

Call for Information on De-Escalation and Minimizing Use of Force

As part of our *Critical Issues in Policing Series*, PERF will be hosting a conference on February 23, 2012 in Washington, D.C. titled "*An Integrated Approach to De-Escalation and Minimizing Use of Force.*"

In preparation for this conference, PERF is seeking information regarding de-escalation techniques and use-of-force policies.

Many police agencies continue to face challenges when interacting with persons displaying agitated, erratic, or excited behaviors, such as persons with mental health issues or developmental disorders such as autism, individuals under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, and persons suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

PERF's conference was prompted in part by several incidents in which police have been accused of over-relying on "hands-off" techniques, such as using an Electronic Control Weapon (ECW), when a person displaying these behaviors does not immediately comply with police orders. With the advancement of less-lethal weapons, have police become too reliant on technology and less likely to use interpersonal and conflict resolution skills?

Often, a special approach by police is needed to de-escalate and resolve situations when certain behaviors are exhibited. However, deciding when and with whom to use these special approaches may not always be clear. How can police examine a situation and identify the appropriate response to take? Should the police response be tailored to specific behaviors?

This conference will bring together law enforcement executives, training professionals, advocates, medical experts and other stakeholders to discuss these issues, including police policies, procedures, training, and responses.

In preparation for this conference, we are seeking information regarding current policies, procedures, and training materials related to how officers should approach and interact with persons exhibiting behaviors that require de-escalation skills and techniques. We are also interested in any programs or partnerships that help your department to properly respond to these types of calls for service.

Suggested Materials Requested

- 1.) Department's use-of-force policy.
- 2.) Department's policy on use of force with persons exhibiting excited and/or agitated behavior (including but not limited to individuals with mental health issues, developmental disorders, those under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, and persons suffering from post traumatic stress disorder).
- 3.) Any departmental training materials related to interacting with individuals showing agitated, erratic or excited behaviors, such as educational materials, de-escalation techniques, program curricula and training activities, etc. We also ask for information regarding who receives this type of training and how frequently it is conducted.
- 4.) Any additional materials or anecdotal information that could aid in this project, such as current trends in the field regarding this issue, programs or partnerships between the police and other

organizations focusing on these types of interactions, information distributed by the police to advocates for individuals with mental illness, learning or developmental disorders, PTSD, etc.

We ask that departments send this information to the attention of Balinda Cockrell by e-mail (BCockrell@policeforum.org), fax (202-466-7826), or mail (1120 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 930, Washington, D.C. 20036). **Please send all materials to PERF by Friday, December 30, 2011.**

A PERF staff member may reach out to you to further discuss your materials and experiences regarding this topic, or if you or someone from your department would like to schedule an interview with a PERF staff member, please contact Balinda Cockrell at 202-454-8322.

For more information regarding the conference on Thursday, February 23, 2012 in Washington, D.C. on this issue, please click the link below.

<http://members.policeforum.org/news/detail.dot?id=2289766>

As always, PERF greatly appreciates your assistance.