

For information
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Legislative Council Panel on Security
Training to police officers in the use of force and firearms

Introduction

This paper provides information on the training to police officers in the use of force and firearms provided by the Hong Kong Police Force.

Principles governing the use of force by the Police

2. The Police have the responsibility to adopt lawful measures to maintain public safety and public order, as well as safeguard people's life and property. On occasions where an act causing danger to others is occurring or is about to occur, the Police shall, based on the circumstances at scene, make assessments and exercise professional judgment to take appropriate actions, which include using the minimum force required in a bid to ensure public safety and public order.

3. The Police have clear guidelines and training in the use of force. Police officers may use minimum force as appropriate only when such an action is absolutely necessary and there are no other means to accomplish the lawful duty. Police officers shall give verbal warning prior to the use of force as far as circumstances permit, while the person(s) involved shall be given every opportunity, whenever practicable, to obey police orders before force is used. The principles governing the use of force by the Police are:

- only the minimum force reasonably necessary to achieve a lawful purpose may be used and once that purpose has been achieved, the use of force shall cease;
- when on-scene circumstances permit, police officers shall give warning of the intention to use force and of the nature and degree of force that they intend to use; and

- the person(s) involved shall be given every opportunity, whenever practicable, to obey police orders before force is used.

Use of force training

4. Police College provides use of force training to new recruits and serving officers which allow police officers to fully understand how to use different levels of force in a safe and effective manner, including the use of verbal advice/ verbal control, empty-hand control, oleoresin capsicum (OC) foam, batons and firearms, as a means to achieve the relevant lawful purpose. Amongst such training, the use of firearms training is to ensure that police officers have the adequate training and ability to use firearms and are capable of discharging their daily duties in a safe and effective manner. Use of force training is classified into the following three categories:

- **Fundamental Training** – The objective of the fundamental training is to equip trainees with the ability of using different levels of force in a safe and effective manner, including the use of verbal advice/ verbal control, empty-hand control, OC foam, batons and firearms. As far as the use of firearms is concerned, trainees will receive training in firing principles, performance check and safe operation of firearms, so that they may have a clear understanding of the marksmanship principles of using firearms and have adequate knowledge of operating handguns in an independent and safe manner while they are on duty;
- **Decision Making Training** – upon acquiring the fundamental skills required to use different levels of force, trainees will receive decision making training, which will be conducted at indoor mini-ranges under the supervision of an instructor in an one-to-one mode. Under various settings with safety design, trainees have to decide whether to use force and what level of force shall be used when faced with threats, while abiding by the principles governing the use of force and the relevant requirements laid down by the Police, for handling the scenario in question. By means of

multi-media and interactive technology, instructors will project simulated cases on screens and fine-tune the development of the case in accordance with trainees' responses. Trainees may then learn how to make decisions on the correct use of force in line with the changes of the case for the purpose of handling relevant real-life scenarios. Instructors will review with the trainees the decisions they have made and the actions taken, as well as make appropriate recommendations. The Police have been enhancing and updating this training system since its introduction to the Force in 1991. Since 2002, instructors can fine-tune the development of the case according to the different levels of force used by the trainees, including the use of verbal advice/verbal control, empty-hand control, OC foam, batons and firearms. For instance, a suspect in a training scenario may choose to surrender to or attack the police officer, or be subdued; and

- **Tactical Training** – Police officers are required to make careful deployment before carrying out any operations. Tactical training is normally conducted in a venue specially designed for such a purpose. By means of simulated cases and scenes, trainees will learn how to handle suspects and suspicious vehicles, as well as how to search buildings in which suspects may hide, so as to enhance their ability in handling similar circumstances in real-life cases. Co-operation among team members and their capability in tactical deployment will also be strengthened accordingly.

5. To ensure that police officers discharge their duties in a safe and effective manner, the Police College shall keep on providing quality training to police officers in the use of force and firearms, so that Hong Kong continues to be one of the safest cities in the world.

Security Bureau
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