

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
Officer Safety/Field Tactics-Building Searches
1850-21018
Expanded Course Outline

Instructional Goal: To provide the student an opportunity to review and apply search concepts and techniques.

Performance Objectives: Using lecture, demonstration and learning activities including practical application the students will:

- ❑ Discuss use of force considerations, policy, legal issues, moral and ethical dilemmas to include De-Escalation and Reverence for Human Life.
- ❑ Identify the appropriate equipment necessary to conduct a safe and successful search
- ❑ Work as a team to develop a plan for entering, searching a room and contacting suspects
- ❑ Communicate by using standard hand signals and terminology
- ❑ Successfully use all four search methods, mirror, quick-peek, slice-the-pie, and look-listen
- ❑ Identify the proper time to use force and articulate the reasonableness of their actions

References: Instructors, facilitators and training supervisors shall ensure that the most current references are utilized

This course provides current Penal Code Section 835a content

I. BUILDING SEARCH OVERVIEW (30 Min)

- A. Introduction
 - 1. Instructors (s)
 - 2. Overview of goals and objectives
- B. Equipment Overview
 - 1. Required: Flashlights, Mirror, body armor, Sam Browne, baton
 - 2. Optional: Tie-off line (HRD), knee pads
- C. Safety Overview
 - 1. Overview Safety Plan¹
 - 2. Safety Guidelines location
 - 3. Practical Application Reminders
 - a. No live weapon or ammunition in the training area
 - b. No OC sprays
 - c. No collapsible batons
- D. Overview of Searching Techniques
 - a. Criss Cross
 - b. Button Hook
 - c. Slice the Pie
 - d. Quick Peek
 - e. Mirror
 - 2. Additional Considerations
 - a. Perimeter/Containment of a Structure
 - b. Search Teams
 - c. Announcements
 - d. SWAT Call out Criteria
 - e. K-9 Criteria
 - f. Initiation
 - g. Contacting Suspects

¹ Training Division Safety Manual, October 2017

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II. Use of Force Review

(30 Min)

Review Department Manual Section 1/556.10, Policy on the Use of Force² and openly discuss how it affects the use of less-lethal force options.

- A. Reverence for Human Life
 - 1. In Preamble for Use of Force Policy
 - 2. Why?
 - 3. How does this play into our decisions when using force?

- B. California Penal Code section 835(a)³ As set forth below, it is the intent of the Legislature that peace officers use deadly force only when necessary in defense of human life. 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.
 - 1. The totality of the circumstances
 - 2. That individuals with physical, mental health, developmental, or intellectual disabilities are significantly more likely to experience greater levels of physical force during police interactions, as their disability may affect their ability to understand or comply with commands from peace officers. It is estimated that individuals with disabilities are involved in between one-third and one-half of all fatal encounters with law enforcement.
 - 3. Totality of the circumstances, that such force is necessary
 - 4. Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to;
 - a. Effect the arrest
 - b. Prevent escape
 - c. Overcome resistance
 - d. Only reasonable force may be used
 - e. You must have reasonable suspicion to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense

- C. Graham v. Connor 490 U.S. 386 (1989) affirms the “objectively reasonable” standard and states that the “reasonableness” of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, and its calculus must embody an allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force necessary in a particular situation.
 - 1. No 20/20 hindsight
 - 2. Based on the totality of facts known at the time
 - 3. Would another officer with similar training and experience, facing similar circumstances act the same way or use similar judgement?
 - 4. Does not have to be the best decision, just a reasonable decision

- D. Tactical De-Escalation Techniques⁴
 - 1. Guided by the principal of reverence for human life

