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Chief of Police

POLICE DEPARTMENT

CITY OF HIGHLAND VILLAGE

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To everyone:

The events surrounding the death of George Floyd are shocking, upsetting, and unacceptable. Over the past week, the Highland Village Police Department (HVPD) has received questions related to our policies specifically related to the use of force, training, reporting, and monitoring. In addition to the numerous policies we have in place and the training that HVPD has in place, I cannot emphasize enough that our people genuinely care about people—all people! We are true servants who have for years worked with and for our community to continue to make a positive impact. HVPD has many programs in place that respond positively to community needs and build relationships with our youth and adults. Some of those programs include our [School Resource Officer Program](#), [Special Treatment and Response Program](#), [Police Involving Parents](#), and our community caretaking [Emergency Care Attendant Program](#) in partnership with the Highland Village Fire Department.

What follows are the policies we have in place as we serve our community as well as frequently asked questions. If there is anything else you would like to know about us, please let us know!

Respectfully,
Doug Reim
Chief of Police

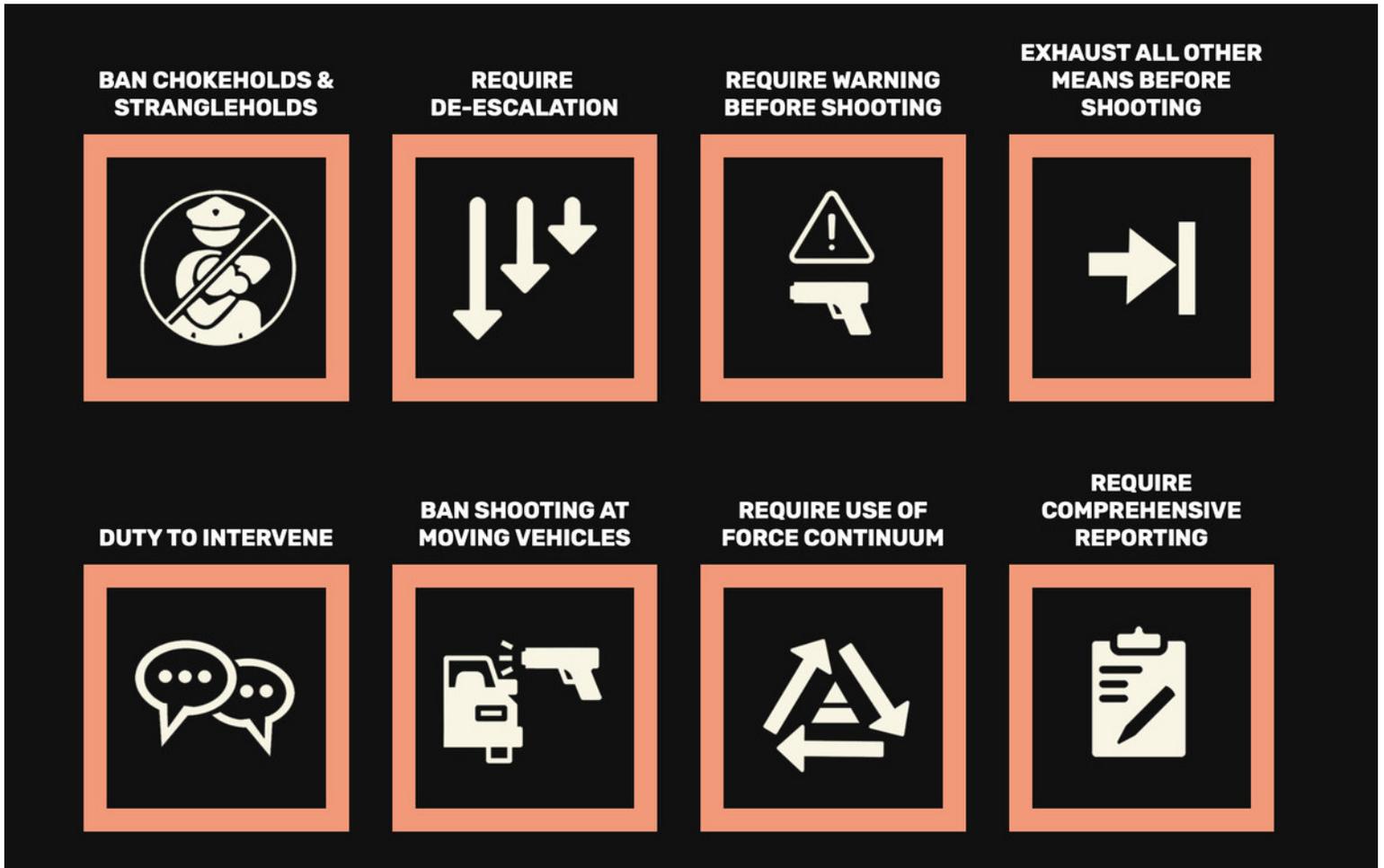
HVPD Community Oriented Public Safety (COPS) Philosophy

