



LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT  
**TACTICAL CONCEPTS**  
Tactics Training Overview

Tactical Concept No. 16

November 2025

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Tactical Concept is to clarify the idea of assessment for Department personnel. It is intended to enhance officers' understanding of how to evaluate threats, environments, and available information in order to make informed decisions, particularly during deadly force situations. These decisions can help promote safety, de-escalation, and appropriate use of force – in keeping with our guiding principle of reverence for human life.

### **PROTOCOL**

An assessment is an evaluation. For example, when conducting an assessment during a radio call, an officer will be evaluating the environment, the perceived level of threat posed by the subject or suspect (referred to as suspect), information about the radio call, and any other information gathered at scene. Assessment includes the officer's perceptions and impressions of the situation and their environment. The assessment process assists the officer to develop a plan and take appropriate action to gain control of the situation with the goal of minimizing risk and injury.

### **De-escalation**

Assessment is part of the Department's de-escalation procedure as the "A" in the PATROL acronym (Planning, Assessment, Time, Redeployment and/or Containment, Other Resources, and Lines of Communication). Officers should continually assess the situation as circumstances change and new information is received. If a suspect is failing to comply with orders, officers should attempt to, when feasible, determine whether a suspect's lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist or escape, or an inability to comprehend the situation due to environmental, physical, cognitive, or other conditions. If the suspect appears unable to comprehend the situation, other tactical options may be more effective in resolving the situation safely.

### **Deadly Force**

To review, it is the policy of this Department that officers shall use deadly force upon another person only when the officer reasonably believes, based on the totality of circumstances, that such force is necessary for either of the following reasons:

- To defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or to another person; or,
- To apprehend a fleeing person for any felony that threatened or resulted in death or serious bodily injury, if the officer reasonably believes that the person will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless immediately apprehended.

**Note:** The Department will analyze an officer's use of deadly force by evaluating the totality of the circumstances for each case consistent with California Penal Code Section 835(a) and the factors articulated in *Graham v. Connor*.

**Shooting:** Per the Department's Basic Firearms Manual:

*The decision-making process to shoot additional shots includes an ongoing and continuous assessment during the tactical event. This assessment involves the officer's awareness of the suspect's continuing deadly threat when deciding to fire additional shots.*

Officers are reminded that they are accountable for each round discharged during an Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) incident. During an incident, officers may continuously assess the situation through their sights (or sighting system) and determine if additional lethal force is required to de-escalate the deadly threat.

**Shooting Through the Sights:** After the first round has been fired, *assessment* is referred to as "shooting through the sights." Any assessment between rounds, is, by necessity, a momentary decision made by officers. This assessment is an ongoing process that does not require modifying an officer's sight picture nor lowering of the firearm.

**Sight Picture:** The ability to assess the need for additional shots can occur through the officer's sight picture. Sight picture is the relationship between the shooter's eye, the sighting system (e.g., iron sights, red dot, etc.), and the target. It depends on the sighting system as to where the officer's eye(s) are focused and whether one or both eyes are open. Regardless of sighting system, part of the sight picture includes the target, whether focused or blurry. The view of the target through the sights can allow an officer to observe the suspect's actions, assess the danger/threat, and determine if the discharge of additional rounds is appropriate.

**Post-assessment:** Once it is determined there is no longer a deadly threat, and there is no longer justification for the officer to remain on target, the officer shall remove their finger from the trigger, assume a low-ready position, and continue to assess the situation. This last technique is commonly referred to during training as, "Low ready, assess."

However, the final assessment is not just looking left and right. The idea behind a final assessment is to break the tunnel vision that may have developed during the shooting and provide the officer with the ability to return to assessing the scene and to take appropriate action. Those actions might include taking the suspect into custody, providing medical attention, etc.

## **CONCLUSION**

Assessment is a concept that guides an officer's decision-making in dynamic and potentially life-threatening situations. It involves a continuous evaluation of threats, environmental factors, and available information to develop a safe and effective response. In deadly force scenarios, assessment becomes especially vital, as officers must make momentary decisions based on the officer's perception of the suspect's ongoing threat level. Assessment requires situational awareness and accountability for every action taken, including each round fired. Ultimately, assessment helps officers determine appropriate use of force while attempting to minimize harm and bring situations safely under control.

### **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.**

Field Training Services Unit  
Police Training and Education Group

DISTRIBUTION "A"