



Phoenix Police Department
Public Affairs Bureau
620 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85003



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Phoenix Police Department Implements New “Use of Force” Policy

The Phoenix Police Department is implementing its new “Use of Force” policy. The purpose of this new policy is to clearly define when it is permissible for officers to use force, and an officer’s duties before, during, and after a force encounter.

“The first thing I began looking at after taking this job in Phoenix was the need to revise our use of force policy, because it is the basis for building trust with the community,” Interim Police Chief Michael Sullivan said.

The new policy states that Phoenix Police employees “shall use only the force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional to effectively and safely resolve and incident.” It is important to note certain aspects of the new Phoenix Police policy are deliberately stricter than the standards established by the [U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Graham v Connor. 490 U.S. 386 \(1989\)](#)

“We have built on our previous use of force policy by making sure the criteria for using force in any encounter is more clearly defined,” Sullivan said. Policy writers accomplished this by adding the terms “necessary” and “proportional” to the already existing standard of “reasonable.”

In addition, the new policy will require all use of force encounters to be reported. Increasing our standards for reporting will provide Department leadership a better understanding in making future policy and training decisions.

The updates to these policies are the result of collaboration between the police department, community, labor unions, legal experts, City leadership, and subject matter experts dating back several years.

The first step in this process was for several sergeants and detectives in the Continuous Improvement Unit (CIU) to draft a new policy by researching other highly regarded documents across

the nation. Together with outside experts and Interim Chief Sullivan's executive team, CIU launched a holistic review of the existing policy. Subject matter experts from within the department leveraged input from various community groups to create an initial draft. [This first draft was posted on the City of Phoenix website](#) in January 2023 along with a social media request for the community to weigh in.

More than 800 comments were received and reviewed before making additional updates to the policy. In early 2024, [the Police Department requested additional community feedback on two sub policy revisions](#) related to use of force, and reviewed the input before making final changes.

Each sworn police employee, and non-sworn police employee working in an enforcement role completed a 20-hour training course on the policy over the course of a 12-month period. Additional feedback was received during these training sessions, which led to updates in the policy language. In early February 2025, all employees who completed the training were required to review a video intended to refresh and update the policy before Interim Chief Sullivan signed off.

“This process underscores our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. The work here is never complete, and additional reviews of this, and other policies will be ongoing because that’s what the community and our officers deserve,” Sullivan said.

Below are links to the 8 policies related to Use of Force:

[Ops 1.5.00 Use of Force](#)

[Ops 1.5.01 UOF Force Options](#)

[Ops 1.5.02 UOF Reporting](#)

[Ops 1.7 Standards of Public Trust](#)

[Ops 1.8 Duty to Intervene](#)

[Ops 1.9 Prohibition of Retaliation](#)

[Ops 3.13 Rules and Regulations](#)

[Ops 3.18A Discipline Policy](#)