We build programs and people that support our Community Oriented Public Safety (COPS) philosophy. This means that all of our actions are directed at making Highland Village a safe and enjoyable place to live where citizens and visitors feel that they are partners with the Police Department and that they can come to us with any question, concern, or issue. The primary purpose of this partnership is to prevent criminal and safety related problems from occurring.

HVPD is Dedicated to Sir Robert Peel's Nine Principles of Policing

1. The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.
2. The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.
3. Police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.
4. The degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force.
5. Police seek and preserve public favor not by catering to the public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.
6. Police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient.
7. Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.
8. Police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary.
9. The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

“8 Can’t Wait”



The “8 Can’t Wait” initiative is created by Campaign Zero and uses data-based solutions and contributions from people around the country to put in place eight specific policies related to use of force within police departments.

Policy Comparisons “8 Can’t Wait” and HVPD



HVPD does not authorize or train personnel in the use of chokeholds, strangleholds or in carotid restraint (sleeper hold).

691.00 – Use of Force



This order recognizes that the use of force by law enforcement in response to resistance requires constant evaluation and that use of force is a serious responsibility. The purpose of this order is to provide officers with guidelines on objectively reasonable use of force. While there is no way to specify the exact amount or type of objectively reasonable force to be applied in any situation, each officer is expected to use these guidelines to make such decisions in a professional, impartial, proportional and objectively reasonable manner.

This order is written in terms to apply to sworn officers. In incidents where civilian employees are authorized to use force, they are subject to the same policies and procedures as officers but the test of objective reasonableness is judged from the perspective of an objectively reasonable civilian employee with like training. Additionally, this order will provide directives

and guidelines on the following:

- De-escalation principals and techniques.
- Parameters relating to the use of objectively reasonable force.
- Reporting requirements.
- Providing medical assistance to injured subjects.

691.05 - De-Escalation of Potential Force Encounters

De-escalation is the preferred, tactically sound approach in many critical incidents. When safe and reasonable under the totality of circumstances, officers shall use de-escalation techniques to reduce the likelihood for force and increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance.

Nothing in this de-escalation policy requires an officer to place themselves in harm's way to attempt to deescalate a situation. Recognizing that circumstances may rapidly change, officers may need to abandon de-escalation efforts after they have commenced. Understanding that no policy can realistically predict every situation an officer might encounter, the Department recognizes that each officer must be entrusted with well-reasoned discretion in determining the reasonable de-escalation techniques to use in a situation.

This de-escalation policy is intended to complement, not replace or supersede, other portions of the HVPD Policy Manual or specific officer training that addresses de-escalation. Officers shall be required to receive training on key de-escalation principles.

691.06 – Assessment and De-Escalation

As officers arrive on the scene, observe conditions, and interact with the persons there, they should continue to gather additional relevant information and facts. These assessments, along with reasonable inferences help to develop an understanding of the totality of the circumstances of the incident.

