

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Vincent De Stefano
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 2:13 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: A comment regarding Item 7 on the March 27th City Council agenda

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Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing to the council regarding the request for approval by Pasadena Police of digital training modules regarding the use of force and de-escalation that continues to support our current Lexipol based manual. Unfortunately, the Lexipol manual ignores the changes required by AB 392 which was signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsome on August 19, 2019. Directly after passage of AB 392 I personally heard recordings of Lexipol staff stating that AB 392 did not change California's use of force policy at all. However, AB 392 clearly states a mandate of de-escalation. What is so troubling to me is that these digital training do not promote or require the use of de-escalation, if feasible, prior to the use of deadly force in direct contradiction to AB 392.

This, despite the fact that AB 392 includes the term “**if feasible**” regarding the use of de-escalation. What these trainings do is to offer wide latitude for an officer to decline de-escalation if he/she thinks it's not safe or doable. The end result being there is no reason not to require an officer to use de-escalation that can save lives, if feasible, prior to use of deadly force. The real danger in this line of reasoning is that it does not make officers safer. Rather it makes it more likely that Black, Latino and Indigenous men will be shot and killed in haste and by the fear officers have trained into them by false warning of ever-possible deadly and imminent dangers during stops.
(see <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/31/us/police-traffic-stops-killings.html>)

These trainings have a hard focus on simulations and body camera footage of the worst case scenario of stops gone wrong. This gives the impression that each vehicle stop represents an imminent danger. However, the data on vehicle stops indicate that it is only a very small fraction of total stops where anything like the presentations actually happen. Vehicle stops represent the number one interaction between citizens and police officers by a huge margin. The truth regarding an officer's chances of being killed at any vehicle stop are less than 1 in 3.6 million. At stops for common traffic infractions, excluding accidents, the odds are even lower at 1 in 6.5 million. These numbers tell a dramatically different story than these training. What this type of training does is to create an impression that is very difficult, if not impossible, to remove from an officer's mind regarding those very rare worst case scenarios. That impression sets the stage for the unnecessary loss of life to people of color that is far too often the outcome of a stop gone bad. Not because the individual being stopped represents a clear and present danger to the officer but rather because the officer has been trained incorrectly and egregiously to fear the person being stopped.

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Yours truly,

Vinnie De Stefano

Pasadena, CA. 91107

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From:
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 3:03 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: ITEM 7 March 27, 2023 City Council Agenda: Police De-Escalation Training
Attachments: Policing Danger and Routine Traffic Stops 4.1.19 Michigan Law Review JB Woods.docx

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VIA Email

ITEM 7, Council Agenda: POLICE DE-ESCALATION TRAINING

Dear Councilmembers:

Item 7 on tonight’s agenda asks that you approve a contract for PPD officers training on the use of force, and of de-escalation, if feasible.

These landmark state reform measures of 2019, however, have been undermined by police lobbying and the training offered does not support the original intent of requiring de-escalation, if feasible, prior to use of deadly force in order to save lives.

Recent evidence-based research has revealed that much of police training on de-escalation overemphasizes the potential for death and violent reaction to police that are far out of

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proportion to its real occurrence. Trainings' use of simulations, videos and body camera footage, emphasize grave dangers to police, particularly in traffic stops. But studies of actual data of police traffic interactions reveal a quite different reality.

In fact, because the police pull over so many cars and trucks — tens of millions each year — an officer's chances of being killed at any vehicle stop are less than 1 in 3.6 million, excluding accidents, two studies have shown. At stops for common traffic infractions, the odds are as low as 1 in 6.5 million, according to a 2019 study by Jordan Blair Woods, a law professor at the University of Arkansas. (Why Many Police Traffic Stops Turn Deadly 10.31.19 New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/31/us/police-traffic-stops-killings.html>)

The training module PPD will be using for the next 3 years, at least, does not require de-escalation, if feasible, prior to use of deadly force, even though overwhelming data of millions of stops show that such deadly interactions are extremely rare. It is at the expense of saving lives, both of the public and police, and particularly of Black, Latino and Indigenous men who are being killed or who suffer great bodily harm from police traffic stops in significant numbers.

Other California cities do require use of de-escalation, if feasible, prior to use of deadly force: LAPD, Long Beach PD, San Francisco PD, Sacramento PD, Stockton PD, et al. They value their officers as does Pasadena and would not carelessly put them in harm's way. It's time for law enforcement to reject the truly dangerous myths around the excessive need for the use of deadly force and look the data in the eye.

Thank you,

Kris Ockershauser

Coalition for Increased Civilian Oversight of Pasadena Police

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