

GENERAL ORDER

USE OF FORCE

The purpose of this order is to set forth the circumstances under which officers may resort to the use of force. The order also outlines procedures for reporting and evaluating incidents involving the use of force.

I. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the San Francisco Police Department to accomplish the police mission as effectively as possible with the highest regard for the dignity of all persons and with minimal reliance upon the use of physical force. The use of physical force shall be restricted to circumstances authorized by law and to the degree minimally necessary to accomplish a lawful police task.**
- B. Officers are frequently confronted with situations where control must be exercised to effect arrests and to protect the public safety. Control may be achieved through advice, warnings, and persuasion, or by the use of physical force. While the use of reasonable physical force may be necessary in situations that cannot be otherwise controlled, force may not be resorted to unless other reasonable alternatives have been exhausted or would clearly be ineffective under the particular circumstances.**
- C. Officers are permitted to use whatever force is reasonable and necessary to protect others or themselves, but no more. The purpose of this policy is not to restrict officers from using sufficient force to protect themselves or others, but to provide general guidelines under which force may be used. If exceptional circumstances occur which are not contemplated by this order, officers should use any force reasonably necessary to protect themselves or others; however, they must be able to articulate the reasons for employing such force.**

2. **Penal Code Section 835 a provides that, " Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance. A peace officer who makes or attempts to make an arrest need not retreat or desist from his/her efforts by reason of resistance or threatened resistance of the person being arrested; nor shall such officer be deemed the aggressor or lose his/her right to self defense by the use of reasonable force to effect the arrest, or to prevent escape, or to overcome resistance."**

F. CIRCUMSTANCES JUSTIFYING THE USE OF FORCE

1. **Officers may use force in the performance of their duties in the following circumstances:**
 - a. **To prevent the commission of a public offense.**
 - b. **To prevent a person from injuring himself/herself.**
 - c. **To effect the lawful arrest/detention of persons resisting or attempting to evade that arrest/detention.**
 - d. **In self-defense or in the defense of another person.**
2. **Before using force, the officer should consider these questions:**
 - a. **What actions on the part of the suspect justify the use of force?**
 - b. **What crime is being or has been committed?**
 - c. **Does the situation require the immediate use of force?**

G. VERBAL PERSUASION AS A MEANS OF EFFECTING CUSTODY

1. **The practice of courtesy in all public contact encourages understanding and cooperation; lack of courtesy arouses resentment and often physical resistance. Simple directions which are complied with while you merely accompany the subject are by far the most desirable method of dealing with an arrest situation. Control may be achieved through advice, persuasion and warnings before resorting to actual physical force.**

I. USE OF LIQUID CHEMICAL AGENT (MACE/OLEORESIN CAPSICUM) TO ACCOMPLISH CUSTODY

- 1. Liquid chemical agent is a non-lethal device designed to subdue a person by projecting a specially formulated liquid onto the face. It is not designed to replace the police revolver or baton. Liquid chemical agent is a defensive weapon intended for use when attempting to subdue an unarmed attacker or to overcome resistance likely to result in injury to either the suspect or the officer.**
- 2. In most instances, liquid chemical agent will reduce or eliminate the necessity for greater physical force to effect the arrest. Every officer should be equipped with liquid chemical agent and, when practical to do so, should use it rather than the baton or carotid restraint.**
- 3. MEDICAL TREATMENT. Persons who have had Mace or O.C. sprayed on their faces shall have their faces washed and their eyes flushed with clean water at the scene or as soon as possible. Medical evaluation shall occur:**
 - a. Prior to booking and as soon as practicable.**
 - b. If the person is recovering normally, request an ambulance (Code 2) to the scene or arrange to have paramedics meet you at another location to medically assess the individual.**
 - c. If the ambulance is unavailable or the delay will be excessive, transport the exposed subject to SFGH for medical evaluation.**
 - d. If the sprayed suspect loses consciousness or has difficulty breathing, summon an ambulance Code 3.**
- 4. TRANSPORTATION. Persons who have been sprayed with Mace or O.C. must be transported in an upright position by two officers. The passenger officer shall closely monitor the subject for any signs of distress which would require medical evaluation and/or treatment. Hobble cords or similar types of restraints shall only be used to secure a subject's legs together. They shall not be used to connect the subject's legs to his/her waist or hands in a "trussed" position.**

K. USE OF BATON TO ACCOMPLISH CUSTODY. The baton in the hands of an officer trained in its use is a very formidable weapon. If we are to obtain effective results, avoid unnecessary injury to suspects, and minimize criticism of the Department, the baton must be used properly and judiciously.

