
SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

NUMBER: UOF-2	DATE: February 1, 2023
MPAC STANDARDS: 1.1.6	
SUBJECT: USE OF FORCE REPORTING	

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to set forth the policy and procedures of the Springfield Police Department regarding the reporting of the use of force and the protocols that must be followed whenever an officer exerts or observes another officer exert a reportable use of force in the performance of their duties. This policy applies to all sworn personnel.

II. Policy

It shall be the policy of the Springfield Police Department that all officers accurately, thoroughly, and in a timely manner report all uses of force utilizing the following use of force reporting requirements.

III. General Guidelines and Considerations

The use of force has profound impact on the persons who are subject to it, the officers who deploy such force, and members of the community. How SPD officers use force affects how the community views the police and impacts the legitimacy of the Department in the eyes of the community.

The nature of officers' work requires them to make split second decisions, often in dangerous and dynamic circumstances. When incidents involving force occur they demand a timely, thorough and complete inquiry into all the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident. Only through a comprehensive investigative inquiry can the complete and accurate facts of the incident evolve, allowing for public trust and confidence to be maintained. Thorough and accurate reporting of all incidents involving the use of force shall be completed when a use of force occurs.

IV. Procedures

A. General Reporting Requirements ([Hyperlink to BlueTeam reporting system](#))

1. For all uses of force (i.e., any force above un-resisted handcuffing), the officer(s) using force, when safe to do so, are required to immediately orally report the use of force to an uninvolved supervisor.
2. In addition to immediately notifying the uninvolved supervisor, an officer using

force will document the force in the electronic use of force reporting system and by writing a use of force narrative before the end of their shift.

3. Any officer who observes a use of force will complete a use of force narrative report, documenting what they witnessed by the end of their shift, if possible, and no later than the subsequent shift.
4. In reporting all uses of force, officers will provide a use of force narrative that explains with specificity the type of force used, including the following. The use of force narrative will be scanned as a PDF and attached to the BlueTeam use of force report.¹
 - a. The reason for each use of force (e.g. each strike);
 - b. The reason for the initial police presence and the legitimate police objective necessitating the use of force;
 - c. Details regarding the level of resistance encountered and the subject's actions, including whether subject was armed;
 - d. All efforts to de-escalate the situation to avoid the use of force and/or to minimize the level of force used, or reasons why such de-escalation efforts could not be attempted;
 - e. Subject's condition;
 - f. If the subject was injured or complained of injury(s) during or prior to the arrest;
 - g. Medical services offered to subject and if treatment received or refused by subject; and
 - h. Injury(s) to officer(s) and medical services received if applicable.
5. When documenting their uses of force, officers shall not use conclusory statements, boilerplate, or canned language (e.g., "violent struggle" or "only reasonable and necessary force was used") without providing supporting incident-specific detail in their use of force reports.
6. Officers will note in their use of force reports the existence of any body-worn camera or other video footage, regardless of source.
7. All incidents of force (including personal weapons such as hands, elbows, knees and feet) will be reported in the appropriate use of force section found in BlueTeam, which is SPD's electronic use of force reporting system. BlueTeam will provide a way to electronically capture use of force incident details, including the following:
 - a. Call for service number
 - b. De-escalation techniques utilized
 - c. Person's injuries
 - d. Person's resistance
 - e. Use of force tool (e.g., personal weapons (hands, feet, etc.), Taser, baton, OC Spray)
 - f. Location of the use of force on the person's body

¹ Currently, SPD supervisors will collect hard copy use of force narratives from involved officers, scan them, and upload them to the BlueTeam system. SPD is working on upgrading its systems so that involved officers will eventually be able to type their use of force narratives directly into BlueTeam.

- g. Supervisor(s)' narratives regarding their use of force incident review and investigation and approval
8. The booking sergeant will fill out the appropriate report (preexisting or officer involved injury), which is required by G.L. Ch. 276. The photo lab staff or designee will take digital photographs of detainees' actual and/or reported areas of injuries. These photographs will become part of the use of force report. The photo lab staff or designee will also take photographs of officers (e.g., torn uniform, grass stains, injuries, and photos of hands).
 9. If a subject/detainee makes any complaint of an unreasonable use of force during the booking sergeant's intake while filling out the detainee injury report, the booking sergeant will report that complaint to the Internal Investigations Unit and to the Superintendent's office.
 10. Every officer required to complete a use of force report must do so without conferring or discussing the matter with other officers or anyone else.
 11. In addition to intervention techniques, an officer present and observing another officer using force beyond that which is objectively reasonable, necessary and proportional shall report, orally, the incident to an uninvolved supervisor as soon as reasonably possible but not later than the end of the officer's shift.
 12. If an officer who has observed a use of force by another officer has a reasonable belief that there has been a failure to report the use of force, they will immediately report the use of force, and the failure to report such use of force, to the Internal Investigations Unit and the Superintendent's office.
 13. Any harassment, intimidation, or retaliation against any officer who either intervened to prevent or stop an excessive force incident, or made a report regarding an excessive force incident that they witnessed shall be reported immediately to an appropriate supervisor and will not be tolerated. Any such actions may result in disciplinary action.
 14. These mandatory use of force reports shall be submitted and maintained through the Springfield Police Department's electronic use of force reporting system, BlueTeam.1.1.6 (3, 4)

V. Associated Policies

1. Use of Force policy
2. Use of Force - Review and Investigation

Cheryl C. Clapprood
Police Superintendent

CCC/bgb