² Department Manual Section 1/556.10, Policy on the Use of Force

³ California Penal Code Section 835a

⁴ LAPD Use of Force-Tactics Directive No. 16, Tactical De-Escalation Techniques

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2. The use of techniques to:
3. Reduce the intensity of an encounter with a suspect; AND,
4. Enable an officer to have additional options to gain voluntary compliance; OR,
5. Mitigate the need to use a higher level of force
6. All while maintaining control of the situation
7. Tactical de-escalation DOES NOT require that an officer compromise their safety or increase the risk of physical harm to the public
8. Tactical de-escalation techniques should only be used when it is safe and prudent to do so
 - a. Planning
 - b. Assessment
 - c. Time
 - d. Redeployment and/or Containment
 - e. Other Resources
 - f. Lines of Communication

E. Command and Control⁵

1. The use of active leadership to direct others while using available resources to coordinate a response, accomplish tasks and minimize risk.
2. Initial responsibility to begin the process to develop a plan of action falls upon the senior officer, or any officer on-scene who has gained sufficient situational awareness.
3. Tactical Consideration

F. Less Lethal Weapons and Ammunition

1. California Penal Code Section 16780(a)
 - a. "Less lethal weapon" means any device that is designed to or that has been converted to expel or propel less lethal ammunition by any action, mechanism, or process for the purpose of incapacitating, immobilizing or stunning a human being through the infliction of any less than lethal impairment of physical condition, function or senses including physical pain or discomfort. It is not necessary that a weapon leave any lasting or permanent incapacitation, discomfort, pain or other injury or disability in order to qualify as a less lethal weapon.
2. California Penal Code Section 16770
 - a. As used in this part, "Less Lethal Ammunition" means any ammunition that both of the following requirements.
 - 1) Designed to be used in any less lethal weapon or any other kind of weapon (including but not limited to firearms, pistols, revolvers, shotguns, rifles and spring, compressed air and compressed gas weapons; and
 - 2) When used in less lethal weapon or other weapon is designed to immobilize or incapacitate or stun a human being through the infliction of any less lethal impairment of physical condition, function of senses, including physical pain or discomfort.

G. Less-Lethal Force-Clarification⁶

⁵ Training Bulletin, Volume XLVII Issue 4, COMMAND AND CONTROL

⁶ Office of Administrative Services Notice, Use of Less-Lethal Force Clarification Jan. 2018

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1. Less-Lethal force options (OC Spray⁷, Baton⁸, TASER⁹, Beanbag Shotgun¹⁰, 40mm LLL and Less-Lethal munitions¹¹) are only permissible when:
 - a. An officer reasonably believes the suspect or subject is violently resisting arrest; or,
 - b. Poses an immediate threat of violence or physical harm.
2. Less-Lethal force options shall not be used for a suspect or subject who is:
 - a. Passively resisting, or
 - b. Merely failing to comply with commands.
3. Verbal threats of violence or mere non-compliance do not alone justify the use of Less-Lethal force.
4. In addition, generally, an officer shall give a verbal warning prior to using such force when feasible.

H. United States Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit

1. Defines “Intermediate Force” as force capable of inflicting significant pain and causing serious injury. (Young v. County of Los Angeles)

I. Deorle v. Rutherford (2001DJDA 2725)

1. Officers have a duty to warn, if possible, before using any force option, including beanbags
2. The cloth cased shot constitutes force which carries significant risk of serious injury and thus is not to be deployed lightly

J. Bryan v. McPherson (630 F.3d 805)

1. X26 TASER and similar devices, when used in dart mode, constitute an “intermediate, significant level of force that must be justified by the governmental interest involved.”
2. Placed the taser at a higher level of force than most law enforcement agencies and the International Association of Chiefs of Police had placed them

K. Young v. County of Los Angeles

1. Traffic stop for a seatbelt violation (infraction)
2. Pepper spray and baton blows are “intermediate force” because they are “capable of inflicting significant pain and causing serious injury,” and therefore “present a significant intrusion upon an individual’s liberty interests.”

