

USE OF FORCE (CCN:29580) 4 HOURS

(Revised January 12, 2026)

COURSE GOAL:

The course will provide the student with the minimum topics of Use of Force required in the POST Perishable Skills Training Program (PSP). The intent of the course is to improve the student's knowledge of use of force laws and policies as well as critical decision-making skills. The course consists of facilitated discussion, case study analysis, and scenarios for in-service personnel.

USE OF FORCE

Minimum Topics/Exercises:

- a. Statutory Law
- b. Case Law
- c. Agency Policies
- d. Reverence for Human Life
- e. De-escalation
- f. Duty to Intercede
- g. Rendering First-Aid
- h. Class Exercises/Student Evaluations/Testing

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

- 1. Demonstrate knowledge of use of force laws.
- 2. Demonstrate knowledge of individual agency's use of force policies.
- 3. Demonstrate an understanding of force options decision-making with every technique and exercise, to include:
 - A. Reverence for Human Life
 - B. De-Escalation and Verbal Commands
 - C. Rendering First-Aid
 - D. Legal Duty to Intercede and Report Excessive Force to a Superior Officer
- 4. Minimum standards of performance shall be tested by an instructor observing the trainee during their participation in facilitated discussions, case study analysis, and scenarios. If the trainee does not meet minimum standards, as established by the presenter, remediation will be provided until the standard is met.

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EXPANDED COURSE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION/ORIENTATION

A. Introduction, Registration and Orientation

1. Instructor/student introductions
2. Registration/rosters

B. Course Goals and Objectives

1. Increase knowledge of use of force laws
2. Increase knowledge of individual agency's use of force policies
3. Increase understanding of force options decision-making

II. POLICIES AND LEGAL ISSUES

A. Statutory Law

V(a)

1. Existing Law

a. PC 835a

- 1) "...it is the intent of the Legislature that peace officers use deadly force only when necessary, in defense of human life."
- 2) "In determining whether deadly force is necessary, officers shall evaluate each situation in light of the particular circumstances of each case and shall use other available resources and techniques if reasonably safe and feasible to an objectively reasonable officer."
- 3) Objectively reasonable standard – and how it has been defined in 835a PC
- 4) Mentally ill and suicidal subjects
- 5) Deadly Force
 - a) Defend against imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury
 - b) Fleeing Felon
- 6) Definition of Totality of the Circumstance
- 7) Definition of Imminent

B. Case Law

V(b)

1. Foundational Case Law

- a. Graham v Connor
- b. Tennessee v Garner
- c. Hayes v County of San Diego

2. Recent Case Law

- a. Barnes v Felix
- b. Scott v Smith

C. Agency's Use of Force Policy

- a. Review Definitions within Policy 300 Use of Force/De-Escalation
- b. How has the policy changed in recent years?

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- c. How does this affect how officers do the job?
- d. Officer's responsibility to notify supervisor following use of force
- e. Supervisor responsibility following notification
- f. Body worn cameras (activations and use)

III. REVERENCE FOR HUMAN LIFE AND DUTY TO INTERCEDE V(d,f)

A. Reverence for Human Life

- 1. What does "reverence for human life" mean?
- 2. How is this applied to the use of force?

B. Duty to Intercede (*Penal Code 13519.10(b)(2)*, *Penal Code 7286(b)(8)*)

- 1. What is a "duty to intercede"
 - a. Bystander officer liability
 - b. What is the stigma around this?
 - c. How do we break the stigma?
 - d. How does this reflect your personal and organizational core values?
- 2. What is your responsibility as a peace officer to intervene?
 - a. To the public?
 - b. To fellow officer(s)?
 - c. To self?
 - d. To organization?
- 3. What are the consequences and liabilities?
 - a. Criminal
 - b. Civil
 - c. Administrative
 - d. Moral/ethical
- 4. How do you recognize when to intercede?
- 5. Agency's policy on duty to intercede
 - a. What is your responsibility to report to your supervisor?
 - b. Has the policy changed in recent years?
 - c. What is the policy on retaliation?

C. Rendering First-Aid

V(g)

- 1. What is your responsibility to render first-aid?
- 2. How does one deem when it is safe to render first-aid?
- 3. Discuss agency policy regarding handcuffing techniques when rendering aid to subjects who are severely injured or possibly deceased
- 4. Agency's policy on rendering first-aid

IV. DE-ESCALATION AND VERBAL COMMANDS

V(e)

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- A. De-Escalation
 - 1. What is it?
 - 2. How is it used?
 - 3. What are the key components and considerations?
- B. Verbal Communication versus Verbal Commands
 - 1. How does verbal communication fit in as a force option?
 - 2. How is it used as a tool for de-escalation
 - 3. How might either verbal communication or commands affect the outcome of a situation?
- C. Control the environment
 - 1. Tactical pause
 - 2. Slow down
 - 3. Gather information
 - 4. Develop a plan
 - 5. Time + distance = options
- D. Making Sound Decisions
 - 1. What is important now?
 - 2. Set priorities
 - 3. Think through your choices
 - 4. Make sound decisions

V. CLASS EXCERSISES AND STUDENT EVALUATIONS/TESTING V(h)

- A. Practice engaging in a potential use of force situation via active process
 - 1. Participation in role play scenarios
 - 2. Observation of role play scenarios
 - 3. Debrief of role play scenarios using the following lenses:
 - a. Department policy/legal standards
 - b. Procedural Justice – How did the response demonstrate procedural justice?
 - c. Tactics
- B. Evaluation of potential use of force situations via instructor demonstration
 - 1. Evaluate role play scenarios
 - 2. Feedback from peers
 - 3. Feedback and debrief from instructors
 - a. Department policy/legal standards
 - b. Procedural Justice – How did the response demonstrate procedural justice?
 - c. Tactics