



**Training Advisory  
Council Coursework  
Comments and  
Suggestions**

**Crowd Control Training –  
Second Dry Run**

**June 17, 2021**



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# CROWD CONTROL TRAINING – SECOND DRY RUN

June 17, 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 crowd control training, but concerned over the lack of clarity regarding how officers are supposed to overcome the issues explored. The training seems to offer little in the way of realistic and viable on the ground solutions to challenges created by shifting legal standards, which in turn brings up questions regarding its overall benefit not only to the officers themselves, but also to the community. It feels as though the training is taking place prior to it being fully decided what needs to be trained. This is not viewed as a Training Division issue, but rather a Bureau wide issue.

While TAC members were appreciative that the Training Division made changes based upon earlier TAC commentary, there is a sense of significant systemic and structural issues with regards to crowd control which cannot be corrected by training. Several of these are mentioned in this document as well as crowd control training commentary made in late May. By failing to address these structural issues, members expressed the view that City and PPB leadership are effectively setting officers up to fail.

### 3. Comments and Suggestions

#### **Overview**

Following comments given by the TAC concerning the PPB's planned crowd control training in late May, the PPB decided to push back implementation to make revisions and modifications to the planned training. The following feedback is given by individual TAC members following viewing a partial dry run of the revised crowd control training on June 17, 2021. This is direct feedback by a select number of TAC volunteers, which differs from recommendations developed over months of research and interviews voted on by the full TAC membership. The training is expected to be given in July.

Originally the dry run was supposed to include all portions of the planned crowd control training; including procedural justice in crowd control events, an update from the city attorney's office, force reporting post crowd control events, and three scenarios. Unfortunately, the dry run coincided with the mass resignation of the PPB's Rapid Response Team. As a result, the TAC volunteers only viewed the procedural justice in crowd control events and force reporting post crowd control events training. However, discussion did take place regarding the efficacy and expected effectiveness of the overall training lesson plan.

For earlier notes on this crowd control training, please review the TAC documents: 2021 Commentary Crowd Control, 2021 Commentary Force Reporting Post Crowd Control Events, and 2021 Commentary Crowd Control Scenarios.

#### **Overall Training Feedback**

TAC members provided the following feedback regarding the overall set of trainings:

- TAC members voiced the view that most likely the training would leave officers deeply frustrated and would likely further erode officer trust in Bureau and City leadership rather than enhance it. The overall training highlights important issues related to crowd control, but it offers few solutions to rectify them. An example of this is the shift of protesters walking slowly from being legally defined as active resistance to passive resistance. While this has a major effect on the strategies used by officers in a significant number of crowd control situations, neither City leadership, PPB leadership, the City Attorney's office, or the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) seem to be able to provide any clarity on what alternative strategies should be used instead. A second example is the demand to improve report writing for dynamic crowd control situations without putting into place any structures or tools to mitigate the limitations of the human capability to recollect individual incidents in traumatic or stressful situations. This puts officers in an unfair, terrible, and unwinnable situation. While individual officers must be held accountable for their actions during crowd control events, as with the carrying out of all of their duties, failing to provide the structure, strategies, and tools needed for them to effectively carry out their duties is setting them up to fail.
- There is no sense of change actually happening with relation to how crowd control situations are handled. Rather, it feels as though known issues and broad needs for change are being reiterated followed by a collective shrugging of shoulders when questions are asked actually digging into the details of seeking viable solutions.
- The overall training felt disjointed, with lessons not fully building off of each other and portions presented by the Training Division, City Attorney's office, and Force Inspector seeming to contradict each other. While these issues were somewhat

improved from the first iteration seen in May, they were still significantly present. TAC members were concerned to find out that several instructors had not viewed the other trainings that were part of the overall lesson plan and that seemingly no unified message had been jointly developed by the Chief's Office, Training Division, policy team, Office of the Inspector General, and City Attorney's office during the development of the lesson plans. While it is recognized that the lesson plan was developed on a tight timetable in order to meet the mandates of a court order and to regain compliance with the DOJ Settlement Agreement, there is a sense of the training taking place prior to the PPB fully knowing what should be trained.

