

Seattle Police Department Manual

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8.100 - DE-ESCALATION

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1. When Safe under the Totality of the Circumstances and Time and Circumstances Permit, Officers Shall Use De-Escalation Tactics in Order to Reduce the Need for Force

De-escalation tactics and techniques are actions used by officers, when safe and without compromising law enforcement priorities, that seek to minimize the likelihood of the need to use force during an incident and increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance. (See Section 8.050.)

When safe and feasible under the totality of circumstances, officers shall attempt to slow down or stabilize the situation so that more time, options and resources are available for incident resolution.

When time and circumstances reasonably permit, officers shall consider whether a subject's lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist or an inability to comply based on factors including, but not limited to:

- * Medical conditions
- * Mental impairment
- * Developmental disability
- * Physical limitation
- * Language barrier
- * Drug interaction
- * Behavioral crisis

An officer's awareness of these possibilities, when time and circumstances reasonably permit, shall then be balanced against the facts of the incident facing the officer when deciding which tactical options are the most appropriate to bring the situation to a safe resolution.

Mitigating the immediacy of threat gives officers time to utilize extra resources, and increases time available to call more officers or specialty units.

The number of officers on scene may increase the available force options and may increase the ability to reduce the overall force used.

Other examples include:

- * Placing barriers between an uncooperative subject and an officer
- * Containing a threat
- * Moving from a position that exposes officers to potential threats to a safer position
- * Decreasing the exposure to potential threat by using
 - Distance
 - Cover

- Concealment

- * Communication from a safe position intended to gain the subject's compliance, using:

- Verbal persuasion

- Advisements

- Warnings

- * Avoidance of physical confrontation, unless immediately necessary (for example, to protect someone, or stop dangerous behavior)

- * Using verbal techniques, such as Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity (LEED) Training, to calm an agitated subject and promote rational decision making

- * Calling extra resources to assist or officers to assist:

- More officers

- CIT officers

- Officers equipped with less-lethal tools

- * Any other tactics and approaches that attempt to achieve law enforcement objectives by gaining the compliance of the subject

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