Assessing Risks and Benefits – After an officer has gathered sufficient information to ascertain anticipated threats at the scene, they shall consider whether de-escalation is appropriate. Factors that should be considered are:

- Whether the officer believes the search, arrest or transportation must be undertaken immediately;
- What risks and benefits may be associated with delaying immediate action;
- What contingencies may arise;
- Whether the situation requires a supervisor's response;
- Whether other officers may be needed on the scene, including those with special training, such as Mental Health Peace Officers, CIT or CINT;
- Whether other resources (e.g. less-lethal weaponry, special equipment, or other emergency professionals, interpreters or other persons) are needed; and
- other factor(s) relevant to assessing risks, benefits and contingencies.

Having completed the above outlined assessment the officers shall, if reasonable, identify and employ appropriate de-escalation techniques.

Use of De-escalation Techniques - Employing de-escalation techniques may involve securing additional resources, tactical repositioning (e.g. obtaining distance and cover), and employing verbal persuasion.

Securing Additional Resources - Officers may utilize additional resources which are reasonably calculated to lessen or possibly eliminate the need to use force in a situation. To the extent possible and reasonable, in light of the totality of the circumstances, officers should avoid physical confrontation until such time as additional resources have arrived to assist. Additional resources may include:

- Less lethal weaponry;
- Additional officers;
- Officers with special training, such as Mental Health Peace Officers, CIT or CINT; or
- Any other persons whose presence may help de-escalate the situation (e.g., emergency medical professionals, interpreters, or supportive family members).

Tactical Repositioning - To delay or avoid physical confrontation, officers may wish to employ any one or more of the following tactical repositioning measures, to the extent possible and reasonable in light of the totality of circumstances:

- Maintain safe physical distance from the subject;
- Maintain cover behind existing or assembled physical barriers; or
- Communicate from a location that is concealed from the subject.

Verbal Persuasion - To the extent possible and reasonable under the totality of the circumstances officers may use one or more of the following verbal techniques to try to calm an agitated subject and promote rational decisions.

- Treat the subject with dignity, the way the officer would wish to be treated if they stood in the subject's shoes;
- Listen to the subject's side of the story and permit them to express frustration;
- Explain what the officer is doing, what the subject can do, and what needs to happen;
- Explain why the officer is taking a specific action, again permitting the subject to respond and acknowledging their perspective;
- If possible, provide the subject with alternatives, even though those alternatives may be limited;
- Advise the subject of the consequences for noncompliance;
- Offer advice if it is reasonably expected to help; or
- Provide the subject with reasonably sufficient time within which to respond to directives.



691.10 – Notice of Authority and Identity

If it is not already reasonably known by the subject to be searched or arrested, or it is not reasonably impractical to do so, officers should make clear their intent to arrest or search and identify themselves as a peace officer before using force (Penal Code 9.51(a)(2)).



693.00 - Use of Lethal Force

This use of lethal force philosophy is intended as a broad guide to the use of lethal force and as a moral and ethical approach to the use of lethal force policy. Although not intended as a strictly enforced set of rules, the philosophy statement describes the way the procedures will be applied. Protection of human life is a primary goal of the Police Department; therefore, police officers have a responsibility to use only the degree of force necessary to protect and preserve life.

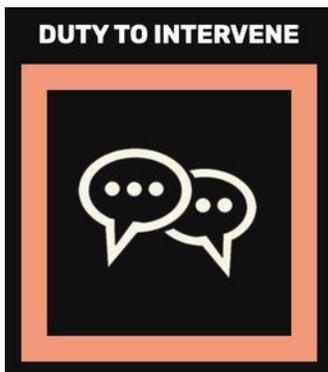
Lethal force will be used with great restraint and as a last resort only when the level of resistance warrants the use of deadly force. The Highland Village Police Department places a greater value on human life than on the protection of property; therefore, the use of deadly force is not allowed to protect property interests.

693.03 - Avoiding the Use of Lethal Force

At the point when an officer should reasonably perceive the potential exists that lethal force may be an outcome of any situation; the officer should plan ahead and use reasonable alternatives if time and opportunities permit.

