



Use of Force Policies Preliminary Comparison With The Obama Foundation's Mayor's Pledge / #8CantWait Initiative

The [Obama Foundation Mayor's Pledge](#) campaign has called attention to the [Police Use of Force Project](#) list of 8 concerning law enforcement use of force policies. These same policies are also the subject of the [8 Can't Wait](#) campaign.

INTRODUCTION

Palo Alto Police Department (PAPD) has conducted a preliminary comparison of existing policies and training to the eight principles. Below is a summary of our current status. The Department looks forward to reviewing these policies in detail with the community and ensuring that the Department continues to maintain a leadership position among law enforcement agencies across our nation.

PRELIMINARY COMPARSION

Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #1: Failing to require officers to de-escalate situations, where possible, through communication, maintaining distance, slowing things down, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force.

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD incorporates these concepts and other de-escalation techniques into its use of force policy and requires that, prior to using force, officers consider other reasonable and feasible options and their possible effectiveness ([PAPD Policy Manual §300, et seq.](#)).

Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #2: Prohibiting officers from using maneuvers that cut off oxygen or blood flow, including chokeholds or carotid restraints, which often result in unnecessary death or serious injury.

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD specifically trains its officers not to use "chokeholds." On June 9, 2020, the Department changed its policy to prohibit the use of the carotid control hold as well ([PAPD Policy Manual §300.3.5](#)).

Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #3: Failing to require officers to intervene and stop excessive or unnecessary force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor.

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD policy requires that officers intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force by another officer. An officer who observes another employee use force that clearly exceeds the degree of force permitted by law is required to promptly report those observations to a supervisor ([PAPD Policy Manual §300.2.1](#)).



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Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #4: Failing to restrict officers from shooting at moving vehicles, which is regarded as a particularly dangerous and ineffective tactic.

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD policy restricts officers from shooting at a moving vehicle except as a last resort to protect human life ([PAPD Policy Manual §300.4.1](#)).

Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #5: Failing to limit the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance and specific characteristics such as age, size, or disability.

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD policy restricts the application of all types of force to specific types of resistance ([PAPD Policy Manual §300, et seq.](#)). For certain types of weapons (e.g., TASER), policy includes special considerations for characteristics such as age, size, or disability ([PAPD Policy Manual §309.5.2](#)).

Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #6: Failing to require officers to exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to deadly force.

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD policy incorporates California State law requiring all officers to use deadly force only when necessary in defense of human life and all officers are required to use all other available resources and techniques, if reasonably safe and feasible ([PAPD Policy Manual §300.4](#) and [California Penal Code §835a](#)).

Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #7: Failing to require officers to give a verbal warning, when possible, before using serious force such as shooting, tasing, or pepper spraying someone.

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD policy requires officers to provide a verbal warning, when possible, prior to the use of deadly force, a TASER, or tear gas ([PAPD Policy Manual §300.4](#), [§308.9.2](#), and [§309.4](#)).

Police Use of Force Project Policy Concern #8: Failing to require officers to report each time they use force or threaten to use force (e.g., pointing a gun at a person).

Palo Alto Police Initial Review: PAPD policy requires officers to promptly, completely and accurately document any use of force ([PAPD Policy Manual §300.5](#)). Policy also requires officers to document any time they point a TASER or firearm at a person ([PAPD Policy Manual §309.6](#) and [§344.2.2](#)).