1. The baton must be carried properly in the officer's baton ring. A baton left in the car is of no use to an officer in a confrontation.
2. Officers are not to slap the palm of their hand with the baton or poke the baton at people as an intimidation technique.
3. The baton, when properly used, is capable of delivering extremely powerful blows to stun and incapacitate an aggressive opponent. It is also capable of delivering lethal or permanently disabling blows. Blows to the head, throat, side of the neck, or armpit must be avoided whenever possible.
4. To properly control and therefore maximize its effectiveness, the baton should normally never be raised above the head to strike a blow. The use of the baton as a club is generally prohibited.
5. Striking a handcuffed prisoner with a baton is expressly prohibited (except as allowed for in Section I, C., of this order).
6. Officers will carry only batons issued by the Department.

L. USE OF FIREARM TO ACCOMPLISH CUSTODY. See DGO 5.02, Use of Firearms.

M. UNNECESSARY FORCE (DEFINED)

1. Unnecessary force occurs when it is apparent that the type or degree of force employed was neither necessary nor appropriate. When any degree of force is utilized as summary punishment or for vengeance, it is clearly improper and unlawful.
2. Malicious assaults and batteries committed by officers constitute gross and unlawful misconduct. Penal Code Section 149 provides criminal penalties for every public officer who under the color of authority, without lawful necessity, assaults or beats any person.

- b. In the event that the officer using force is not the officer preparing the incident report, the officer using the force shall:
- (1) Ensure that he/she is clearly identified in the incident report.
 - (2) Ensure that the incident report includes:
 - The type of force used (e.g., carotid restraint, struck with fist).
 - Reason for the use of force (e.g., subject resisted arrest).
 - The supervisor's name, rank, star number and time notified.
 - (3) Or prepare a supplemental report or a statement form with the above information.
3. **SUPERVISORY OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES.** When notified of the use of force, supervisors shall determine whether anyone (including the officer) has sustained an injury and its severity. If an injury has been sustained which is serious enough to require immediate medical treatment, the supervisor shall immediately respond to the scene of the incident unless a response is impracticable, poses a danger, or where officers' continued presence creates a risk. Response is optional in other reportable use of force incidents. Upon arrival, the supervisor shall do the following (when more than one supervisor responds, the responsibility shall fall on the senior supervisor):
- a. Ensure that witnesses (including officers) to the criminal incident and also the reportable use of force incident are identified, interviewed, and that this information is included in the incident report. Hostile situations or number of witnesses may preclude identification and interview of all witnesses.
 - b. Conduct observations of the scene and injured subjects or officers.
 - c. Conduct a supervisory evaluation to determine whether the force used appears reasonable and within the provisions of this order.
 - d. When appropriate, cause photographs of injuries or other evidence connected to the case to be taken and booked as evidence.

- 6. RECORDING PROCEDURES/USE OF FORCE LOG/TRAINING DIVISION USE OF FORCE REPORT.** Every unit of the Department whose officers normally perform street duty (e.g., district stations, Narcotics, Vice Crimes, Traffic, Special Operations Division, etc.) shall maintain a Use of Force Log (SFPD 128). Other units (e.g., administrative, investigative, etc.) need not maintain a Use of Force Log; however, commanding officers of these units are responsible to ensure compliance with all other provisions of this order along with the following recording procedures:
- a.** On each occasion that an officer reports the use of force in an incident report, he/she shall verbally notify the supervisor reviewing the report if different than the supervisor notified that the report contains reportable use of force. The supervisor reviewing this report shall ensure the necessary information is placed in the Use of Force Log. Two copies of the incident report shall be attached to the log.
 - b.** On the 1st and 15th of each month, commanding officers shall sign the log and send it, along with one copy of each of the incident reports, to their respective deputy chief. The deputy chief will review the log and route it to the Management Control Division. Commanding officers shall forward a copy of the log and one copy of each incident report to the Commanding Officer of the Training Division.
 - c.** The Commanding Officer of the Management Control Division will maintain controls that assure all unit logs are received and shall review completed forms to ascertain if any officer appears to be having problems with the use of force. If so, he/she shall notify the appropriate command personnel (also see DGO 3.18, Performance Improvement Program and *Performance Improvement Program, A Supervisor's Guide, DM-06*).
 - d.** The Commanding Officer of the Training Division will maintain controls that assure all unit logs and reports are received, and shall perform a non-punitive review of completed logs and incident reports to ascertain the number, types, proper application and effectiveness of uses of force reported by members of this Department. The information developed shall be used to identify training needs. The Commanding Officer of the Training Division shall report to the Chief of Police quarterly on the use of force by members of the Department.