



June 5, 2020 – Recent events have brought the police and policing practices to the forefront of public dialogue. At the Ann Arbor Police Department, we welcome this open and honest dialogue as we partner with the community to make Ann Arbor a safe place to live, work, and play. We’ve recently begun to receive an increase in questions about specific policies and practices employed by the AAPD in order to ensure that we are working to prevent unjust behavior by our officers. We want to take a moment to share with the public some of the policies and protocols in place to guide our officers.

One set of research has laid out eight key policies which the researchers believe heavily influence the force used by departments. The project can be seen at <http://useofforceproject.org/#project>. You may have recently seen it trending in social media as #8Can’tWait. We would like to take this opportunity to address the policies mentioned in the project as it has led to many people contacting the AAPD to inquire where we stand with each policy. We would also like to share some of the ways we are working to help our officers de-escalate and avoid the use of force.

The following policies were presented by researchers as potentially relevant to decisions about “how and when officers can use force”.

**1. Require officers to de-escalate situations, when possible before using force.**

Each officer in the Ann Arbor Police Department is trained in verbal de-escalation. This training course is given when officers join the department and a refresher is provided to each member at least once annually. When taking the verbal de-escalation class, officers are taught various skills and encouraged to use empathy to guide their decisions and actions. Other ideas stressed in our verbal de-escalation training include asking subjects for voluntary compliance - as opposed to giving verbal demands, explaining the reasoning behind such requests, and providing clear options and their consequences. This training is based upon models used internationally and is intended to provide outcomes not requiring the use of force.

**2. Use a Force Continuum or Matrix that define/limit the types of force and specific weapons that can be used to respond to specific levels of resistance.**

The AAPD has policies outlining the use of different levels of force and these policies rely on a force continuum set forth by the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES). This continuum lays out the actions presented by a subject in incremental levels. It then provides the appropriate response from the officer based upon the level of resistance.

**3. Restrict chokeholds and strangleholds (including carotid restraints) to situations where deadly force is authorized or prohibiting them altogether.**

AAPD policy has long addressed “choke holds” and bars them in non-lethal force situations. We adhere to the Pressure Point Control Tactics (PPCT) training which, in conjunction with the force continuum, provides officers with tactics and techniques which use only the minimal force necessary and also places a priority on the safety of the subject and officer.

**4. Require officers to give a verbal warning, when possible, before using deadly force.**

In using our verbal de-escalation program, officers are guided to provide explanations and explain the repercussions of what is happening. This is also reflected in our policies governing the use of lethal and non-lethal force as these policies require verbal warnings when possible.

**5. Prohibit officers from shooting at people in moving vehicles unless the person poses a deadly threat by means other than the vehicle (for example, shooting at people from the vehicle).**

AAPD policy recognizes the dangers of an officer firing at or from a moving vehicle and therefore allows it only in situations where an officer is attempting to protect the life of another or themselves.

**6. Require officers to exhaust all other reasonable alternatives before resorting to deadly force.**

By implementing verbal de-escalation, as well as policies on the force continuum and use of force, our officers are given clear and specific guidance on exhausting all available measures prior to using deadly force.

**7. Require officers to intervene to stop another officer from using excessive force.**

City policy requires that all employees report violent or threatening behavior to a supervisor. State Law and AAPD policy require officers to take action to intervene when witnessing a crime. It is the expectation that any officer witnessing excessive force intervene to stop such a criminal act. Administration is working on implementing a policy which more specifically articulates the requirement.

**8. Require officers to report both uses of force and threats/attempts of force (for example, reporting instances where an officer intentionally points a firearm at a civilian) (Referred to in this study as ‘Comprehensive Reporting’).**

AAPD policy on the use of force requires that any officer involved in any level of force complete “Response to Resistance” reports which are then thoroughly reviewed by command up to, and including, the Deputy Chief level. This includes a review of reports, photographs, and the Body Worn Camera (BWC) of each officer involved. Such Response to Resistance reports are required when an officer displays their firearm or taser in the direction of a civilian.