III. BUILDING SEARCH DEMONSTRATION

(15 Min)

A. LEARNING ACTIVITY:

1. Building Search Demonstration
 - a. Instructors will conduct a building search
 - 1) Team member roles
 - 2) Initiation
 - 3) Angles

⁷ Use of Force-Tactics Directive, Oleoresin Capsicum

⁸ Use of Force-Tactics Directive, Baton

⁹ Use of Force-Tactics Directive, Electronic Control Device

¹⁰ Use of Force-Tactics Directive, Beanbag Shotgun

¹¹ Use of Force-Tactics Directive, 40mm Less Lethal Launcher

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- 4) Entries
 - 5) Room Clearing
 - 6) Communication inside the location
 - 7) Contacting suspect
2. Debrief Points:
- a. This information should be used to assist in the debrief of the practical application of a building search. The utilization of these points comes during the practical application not the lecture.
 - b. Perimeter/Containment of a structure
 - c. Outside containment
 - 1) A perimeter around the location to be searched is essential for the containment of a possible suspect inside the location
 - 2) Considerations for perimeters are:
 - a) Be close enough to assist but not too close to get in the way
 - b) Complete containment around the perimeter of the location
 - c) No diagonal deployment, unless there are two A-cars present
 - d) Proper sequential numbering of a location
 - e) Establishing a tactical frequency for all involved units
 - f) Air Unit
 - g) Keeping a constant uninterrupted view of the location
 - h) Fences or walls
 - i) Cover and concealment
 - j) Animals
 - k) Neighbors: Are they friend or foe? **(117c)**
 - (1) The attitude of the immediate neighbors and the entire community can influence the outcome of the search
 - l) Occupants **(117c)**
 - (1) Interaction with uninvolved occupants
 - (2) Relocation of occupants
 - (3) Language barriers
 - d. Architecture of the Location
 - 1) Structure can reveal interior elements or layout
 - a) Doors
 - (1) Size and composition
 - (2) Locks
 - b) Window(s)
 - (1) Size and composition
 - (2) Distance from the ground
 - 2) Natural flow of the location
 - a) Right, left or straight back
 - 3) Obtaining interior room configuration of a location can be immensely valuable
 - a) Attempt to have a diagram drawn showing room locations
 - b) Find a similar location and perform a walk-through to familiarize yourself with the layout of the location to be searched
3. Search Teams
- a. Building search should be conducted with at least three officers
 - 1) This is to complete officer rescue
 - b. Four to six officer teams are optimal

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- 1) Point Officer
 - a) Assigned during the planning phase
 - b) First Member of team upon approach
 - (1) Identifies and communicates any threat to the team upon approach
 - (2) Communication can be stealth or verbal
- 2) Contact Officer
 - a) Makes planned verbal contacts
 - (1) Knock and notice
 - (a) Verbal
 - (b) Electronically enhanced
 - (c) Telephonic
 - (2) Verbal direction to occupants / suspects located
 - (3) Assumes contact if unplanned contact made
- 3) Team Leader
 - a) Formulates plan
 - b) Controls team movement during operation
 - c) Ensures thoroughness of search
4. Barricaded suspect¹²
 - 1) Probably armed
 - 2) Believed to be involved in a criminal act or is a significant threat to lives and safety of citizens and/or police
 - 3) Suspect has position of advantage, affording cover and concealment or is contained in an open area and the presence or approach of police officers could precipitate an adverse reaction by the suspect
 - 4) Refuses to submit to arrest
5. K-9 criteria
 - a. Felony suspects
 - b. Misdemeanor suspect armed with a firearm
 - c. Lost or missing person that rises to critical level
 - d. Evidence or article search related to an ongoing criminal investigation
6. Initiation
 - a. There are many elements to a proper and successful search.
 - 1) Officer safety is most important
 - 2) Time is on the officer's side
 - 3) A slow and methodical search, using proper searching techniques and proper angles, will allow officer's the ability to systematically search for a suspect using both cover and concealment
 - b. All building searches are inherently dangerous
 - c. Weapon Positioning
 - 1) Building searches are a high-risk situation.
 - 2) Officers will normally have their firearm drawn from their holsters due to the fact that a search for the suspect has the possibility of escalating into a use of deadly force situation.
 - 3) Weapons will be at the low-ready

