



**Training Advisory  
Council Coursework  
Comments and  
Suggestions**

**Force Reporting Post  
Crowd Control Events**

**May 21, 2021**



## Table of Contents

1. TAC Participants .....	2
2. High Level Summary.....	2
3. Comments and Suggestions .....	3
4. PPB Contacts .....	5

# FORCE REPORTING POST CROWD CONTROL EVENTS

May 21, 2021

## 1. TAC Participants

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## 2. High Level Summary

Overall the attending members of the TAC were supportive of the primary goals of the training and appreciative of how the training was delivered. The training was felt to adequately remind and update officers regarding their responsibilities when reporting uses of force during crowd control events, while also relating these reports to relevant policies and directives. However, it was felt that the training could better highlight how descriptive and accurate reporting can help improve public trust in the PPB and its officers.

Indirectly related, questions were raised regarding the likelihood that training such as this will actually solve many of the issues identified during the 2020 protests. While the collection of accurate and detailed force reports was most certainly a significant issue during the protests and well worth reviewing in a training setting, focusing solely on such a review fails to take into account structural issues related to the inadequacy of the current reporting system for crowd control events and human limitations when involved in lengthy and stressful situations.

### 3. Comments and Suggestions

#### **Overview**

The following is feedback given by individual TAC members following viewing a dry run of the PPB's Force Reporting Post Crowd Control Events training on May 21, 2021. This is direct feedback by a select number of TAC members, which differs from recommendations developed over months of research and interviews and voted on by the full TAC membership.

This training is expected to be given to officers in June. The primary focus of this training is to provide officers with a refresher training on how to articulate each individual use of force on the FDCR, what the levels of resistance are by policy, and first line supervisor requirements for after actions reviews post force. This training is in response to findings by the DOJ, COCL, and PPB Force Inspector that force reports filed following crowd control events in 2020 and 2021 have often been inadequate. The objective of the training was for officers to be able to identify level of resistance during crowd control events and be able to articulate them on an FDCR and the importance of accurately reporting force on FDCR's and after action reports to establish a sense of transparency and accountability.

#### **Feedback Related to Specific Training**

The following feedback relates directly to the training course observed:

- TAC members were supportive of the primary goals of the course, including the emphasis on providing detailed information in reports, ensuring officers use force based upon the actions of individuals rather than groups in crowd control situations, and the importance of individual officers attempting to use de-escalation tactics when feasible.
- Throughout the training it was felt that there was an over reliance on mentioning the DOJ and the Settlement Agreement as being the reason the training was occurring. While technically true, this makes the course feel punitive as opposed to needed. For broad acceptance by officers, it is important that they feel PPB leadership is an active, rather than a reluctant, part of such changes.
- Concerns were raised that the term feasible used in the statement “de-escalate when feasible” is not well defined. Though it is impossible to identify every possible condition of feasibility, some examples would be helpful to better define the term.
- TAC members were supportive of emphasis that individual officers not assume all sound truck commands are heard by all members of a crowd. From personal experience, it is often difficult to discern exactly what is being ordered by the sound truck.
- TAC members were appreciative on the emphasis that directions be clear when interacting with people and that warnings prior to force being used must include a consequence and be direct.
- The training did a good job of combining videos showing police behavior during protests and samples of FDCR reports, highlighting both good and bad examples. The training did a good job of highlighting these as learning moments to aid in avoiding officer push back.
- TAC members were glad to see an emphasis regarding the need to be aware an individual may be medically fragile, deaf, does not understand English, or other reasons why a subject may not comply with orders.
- TAC members were appreciative on the mention of how officers do not need to push or shove individuals as long as they are moving in the direction directed.

- TAC members were encouraged by the training emphasizing that officers too often misidentified resistance as active aggression, the highest level of resistance, when it was actually physical resistance, a level below. This is important given some types of force can only be utilized if higher levels of resistance are present. TAC members were also appreciative of the emphasis on force being used based on actual events, not speculation of possible events.
- Good emphasis on need for supervisors to file reports within 72 hours of force taking place and the need to do broader follow up work in crowd control events, such as speaking with Detectives to ascertain whether a subject taken into custody reported an injury not initially reported.
- TAC members agree with the assertion that in after action reports and debriefs it is important to not only highlight why force was used, but also why it wasn't. Quality assurance requires not just analyzing when things go wrong.
- It should be recognized that this is going to be a tough area to get buy-in from officers. Buy-in by officers will be easier if existing policies and new policies are better differentiated, broader structural issues are acknowledged, and PPB leadership takes ownership of issues and needed changes.
- It was felt that the ending of the training should be summarized with how accurate reporting relates back to regaining public trust. This would help connect the training to the broader goals of the procedural justice.

### **Feedback Related to Broader Goals of Training**

The following feedback relates to the broader goals of this training:

- While the training on reporting was felt to be well done by TAC members, there are concerns that focusing solely on training does not adequately address larger structural issues seen during the protests in the summer of 2020. While detailed and accurate reporting of force is certainly a necessity, it must be acknowledged that the force reporting system designed for day-to-day operations does not work in dynamic crowd control situations. For example, when force is used by an officer on patrol, the scene is effectively paused while supervisors speak to the officers on the scene, the subject force was used on, and any other witnesses present. This is rarely if ever possible in crowd control situations, which often leaves just the officer involved as the sole source of information regarding a use of force. This creates a significant accountability issue. Options to alleviate this accountability issue, such as the introduction of body cameras, need to be fully explored.
- It should be acknowledged that an officers' ability to provide accurate and detailed reports regarding uses of force in crowd control events will become increasingly limited based upon the longevity of the event and the number of times force was used. There are limitations to the human ability to recall details for specific events when multiple events take place over a relatively short period of time and expecting them to be able to is as unrealistic as expecting a basketball player to remember the details of every shot they took during a game. Options to alleviate this issue, such as the introduction of body cameras, need to be fully explored.
- It should be recognized that officers were put in a difficult situation during the George Floyd protests. While individual officers should be held accountable for their failure to follow policy when such events occurred, failing to fully acknowledge the role of structural deficiencies in tactics, policies, and training, and the failure of PPB and city leadership in adequately and quickly adapting to shifting events, unfairly puts the onus of responsibility solely on the officers themselves.
- The events of the George Floyd protests emphasize the need of PPB and city leadership to focus on officer wellness more fully in training, policies, and tactics,

with a greater emphasis on introducing structural changes to ensure the maintenance of good officer mental health.

- TAC members were supportive of ideas raised about adding the force type baton-push to better discern such a use of force from baton strikes. Members were also supportive of providing training regarding the proper way to carry a passive 'deadweight' individual in order to clear a street or other location.
- It is felt that it would be beneficial for incident commanders and those training officers in crowd control tactics to speak with protesters and observers about their experiences during the 2020 protests. Several assumptions voiced during the training and following it did not match the experiences of individuals present. TAC is willing to aid in locating individuals and facilitating such conversations.
- During the training, information was provided regarding definitions of the different levels of resistance in crowd control situations and the appropriate force response. This information would be good for the public to know so that they can better understand how their actions and the actions of others relate to the reactions of police in protest environments.

#### 4. PPB Contacts

Captain David Abrahamson, Training Division  
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