## What else is the Ann Arbor Police Department Doing to Serve the Community Equitably?

The above policies were those identified by researchers as being key to reducing the use of force. At the AAPD, we strive to improve every day and look for ways in which we can better protect and serve the community. Below are some actions the department has taken in order to provide police services which are proactive, just, and transparent.

- **Upgrading BWC equipment.**
  - The AAPD was one of the first agencies in the county to deploy Body Worn Cameras (BWC's). Recently, the department upgraded the equipment and ensured that each officer is assigned their own BWC and is trained on its use. This new equipment is more reliable, provides better video quality, and streamlines the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) process when compared to the original equipment officers were issued.
- **Implementing Implicit Bias Training**
  - The AAPD has sent a team of officers to the Fair and Impartial Policing training program. These officers are now highly skilled trainers for the rest of the department in Implicit Bias. Each member of the department is receiving training in how the mind works in relation to implicit bias, policing, and our everyday actions. By arming our officers with the knowledge of their own subconscious, they will be better able to perform their duties without bias.
- **Increased Focus on Community Policing**
  - Chief Cox has made clear from Day One that community policing must and will be a priority of the AAPD. Since the chief's arrival, officers have increased their focus on connecting with citizens, providing more foot and bike patrols, and adapting services to the demands of the community. Each officer is receiving specific community policing training this year to help guide them to better perform their duties in a way that garners trust from the community. The AAPD is making it clear to its officers that community policing is the responsibility of ALL members of the department.
- **Achieved CALEA Accreditation**
  - CALEA is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. They are the national standard for industry best-practices when it comes to policing. The years-long accreditation process meant that AAPD went through each policy to ensure they met the rigorous standards prior to having auditors from around the country come to Ann Arbor for a thorough evaluation. The AAPD continues to constantly monitor and update policies, new and old, in order to maintain accreditation. The Ann Arbor Police Department is one of only eleven agencies to be accredited by CALEA.
- **Creating Increased Oversight Within the Agency**
  - One step the Chief took in order to increase accountability was the creation of the Audit and Review Lieutenant. This position reports directly to the Chief and Deputy Chiefs and has several roles:
    - Evaluate all departmental policies and ensure that the department is appropriately following each policy
    - Identify areas where new policies or changes in current policy are required in order to provide the highest level of service which is fair and just to all citizens

- Coordinate the department’s adherence to CALEA standards
  - Liaison directly with the Independent Community Police Oversight Committee. Ann Arbor Police leadership meets with the ICPOC chair and vice chair regularly to discuss policies and procedures as well as other concerns brought forth by the committee or the citizens of the community.
- **Meeting with the Community**
  - Since his arrival, Chief Cox and the members of the Community Engagement Team have worked to meet, personally and online, with various community groups in their own neighborhoods throughout the city. Meetings are scheduled through our community engagement unit or by contacting the community engagement sergeant, Corey Mills, at [cmills@a2gov.org](mailto:cmills@a2gov.org).
- **Collaboration with Other Agencies to Reduce Arrests for Those in Crisis**
  - Often times the AAPD is called to assist people in situations that are non-criminal. Many times we come into contact with folks facing crises caused by mental health issues, homelessness, addiction, or hunger. We have worked to build relationships with agencies like Community Mental Health, The Delonis Center, Psychiatric Emergency Services, Avalon Housing, and others in order to assist those whose needs may be best served outside of the criminal justice system. Additionally, the department has worked extensively with the specialty courts such as Sobriety Court, Street Outreach Court, and the Mental Health Court. These avenues allow for those introduced to the criminal justice system to address the root cause of their problems as opposed to facing incarcerations which may only exacerbate their crises.
- **Training, Training, Training**
  - The AAPD is continuously cycling officers through training to help them excel in all aspects of the job. This includes training in the use of force (lethal and non-lethal), mental health training, autism awareness training, and legal updates with the prosecutor’s office.

The actions and polices we have outlined are by no means exhaustive. We also recognize that we can never stop making progress when it comes to providing equitable police service. We are committed to learning and growing with the community. We welcome future dialogue on how best to serve the City of Ann Arbor and we look forward to facing the challenges ahead together.