CRITICAL DECISION-MAKING (CDM) MODEL