¹²LAPD Emergency Operations Guide, Volume 2 Supervisor's Field Operations Guide-Barricaded Suspects & Training
Bulletin Vol XLIII, Issue 9 Barricaded Suspects/Subjects

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- 4) Proper weapons handling while moving during the search is paramount to officer safety and target identification.
 - 5) Several key elements to proper weapons handling include:
 - a) Trigger finger must be kept along the frame of the weapon at all times.
 - b) Never allow the muzzle of the weapon to cover anything you are not willing to shoot.
 - 6) If an officer moves in front of your weapon, lower the muzzle until the officer is clear
 - 7) Weapons handling should be restricted to the officer's primary hand unless the officer is competent with their support hand or injured
 - 8) When using a flashlight, officers should utilize the Harries or Chapman Technique
- d. Whenever officers place themselves inside an unknown location, good tactics, communication, weapons handling, and common sense increase the officer's ability to perform a successful search.
- e. When officer's initiate the search of a location for a suspect, they are not only searching for the suspect, but also areas that the suspect maybe hiding
- 1) These areas are considered danger points or threats
 - 2) Officers must identify threat areas as they come upon them during a building search
 - 3) There are three rules concerning "Danger Points".
 - a) Officers shall utilize one of the following methods before moving past a danger point or threat.
 - (1) Clear it
 - (2) Cover it
 - (3) Secure it
 - b) All corners inside of a location can be considered or recognized as Danger Points
 - c) The systematic use of proper searching techniques
 - (1) Look and listen first
 - (2) Slice the Pie
 - (3) Mirror
 - (4) Quick peek
- f. Angles
- 1) Officers need to be aware of not placing themselves into a contaminated area by disregarding the angles that come into play during a stealth search
 - 2) Adjusting movements of the search officers must be in sequence with areas being covered by other officers
 - 3) This will keep officers from moving into an area where a suspect would be able to attack the officer
- g. Entries
- 1) The entry into a location can be a very dangerous time for officers
 - a) Fatal funnel
 - 2) Entries should be completed by a minimum of two officers
 - a) Flexibility is always a must
 - b) If a room were so small, then one officer enters while the other covers from the doorway
 - c) One entrance point should be utilized during the search

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- 3) Entries can be made using several techniques
 - a) Criss-Cross
 - b) Button Hook
 - c) Linear
- 4) Open doors
 - a) The first officer approaching the open door will stop and cover
 - b) The second officer will then squeeze-up the first officer and both will enter the room
- 5) Closed doors
 - a) All door openings are a challenge
 - b) Officers will make the determination of the entry depending on the configuration
 - c) Officers should agree on a predetermined signal prior to entry, i.e.:
 - (1) Linear – Squeeze
 - (2) Criss-cross – Nod
 - (3) Button Hook – Verbal “go”
- 6) Closed doors - opening in
 - a) First officer will cross the closed door and set up. The second officer will set up on the opposite side
 - b) Hinge officer will cover
 - c) Doorknob officer makes eye contact with hinge officer
 - (1) Acknowledgement made by both officers
 - d) Doorknob officer opens the door
 - e) After the room is cleared as much as possible from the outside, officers will then coordinate their entry
- 7) Closed doors - opening out
 - a) Officers should set up on the opposite side of the door handle
 - b) The first officer approaching will stop and cover
 - c) The second officer will manipulate the environment
 - d) After the room is cleared as much as possible from the outside, officers will then coordinate their entry
- h. Room Clearing
 - 1) Upon entering DO NOT STOP!
 - 2) You must clear the doorway and allow your partner to enter
 - 3) Clear corners into the center of the room
 - 4) Visually scan your area of responsibility
 - a) Corner
 - b) Center
 - c) Up and Down
- i. Communications inside the location
 - 1) Communications between officers conducting a building search is a key element in the successful conclusion of the search
 - 2) Officers need to communicate by use of hand signals if possible and verbally if necessary
 - 3) Hand signals should be established prior to the search and understood by all officers involved
 - a) Suspect
 - b) Cover
 - c) Stop

