



Tips & Techniques

Portland Police Bureau

VOL. MMI No. 18

October 2, 2001

Distraction Principle

The majority of arrests performed by officers are uneventful. Usually the person being taken into custody is cooperative and offers no resistance. On occasion an officer will have to take into custody and handcuff a person who is uncooperative, physically resistant, and even combative in response to the efforts of the officer(s).

The Police Bureau's Training Division provides officers with numerous arrest techniques to take a person into custody. These techniques are designed to provide a margin of safety for the officers, while placing the person being taken into custody at a disadvantage. These techniques also contribute to minimizing injuries to officers and suspects. Regardless of the arrest techniques that officers choose, they should be aware of the option of **distracting** a subject just prior to, or while taking the subject into custody. As a reminder, the Training Division's Defensive Tactics Program teaches the following **Principle** which states:

“In times of stress or concentration, the mind focuses on the most important element of the situation. Any sudden act of significant magnitude will break the concentration, causing the mind to momentarily focus on the distraction.”

This principle, when correctly applied, allows police officers to gain or maintain control of a subject by refocusing his or her concentration. Specific distractions are too numerous to list, but can be categorized into verbal and physical distractions. Physical distractions can include, but are not limited to, pressure point controls, control holds and hand gestures. Verbal distractions can include comments and commands designed to cause a person to momentarily look away while the officer initiates the custody.

However, when a person engages in aggressive physical resistance, or is combative, thus threatening the officer's safety, the officer is authorized to use whatever force is reasonable and necessary in accordance with the Police Bureau's training and use of force policy. Nothing in this Bulletin is intended to limit an officer's use of force

that is reasonable under the circumstances to maintain officer safety, to effect an arrest, or to conduct other official action.

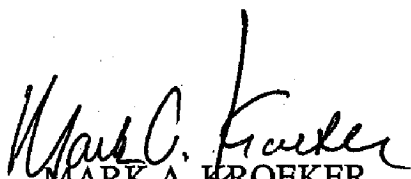
Bureau members are aware that punches, knee strikes, elbow strikes and kicks are defined as Impact Weapons on PPB's Levels of Control and are considered a use of physical force as covered in the Use of Force G.O. 1010.20.

Officers will not use the phrase "distraction techniques" in written reports or testimony. Rather, officers will specifically detail the subject's behavior and other factors that led up to the decision to use that force they believe reasonable and necessary to control the person. Officers must document any type of force used to overcome physical and/or combative resistance. Officers should also list any safety concerns for themselves, the subject or others that they identified during the arresting process.

Officers will include in their reports any injuries known to have been incurred or claimed by the subject before and during the arrest process. Officer's injuries should also be documented in reports.

It is important for officers to remember that their actions must be reasonable given a subject's behavior, and if feasible, the subject should be given the opportunity to comply with the officer's commands.

Any questions regarding this bulletin can be directed to the Training Division.


MARK A. KROEKER
Chief of Police

01-18
Submitted by Training Division