



LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
**USE OF FORCE
DIRECTIVE**

UOF Directive No. 2

March 2023

STRIKES AND KICKS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to provide officers with guidelines for using strikes and kicks.

DEFINITIONS

Strike: Any blow with the hand or elbow.

Note: Absent exigent circumstances which must be fully articulated by the involved officer, fist strikes should be used primarily on soft tissue areas to prevent injury to an officer's hands, and to minimize the risk of serious injury to the suspect.

Kick: Any blow with the foot, shin, or knee.

PROTOCOL

Strikes and/or kicks can be used when such force is objectively reasonable to accomplish the following:

- Overcome active resistance to arrest
- Create distance from a suspect
- Protect self or others from injury
- Stop or stun a suspect
- Distract a suspect

Reporting

When a strike or kick is used and there is contact with an individual it is a reportable use of force.

Rendering Aid/Medical Treatment

Medical treatment is required when the individual is injured or has a complaint of injury. After any use of force, officers shall immediately request a rescue ambulance for any

person injured. In addition, officers shall promptly provide basic and emergency medical assistance to all members of the community, including victims, witnesses, subjects, suspects, persons in custody, subjects of a use of force, and fellow officers:

- To the extent of the officer's training and experience in first aid/CPR/AED; and,
- To the level of equipment available to an officer at the time assistance is needed.

PROCEDURES

When using strikes and/or kicks, officers should target the following areas:

- Shoulders
- Chest
- Arms
- Abdomen
- Sides
- Legs
- Buttocks

Based on the fluid and often violent nature of a use of force situation, the application of a particular technique may vary. Intentional strikes or kicks to any part of the body other than the target areas identified above may be objectively reasonable based on the facts and circumstances articulated by the involved officer. Intentional strikes to the head should be avoided in most circumstances.

Note: When a suspect in a prone position with their hands under their body fails to comply with an officer's commands and submit to handcuffing, officers should consider options such as lateral head displacement, baton-assisted joint locks or pressure-point techniques in order to take the suspect into custody. Palm heel strikes and closed fist strikes are discouraged absent compelling circumstances when a suspect is in a prone position.

POLICY

Use of De-Escalation Techniques

It is the policy of this Department that, whenever feasible, officers shall use techniques and tools consistent with Department de-escalation training to reduce the intensity of any encounter with a suspect and enable an officer to have additional options to mitigate the need to use a higher level of force while maintaining control of the situation.

Verbal Warnings

Where feasible, a peace officer shall, prior to the use of *any* force, make reasonable efforts to identify themselves as a peace officer and to warn that force may be used, unless the officer has objectively reasonable grounds to believe that the person is aware of those facts.

Proportionality

Officers may only use a level of force that they reasonably believe is proportional to the seriousness of the suspected offense or the reasonably perceived level of actual or threatened resistance.

Fair and Unbiased Policing

Officers shall carry out their duties, including use of force, in a manner that is fair and unbiased. Discriminatory conduct on the basis of race, religion, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, housing status, or disability while performing any law enforcement activity is prohibited.

Requirement to Report Potential Excessive Force

An officer who is present and observes another officer using force that the present and observing officer believes to be beyond that which is necessary, as determined by an objectively reasonable officer under the circumstances based upon the totality of information actually known to the officer, as delineated in California Penal Code Section 835(a), shall immediately report such force to a superior officer.

An officer who has a sustained excessive force complaint shall be prohibited from training other officers for a period of at least three years from the date that the complaint was sustained.

Retaliation for Reporting Potential Excessive Force or Violation of Any Law or Regulation

Retaliation for reporting potential excessive force or violation of any law or regulation by any employee of this Department is strictly prohibited, shall be reported immediately, and is considered to be serious misconduct.

Requirement to Intercede When Excessive Force is Observed

An officer shall intercede when present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is necessary, as determined by an objectively reasonable officer under the circumstances, taking into account the possibility that other officers may have additional information regarding the threat posed by a subject.

Note: For the purposes of this section, “intercede” includes, but is not limited to, physically stopping the excessive force (when safe and reasonable to do so) and recording the excessive force, if equipped with a body worn video (BWV) camera. Officers shall attempt to document on BWV the efforts to intervene, efforts to de-escalate the excessive use of force, and confronting the offending officer about the excessive force during the use of force. If the offending officer continues to use excessive force, the witnessing officer shall immediately report the excessive force to a superior officer.

Any officer who has received all required training on the requirement to intercede and fails to do so when excessive force is observed as described above shall be subject to discipline up to and including in the same manner as the officer who committed the excessive force.

CONCLUSION

When attempting to gain control of an individual, the likelihood of success is influenced by an officer's ability to properly apply the appropriate force option, including strikes and kicks. As in all use of force situations, only that force which is objectively reasonable may be used to gain control of the individual.

Important Reminder

Deviation from these basic concepts sometimes occurs due to the fluid and rapidly evolving nature of law enforcement encounters and the environment in which they occur. Deviations may range from minor, typically procedural or technical, to substantial deviations from Department tactical training. Any deviations are to be explained by the involved officer(s), and justification for substantial deviation from Department tactical training shall be articulated and must meet the objectively reasonable standard of the Department's Use of Force Policy.

AMENDMENTS

This Use of Force Directive replaces Use of Force–Tactics Directive, No. 14, December 2012.



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

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