

# BALTIMORE CITY

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# PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## GENERAL ORDER 18-02 SECTION K

### DE-ESCALATION

Approved: June 12, 2018

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This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. Directive
- II. Purpose
- III. Definitions
- IV. De-escalation Techniques
- V. Required Action
- VI. Effective Date

#### **I. DIRECTIVE**

Baltimore City School Police Force (BCSPF) officers shall, when feasible, employ de-escalation techniques to decrease the likelihood of the need to use physical force during an incident and to increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance.

Officers should, when reasonable, attempt to understand and consider the possible reasons why a subject may be noncompliant or resisting arrest. When time and circumstances reasonably permit, officers should consider whether a subject's lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist or an inability to comply based on various factors including, but not limited to age and behavioral crisis.

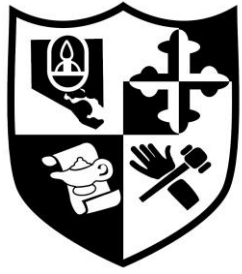
#### **II. PURPOSE**

It is the policy of the BCSPF that, when safe under the totality of circumstances and time and circumstance permit, all members shall use de-escalation tactics in order to reduce the need for physical force and before using to force.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

a. **De-escalation-** Strategies and techniques used by officers to reduce potential conflict among officers and citizens arising out of contacts between the same.

1. **Pre-Incident:** Taking action or communicating during a potential use of physical force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat faced by the officer so that more



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time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation without the use of force or with a reduction in the force necessary. Examples of pre-incident de-escalation actions include, but are not limited to: use of tactical verbal communication strategies, etc.

2. Post-Incident: Taking action to communicate and stabilize a situation after a use of physical force. Examples of post-incident de-escalation actions include, but are not limited to: placing the person on which physical force was used into a recovery position, maintaining an open airway, establishing a professional rapport application of immediate life-saving first aid techniques when it is safe to do so, immediate summoning emergency medical personnel (if necessary), etc.

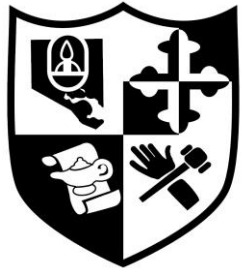
b. **De-escalation Techniques-** Techniques used to minimize the need to use physical force and increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance. These techniques may include, but are not limited to, persuasion, warnings, slowing down the pace of an incident and requesting additional resources.

c. **Totality of circumstances-** The totality of circumstances consists of all facts and circumstances surrounding any event.

### III. DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

De-escalation techniques may include, but are not limited to:

1. Verbal persuasion
2. Verbal advisements
3. Verbal warnings
4. Verbal techniques to calm an agitated subject and promote rational decision making
5. Decreasing the exposure to potential threat by moving to a safer position.
6. Slowing down the pace of the incident by slowing ones speech and taking deep breaths
7. Containing the threat
8. Calling extra resources to assist or officers to assist, for example:
  - a. More department members
  - b. Specially-trained members (e.g. behavioral health care providers, negotiators,



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qualified bilingual members, etc.)

#### IV. REQUIRED ACTION

##### A. Officers

1. When safe under the totality of circumstances and time and circumstances permit, officers shall use de-escalation techniques in order to reduce the need for force.
2. Officers should attempt to avoid jeopardizing their own safety or the safety of others by immediately approaching a subject without proper evaluation of the situation, failing to leave sufficient space between the member and the subject, closing the reactionary gap, or escalating a situation.
3. When time and circumstances reasonably permit, members shall consider whether a subject's lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist or an inability to comply based on various factors including, but not limited to age and behavioral crisis
4. Utilize multiple de-escalation techniques as possible, when safe and feasible under the totality of circumstances, to de-escalate an incident.
5. Any force used should be proportionate to the degree of force reasonably necessary and should be de-escalated as resistance decreases.

##### B. Supervisors

1. Assess whether officer successfully employed de-escalation techniques during a use of force review.
2. Provide timely and constructive feedback directly to the officer and/or refer the officer to further training if deficiencies are noted.
3. Ensure that all officers are trained on de-escalation techniques.

#### V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Order shall be effective on the date of publication.



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I certify that I have read and fully understand this Order.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_