



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:  
Section:  
Original Date:  
Revised Date:

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers of the Fire, Building and Safety Division with guidelines on the reasonable use of force. While there is no way to specify the exact amount or type of reasonable force to be applied in any situation, each officer is expected to use these guidelines to make such decisions in a professional, impartial and reasonable manner.

## POLICY

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Officers are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied interactions and, when warranted, may use objectively reasonable force in carrying out their duties.

Officers must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, their authority and limitations of such authority. This is especially true with respect to dealing with non-compliant and/or resistive subjects while engaged in the performance of law enforcement duties.

Officers are expected to carry out their duties, including the use of force, in a manner that is fair and unbiased.

The Russellville Fire Department recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Vesting officers with the authority to use objectively reasonable force and to protect the public safety and welfare requires monitoring, evaluation and a careful balancing of all interests.

## Definitions

Use of Force: The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) defines police use of force as the amount of effort required to compel compliance from an unwilling subject.

Deadly force: Force reasonably anticipated and intended to create a substantial likelihood of causing death or very serious injury.

Feasible: Reasonably capable of being done or carried out under the circumstances to successfully achieve the arrest or lawful objective without increasing risk to the officer or another person.

Force: The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents, or weapons to another person. It is not a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed, or restrained.

Imminent: Ready to take place; impending. Note that imminent does not mean immediate or instantaneous.

Totality of the circumstances: All facts and circumstances known to the officer at the time, taken as a whole, including the conduct of the officer and the subject leading up to the use of force.

Approved

Fire Chief



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### **De-escalation**

Officers shall use verbal communication and other strategies to reduce the need for force. When circumstances reasonably permit, officers should use non-violent strategies and techniques to decrease the intensity of a situation, improve decision-making, improve communication, reduce the need for force, and increase voluntary compliance (e.g., summoning additional resources, formulating a plan, attempting verbal persuasion).

### **Reasonableness**

Officers shall use only the amount of force that is objectively reasonable and necessary to achieve their goals. Officers may use reasonable force to effect an arrest, search, prevent escape or overcome resistance. If it is not reasonably apparent to the person to be arrested, or it is not reasonably impracticable to do so, officers should make clear their intent to arrest or search, and identify themselves as peace officers, before using force.

### **Duty to Intervene**

Officers shall intervene if another officer is using excessive force that is clearly beyond what is objectionable reasonable under the circumstances.

### **Duty to Provide Medical Assistance**

As soon as practical after any Use of Force incident, officers are responsible for requesting medical treatment for injured subjects and rendering aid consistent with their training.

### **Duty to Report**

Officers should report any use of excessive force to a supervisor or the agency's governing body. Additionally, ANY use of force by an officer of the Division or member of this department shall be documented promptly, completely, and accurately in an appropriate report, depending on the nature of the incident. The officer or member should articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances.

### **Use of Force Continuum**

Officers shall use a continuum of force that includes verbal commands, physical restraint, less-lethal force, and lethal force.

### **Deadly Force**

Deadly force is any use of force that creates a substantial risk of causing death or serious bodily injury. When reasonable, the officer shall, prior to the use of deadly force, make efforts to identify him/herself as a peace officer and to warn that deadly force may be used, unless the officer has objectively reasonable grounds to believe the person is aware of those facts.

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Use of deadly force is justified in the following circumstances involving imminent threat or imminent risk:

- An officer may use deadly force to protect him/herself or others from what he/she reasonably believes is an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.
- An officer may use deadly force to stop a fleeing subject when the officer has probable cause to believe that the individual has committed, or intends to commit, a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious bodily injury or death, and the officer reasonably believes that there is an imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death to any other person if the individual is not immediately apprehended. Under such circumstances, a verbal warning should precede the use of deadly force, where feasible.

### **Training**

All officers shall receive training, at least annually, on the Department's use of force policy and related legal updates.

Training shall be provided on a regular and periodic basis and designed to:

Provide techniques for the use of and reinforce the importance of de-escalation;  
Simulate actual shooting situations and conditions; and  
Reinforce the appropriate exercise of discretion and judgment in using less-than lethal and deadly force in accordance with this policy.

All use-of-force training shall be documented.

### **Arrests**

It shall be the policy of the Russellville Fire Department that, in the event of an imminent or potential arrest, the Russellville Police Department shall be contacted prior to and that all arrests or custody situations shall be under the command of and in cooperation with law enforcement.

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Kirk Stone".

Fire Chief