

International Association of Chiefs of Police (I.A.C.P.)
February 2016 Statement on Use of Force

For decades, the IACP has played a central role in the research, development, and implementation of model policies and best practices regarding the use of force by law enforcement officers. Clearly, this issue is a critical one for both the law enforcement profession and the communities they serve. The IACP is committed to ensuring that officers respond to situations with the appropriate level of force. To that end, the IACP will examine all aspects of the use of force in order to identify potential areas of change.

However, even as these efforts are underway, it is imperative that we remember that threats come in many forms, not just from firearms. Automobiles, “edged weapons”, clubs, and even unarmed physical assaults, can and do injure and kill law enforcement officers and citizens every day.

It is for these reasons that the IACP is extremely concerned about calls to require law enforcement agencies to unilaterally, and haphazardly, establish use of force guidelines that exceed the “objectively reasonable” standard set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court nearly 30 years ago (*Graham v. Connor*). The creation of a multitude of differing policies and use of force standards throughout the United States would, undoubtedly, lead to both confusion and hesitation on behalf of law enforcement officers which in turn would threaten both their safety and that of the citizens they are sworn to protect.

As we move forward in examining law enforcement’s policies and training procedures regarding use of force it is imperative that any reforms be carefully researched and evidence-based. Only by proceeding in a careful and thoughtful manner can we ensure that both community and officer safety will be enhanced.