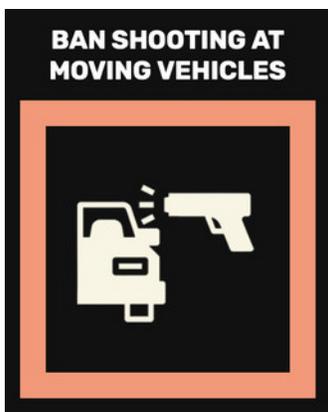
In each case, a reasonable alternative is defined as an action that may be taken by the officer that may allow the officer to avoid the use of deadly force. The reasonableness of the action is based upon the time available, the opportunity of performing the action, and the facts apparent to the officer prior to and during the incident.

Planned and supervised hazardous entry situations are recognized as meeting the requirements of reasonable alternatives above. Officers will not fire their weapons under conditions that would unnecessarily subject bystanders or hostages to death or possible injury except to preserve life or to prevent serious bodily injury.



691.03 – Duty to Intercede

Any officer who observes another officer using force shall intercede to prevent further harm if the officer knows that the force being used is not objectively reasonable and the officer has a reasonable opportunity to prevent the harm. Such officers must also promptly report these observations to a supervisor.



693.05 - Discharging Firearms at Moving Vehicles

Discharging firearms at a moving or fleeing vehicle is prohibited unless it is necessary to prevent imminent death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person. Officers will not voluntarily place themselves in a position in front of an oncoming vehicle where lethal force is a probable outcome. When confronting an oncoming vehicle, officers will move out of its path, if possible, rather than fire at the vehicle.

**REQUIRE USE OF
FORCE CONTINUUM**



691.08 – Determining the Objective Reasonableness of Force

Any interpretation of objective reasonableness about the amount of force that reasonably appears to be necessary in a particular situation must allow for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split second decisions in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving, and the amount of time available to evaluate and respond to changing circumstances may influence their decisions. The question is whether the officer's actions are "objectively reasonable" in light of the facts and circumstances confronting him.

When determining whether to apply any level of force and evaluating whether an officer has used objectively reasonable and proportional force, a number of factors should be taken into consideration. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Reasonable opportunity for the officer to engage in de-escalation;
- The conduct of the individual being confronted as reasonably perceived by the officer at the time;
- Officer and subject factors such as age, size, relative strength, skill level, injury / level of exhaustion and number of officers versus subjects;
- Influence of drugs and alcohol or mental capacity;
- Proximity of weapons;
- The degree to which the subject has been effectively restrained and his ability to resist despite being restrained;
- Time and circumstances permitting, the reasonable availability of other resources to the officer;
- Seriousness of the suspected offense or reason for contact with the individual;
- Training and experience of the officer;
- Potential for injury to citizens, officers and subjects;
- Risk of escape;
- Whether the conduct of the individual being confronted no longer reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to the officer or others; or
- Other exigent circumstances.

**REQUIRE
COMPREHENSIVE
REPORTING**



691.12 – Reporting Use of Force Incidents

Any use of force by a member of this department (including a hand or leg technique, less-lethal device, lethal weapon, weapon of opportunity, or any instance where injury is observed or alleged by a subject that is the result of an officer's use of force) shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately in an appropriate report as prescribed by General Order 694.00 (Reporting Use of Force).

691.13 – Notification to Supervisors

Supervisor notification shall be made as soon as practical following any force incident or allegation of force.

Frequently Asked Questions

Highland Village Police Department Training, Policies and Equipment

Policy and General Orders for the Highland Village Police Department

The Highland Village Police Department voluntarily participates in the Texas Law Enforcement Best Practices Recognition Program. In August of 2009 The Highland Village Police Department's adopted over 150 Best Practices for Texas Law Enforcement. These Best Practices were carefully developed by Texas Law Enforcement professionals to assist agencies in the efficient and effective delivery of service and the protection of individual's rights.

What type of external oversight does the department have?