- Given these issues, several TAC members questioned whether or not this training should be presented to officers at this time. While the issues raised in the training are viewed as important, the lack of direction to overcome them does little to benefit the community while deepening officer frustration and sapping already low morale. If the PPB does move forward with this training as is, it needs to fully acknowledge this shortcoming during the training.
- Issues related to this training were not viewed as a Training Division issue, but rather a systemic Bureau-wide issue.

### **Procedural Justice in Crowd Control Events Feedback**

Captain David Abrahamson of the Training Division presented this section of training. The primary objectives of this part of training were to: 1) Articulate how public perception at crowd control events is intertwined with fundamentals of procedural justice, 2) Articulate the importance of distinguishing between those who want to have a voice with free speech and individuals who use public events as a platform to conduct crime, 3) Identify how de-escalation principles are important within the context of crowd control events in relation to both oversight and individual action, 4) Articulate the role of proactive and defensive attempts to improve procedural justice during a crowd control event.

As defined by the training, community trust is maintained during crowd control events when officers and police leadership work to employ the principles of procedural justice. In particular this entails supporting the public's right to free speech (Voice), engaging with the public respectfully (Respect), recognizing the importance of maintaining a neutral posture (Neutrality), and not engaging in actions which will damage community trust in policing (Trust).

TAC members provided the following feedback regarding this section:

- Members were overall pleased with the changes made to the procedural justice portion of the training. The members were especially appreciative of those in leadership positions in the Training Division taking ownership on behalf of the Training Division as an institution for failures during the events of 2020.
- The Training Division did a good job of better showing an awareness of and sensitivity to the traumatic nature of the crowd control events of 2020 to both the community and the officers on the ground. In the case of this training, this is especially seen as important for the officers given its likely negative effect on the ability of the officers to take in and internalize new training related to crowd control.
- When speaking about procedural justice, it was often brought up how its implementation would positively benefit the PPB as an institution. However, members felt that benefits of effective procedural justice for the officers as individuals also need to be highlighted to better improve officer buy-in. People tend to have more loyalty to themselves and those they work with than to the bureaucratic institutions which employ them.

- Some examples were given of how anarchist and other far left groups use strategies to manipulate public perception, such as ensuring the timing, angles, and focus of online videos highlight the portions of events they wish to be highlighted. While this is certainly true, members felt that time should also be put towards examples of how far right groups also manipulate situations to create a narrative and how this can negatively affect public perceptions of police legitimacy. For example, while far left groups often work to antagonize police to get video of officers using force, far right groups more often try to get video of themselves supporting and having positive interactions with police with the goals of creating a veneer of legitimacy for their belief systems and antagonizing the far left. Though not as direct, this strategy can be every bit as damaging to the reputation of the PPB or an individual officer.
- The Training Division did a good job of connecting the procedural justice portion of the training to the upcoming officer intervention ABLE training scheduled to happen later this year.
- While the focus on procedural justice was seen as good, concerns were raised that the training offered little on helping officers better understand the political dynamics related to the protests as well as strategies to utilize to aid in the limiting of personal biases and the maintenance of officer wellness in crowd control situations.

### **Force Reporting Post Crowd Control Events Feedback**

Lieutenant Chris Lindsey, the PPB's Force Inspector, oversaw this section of training. 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.

