



## 2-55 USE OF FORCE: DE-ESCALATION (FORMERLY USE OF FORCE APPENDIX)

### Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

[2-19 Response to Behavioral Health Issues](#)

2-53 Use of Force: Definitions

B. Form(s)

None

C. Other Resource(s)

None

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

SO 21-58 Amendment to SOP 2-55 Use of Force: De-escalation

### 2-55-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements for Albuquerque Police Department (Department) sworn personnel regarding the use of de-escalation techniques, when feasible, to gain voluntary compliance from individuals who are uncooperative, and to reduce or eliminate the need to use force.

### 2-55-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department for sworn personnel to use de-escalation techniques when feasible and for sworn personnel to use de-escalation techniques consistent with their training before resorting to using force or to reduce the need for force.

N/A

### 2-55-3 Definitions

For definitions specific to use of force, refer to SOP Use of Force: Definitions.

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### 2-55-4 De-escalation Techniques and Guidelines

A. Sworn personnel shall use de-escalation techniques as proactive actions and approaches to gain voluntary compliance of an individual to reduce or eliminate the need to use force.

1. When feasible, in no order of priority, sworn personnel shall use the following de-escalation techniques, including, but not limited to:



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- a. Using distance, cover, concealment, and/or time to:
  - i. Assess the situation and their options; and
  - ii. Develop a plan to reduce or eliminate the need to use force.
- b. Using intermediate barriers;
- c. Requesting additional sworn personnel and resources while waiting for their arrival;
- d. Using active listening skills to indicate that they are engaged in a conversation with an individual; and
- e. Employing verbal de-escalation, which may include:
  - i. Communicating with the individual in a conversational tone of voice;
  - ii. Beginning by asking questions rather than immediately issuing orders; and
  - iii. Advising the individual that disobeying orders and posing a threat to sworn personnel or other people may result in the need to use force.

B. When feasible, sworn personnel shall:

1. Assess the potential risks to the individual, the officer, and other people;
2. Gather information about the incident;
3. Given the facts and circumstances known to sworn personnel at the time, attempt to de-escalate and slow down situations without increasing the risk of harm to themselves, the individual, or other people;
4. Use de-escalation techniques when there is no threat that would require immediate action to prevent physical harm to the officer, the individual, or other people;
5. Use advisements, warnings, verbal persuasion, or other techniques before using force;
6. Transition to other de-escalation techniques and strategies if these techniques are ineffective in gaining compliance from individuals; and
7. Request and coordinate additional resources (e.g., Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT) personnel, Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) personnel, and Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) Department personnel) to best resolve the individual's crisis.

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- C. Sworn personnel shall avoid engaging in behavior determined to purposefully escalate the need to use force.
- D. Sworn personnel shall document their verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques in their use of force documentation.



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1. Commands and orders are not de-escalation techniques. Sworn personnel shall not document commands and orders as de-escalation techniques in their use of force documentation.
  2. Sworn personnel may use commands and orders when de-escalation techniques have failed, but they shall not use commands in place of de-escalation techniques.
- E. Should an individual fail to comply with lawful directions or commands, sworn personnel shall consider whether an individual's lack of compliance may be based upon the individual's inability to comprehend or comply.
1. When feasible, when sworn personnel identify the presence of one (1) of the following factors, they shall use de-escalation techniques to reduce or eliminate the need to use force:
    - a. The influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
    - b. A known or reasonably apparent mental illness or developmental disability;
    - c. The individual is experiencing a behavioral health crisis;
    - d. A known or reasonably apparent physical disability or other medical or physical condition, including a visual or hearing impairment; or
    - e. A language barrier.
- N/A** F. If the individual is or appears to be in a mental or behavioral health crisis, sworn personnel should attempt to de-escalate the situation and shall otherwise follow SOP Response to Behavioral Health Issues (refer to SOP Response to Behavioral Health Issues for sanction classifications and additional duties).
- G. As soon as practicable, a supervisor shall become involved in managing an overall response to potentially violent encounters by coordinating resources and an officer's response.