Our participation in the Texas Law Enforcement Best Practices Recognition Program, requires a yearly submission and reports, along with an on-site inspection every four years to insure compliance with 166 required best practices relevant to efficient and effective delivery of service, the reduction of risk and the protection of individual's rights. The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) provides State oversight regarding training and licensing regulations for both officers and dispatchers.

Do officers wear body cameras?

Yes, all field officers are issued their own individual body cameras since 2009. HVPD was one of the first agencies in Denton County to implement cameras and General Orders for operations and recordings. We are currently operating with our third generation of cameras. The technology improvements has provided a greater enhancement in our accountability of officers and to protect individual rights. HVPD General Order (GO) 643 outlines both Mobile and Body Worn Cameras and requires their use for all contact with people for a law enforcement purpose.

Are there in-vehicle cameras?

Yes, all patrol vehicles have multiple in-vehicle cameras. In-vehicle camera program in place for over 20 years.

Will Highland Village be implementing a curfew in response to DFW incidents?

At this time, HVPD does not recommend a curfew.

Are all officers up to date on required training?

Yes, all officers are up to date with all mandated training and licensing requirements.

What de-escalation training/education do officers receive?

The Sandra Bland Act - Senate Bill 1849 requires De-escalation Techniques for limiting the use of force in public interaction for peace officers with the basic police officer course. Every 48 months for those within a basic proficiency certificate, or to obtain an intermediate or advanced proficiency certificate. Included in this training is the learning of communication skills and diffusion strategies to avoid or resolve conflict. HVPD General Order (GO) 691.05 De-Escalation of Potential Force Encounters, HVPD GO 691.06 Assessment and De-Escalation.

Does de-escalation training/education include content on the mentally ill or cognitively challenged?

Yes. Crisis Intervention Training is required to be completed no later than the second anniversary of the date the officer is licensed or the date an officer applies for an intermediate proficiency certificate, whichever date is earlier. This training covers mental health, cognitive disorders, effective communication skills, etc.

What classes or training are officers required to take regarding racial bias and police brutality?

Every Peace Officer who does not have an Intermediate Peace Officer License must take 8 hours of Cultural Diversity, Crisis Intervention, and De-escalation training every two years. The State Legislature meets every two years, and generally they put out some mandate for training on this topic. This past session, they mandated that all Peace Officers take the Civilian Interaction Training and all of the members of our department have completed that mandatory training.

What has Highland Village done to ensure compliance with use of force directives?

Sworn members receive annual training in our use of force directives. To ensure compliance, monthly supervisory body camera video audits are conducted and every use of force incidents are individually reviewed and evaluated. Our supervisory video reviews exceed the biannual best practices standard. We also complete a yearly Use of Force report and undergo on-site inspection every four years through the Texas Police Chiefs Association Best Practices Recognition Program to confirm continued compliance with standards and laws.

Police Officer Hiring Requirements/Practices

- Preliminary Interview
- Physical Assessment Testing
- Oral Review Board
- Background Investigation
- Polygraph Examination
- Psychological Examination
- Medical Examination/Drug Screen
- Police Chief Review and Interview

What should an individual do if they feel they were mistreated by an officer?

Feedback of any type is accepted by the department including compliments, constructive criticism and formal complaints. Complaints are accepted in any manner including online, in person, email, telephone, etc. The department's website: <https://www.highlandvillage.org/471/Formal-Complaint-Process>, provides information on the process and makes it as simple as possible. Forms are available both online and at the police department. We encourage timely reporting to allow for adequate review of the incident including body and mobile video recordings. In accordance with Texas Government Code the complaint will be documented in writing.

We take all feedback and complaints seriously and use it as an opportunity to review our services for compliance with law and department policies and take corrective action where appropriate. The severity of the complaint dictates if it is investigated by internal processes or an external agency. All complaints and reports of investigation are reviewed by the Chief of Police. In addition to the complaint process, we also have a continuous running Service Satisfaction Survey on our website that citizens can participate in to provide general feedback.