This feedback is as follows:

- Members were appreciative that this lesson was made more interactive with the addition of break out discussion groups, asking the audience for their opinions, and providing actual examples of well written and poorly written FDCRs.
- The video examples and following break out discussions did a good job of connecting report writing to events and the updated requirements regarding what constitutes passive resistance. However, it was felt that an opportunity was missed to also connect the importance of effective report writing to the tenants of procedural justice, which would better tie together all parts of the training.
- When viewing the videos, when possible, the officers should be asked to consider at what point individuals shifted from offering passive resistance to active resistance.
- Regarding the videos, it would be helpful to utilize screenshots, as well as blowing up and marking key points to better highlight exactly what the lesson of each video is supposed to be. Furthermore, context needs to be included as well, such as where it was shot and a brief description of the situation. It might as well be good to include a wider diversity of videos, including older videos to demonstrate how long issues have been happening in crowd control situations.
- Some members noted that the instructor for this section seemed quite nervous in their delivery, though this is not uncommon with presenters who are not regularly

involved in trainings and is understandable given the overall issues with the training discussed earlier.

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

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

- TAC members were appreciative of the recognition by the PPB in the training that during chaotic protests many members of the crowd are not always able to hear, mentally process, or understand (such as with individuals with limited English proficiency or the blind) orders being given by the sound truck. However, it was felt more time needs to be focused on the additional need to have officers on the line support and reiterate the truck's message to ensure it is understood. Are non-auditory options available as well, such as the use of signage?
- A lot of discussion focused on slow walking and other types of passive resistance. The PPB needs to create a top down uniform message describing what constitutes slow walking and other types of passive resistance compared to active resistance and the proper procedures to follow. Preferably training should include visual aids to demonstrate dos and don'ts to support the consistent message.
- It is important to know what the next steps are. What is the plan going forward? The training lacked next steps. There didn't seem to be a long-term vision which could be used to hold all parties involved in the development of training, supervision, and policies accountable.
- PPB needs to examine strategies and tactics in crowd control situations in order to give officers a break from being on the line while on duty, even if just for short periods of time. Reports were heard of numerous situations where officers recognized that stress was beginning to significantly affect their ability, or the ability of other officers, to maintain emotional control, but were told to stay on the line by supervisors. This is a good example of an area where structural change is needed alongside enhanced training. No amount of mindfulness or officer intervention training will be effective if the structure does not allow for the lessons to be put into practice.
- PPB leadership seems to be stuck on the viewpoint that issues related to the events of 2020 are solely the result of the extreme situation at the time. However, while it is important to acknowledge that realistically no system can be designed to effectively handle a situation so far out of what can be considered normal operations, it does not mean the issues related to the situation exist in a vacuum. The events of 2020 should be viewed as an extreme stress test of PPB structure and strategy, similar to over-pressurizing water pipes to find leaks and other weak points. Issues related to officer wellness, public views of police legitimacy, crowd control tactics, and report writing for crowd control events, amongst many others, existed prior to the events of 2020. The sustained period of protests did not create these problems, it simply made them no longer ignorable.
- While enhanced training is of course important, there is a general sense that it is increasingly being focused on, both internally and externally, as the primary solution to the issues faced by the PPB. However, it must be fully recognized that even the best training is worthless if the strategies and structure used by the PPB do not support its effective application in the real world. Creating a structure to limit issues from taking place is every bit as important as, if not more so, than training.
- It must be recognized that the PPB is currently an organization in crisis, with increasing community demands for services and reform clashing with decreasing resources and personnel. As a result, officers and non-sworn personnel of all ranks are struggling to mitigate and overcome an increasing number of immediate challenges, resulting in an inability to focus on creating a shared long-term vision

for what the organization should be, which in turn is resulting in further immediate challenges. Unfortunately, this cycle will likely not be broken until City leadership better makes moves to stabilize the organization and put into place effective change management strategies.

- One member was concerned by a joke shared by many officers concerning the word trauma. It was felt that this suggests traumas felt by community members, especially Black and Brown persons and others facing inequities, are not taken seriously, and that officers are not in a safe space to confront the trauma they experience on the job, thus adding complications to officer wellness.

#### 4. PPB and Other Contacts

Captain David Abrahamson, Training Division  
Lieutenant Greg Stewart, Training Division  
Lieutenant Chris Lindsey, Force Inspector