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- d) Snapping of the fingers.
- e) Follow
- 4) If hand signals not an option verbal communication can be used.
- j. Lighting
 - 1) Officers must be able to see clearly to ensure they are not missing a hidden suspect's location.
 - 2) The proper use of lights can make an officer's task much easier and safer.
 - 3) Improper use of lighting can place an officer in a position of disadvantage without the officer realizing the danger
 - 4) Never silhouette an officer with your light.
 - 5) Never turn your light off in a dark environment.
 - 6) Darkness is a suspect's friend. Light is his/her enemy.
 - 7) Lighting placed into the face of a suspect in a dark environment will place the suspect at a disadvantage.
 - 8) Never place your light system in your primary hand.
- 7. Contacting Suspects
 - a. Develop a plan prior to entering location
 - b. Officers should always expect to find a suspect
 - 1) Using this basic concept, an officer will eliminate the element of surprise when a suspect is located
 - c. Remember; you must be prepared to deal with the suspect once located
 - 1) Utilize appropriate force option if necessary **(117e)**
 - 2) Be able to articulate your decision to use force
 - 3) Control the suspect
 - 4) Call the suspect out of an area that is not clear
 - 5) Search, then handcuff suspect
 - 6) Briefly interview the suspect for any important tactical information
 - 7) Hand the suspect off to outside team if possible.
 - 8) Continue to search the location.
 - d. Minimum of one-officer stays covering the suspect/s if no arrest team is available
 - e. The additional officers continue to search the location
 - f. Always consider secondary suspects.
 - g. Consider the best location for taking the suspect into custody. If there is an area inside of the location that is uncontaminated, it can be used. If you must take the suspect outside of the location for officer safety, then do so.
 - h. Never place a suspect between officers
 - i. Complete Investigation conducting a thorough interview of suspect once location is cleared.

IV. BUILDING SEARCH – APPLICATION

(135 min)

A. **PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** Building Search - Drills

Procedures: Group activity

1. Provide students the opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills and training they have received in building searches
2. The drills should increase in difficulty throughout the training block

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3. This is meant as a low-key, coach the teams through their mistakes and demonstrate appropriate behavior when necessary
4. This should be a positive learning experience for all involved
5. As a facilitator your goal is to determine from the students input what worked, what didn't and if they are able to process what they have learned and be able to build on the information received throughout the training block

6. FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS:
 - a. NO FIREARMS OR AMMUNITION SHALL BE IN THE AREA OF THE SCENARIO DURING THE TRAINING
 - b. MAY CHOOSE TO PROVIDE AN INERT WEAPON/S for the drills
7. The class remains in groups, have the groups rotate to different sets of facilitators
8. Assist the team members in the first building search drill
9. Utilize the material that was presented in the overview block of instruction to debrief each drill upon completion
 - a. DEBRIEF POINTS:
 - 1) Perimeter/Containment in place prior to any action.
 - 2) Non-Dynamic room clearing techniques
 - 3) Time is on your side
 - 4) Communications
 - 5) Closed / Open Door/s
 - 6) Contacting Suspect **(117e)**
 - 7) Control the suspect
 - a) If the student responds with force, ask the student to articulate why they chose the level of force

V. CLOSING

(30 Min)

Reinforce the key learning points

- a. Building Searches are an inherently dangerous
- b. There are many considerations that must be observed before, during and after the search
- c. "There are no absolutes in tactics, but there are things you absolutely must do."
 - 1) Attempt to use light to your advantage
 - 2) Avoid passing an area where a suspect could be hiding.
 - 3) Avoid entering a location alone
 - 4) Avoid the center of halls and rooms
 - 5) Avoid standing in a doorway
 - 6) Attempt to keep noise down
 - 7) Stop and listen periodically
 - 8) Attempt to utilize time to your advantage