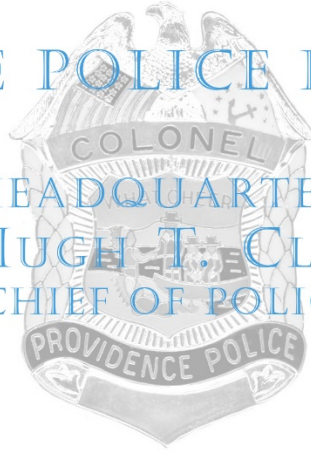


# PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT

HEADQUARTERS  
COLONEL HUGH T. CLEMENTS, JR.  
CHIEF OF POLICE



TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	310.02	8/7/2015	8/9/2015
SUBJECT TITLE		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Investigations of Serious Use of Force Incidents		6/5/2014; Supersedes: G.O. 310.02 of 2/8/2009, entitled "Force Investigation Team/Use of Force Review Board"; G.O. #14 Series 2006; G.O. #8 Series 2002	
REFERENCE		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA 1.3.8		8/7/2015	
SUBJECT AREA		DISTRIBUTION	
Law Enforcement Operations		All Sworn Personnel	

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for the investigation of serious use of force incidents.

## POLICY

It is the policy of the Providence Police Department that all serious use of force incidents are investigated with the utmost thoroughness, professionalism, and impartiality to determine if the sworn member's actions conform with the law and this agency's policies on use of force.

## DISCUSSION

For the purpose of the General order, the following definitions shall apply:

*Serious Use of Force*: Lethal and less-lethal actions by officers including but not limited to:

1. Any incident involving the discharge of a firearm, CEW, or LLM by an officer, with the exception of scheduled range training.
2. Any use of force by an officer, including but not limited to the use of a police canine, that results in serious bodily injury.
3. Any strike to the head with an impact weapon.

4. Any use of force by an officer that results in the loss of consciousness.
5. Any use of force by an officer that results in death.

*Force Investigation Team (FIT):* A panel of three (3) sworn Department officers, which is responsible for investigating a serious use of force incident. The panel is formed at the discretion of the Chief of Police or his designee, and shall consist of a certified Weapons Bureau training instructor of the type of force used; an officer from the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR); and an officer designated by the Chief of Police or his designee. The panel shall not consist of any officers who were involved in the incident under investigation, their first-line supervisor, or their District/Bureau/Unit Lieutenant.

*Use of Force Review Board:* A panel consisting of three (3) sworn Department officers designated by the Chief of Police, which is responsible for reviewing the findings of the FIT and conducting further analysis of a serious use of force incident. The panel is formed at the discretion of the Chief of Police upon his review of the FIT report, and shall include a chairperson. The panel shall not consist of any officers excluded from eligibility for the FIT or who comprised the FIT which investigated the serious use of force incident under review.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **I. INITIAL ON-SCENE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Officers who are at the scene of an occurrence of a serious use of force incident, and first responding officers, shall take those measures that are reasonably possible and appropriate to protect their safety and to preserve evidence essential to the investigation. This includes the following actions, undertaken in the order deemed appropriate and depending upon the fluidity of the situation:

- A. Consider personal safety. Ensure that the threats to officer safety and to the safety of others are over.
- B. Secure and separate suspects.
- C. Relay information on fleeing suspects and work with other available field units to establish a containment area.
- D. Request a supervisor and additional backup. Also request emergency medical services, if necessary, and any other assistance required.
- E. Secure weapons once the threat has ceased. Holster any involved handguns or secure them in place as evidence. Secure long guns in the prescribed manner or in place as evidence. Do not open, reload, remove shell casings, or, in any other manner, tamper with involved firearms.
- F. Memorialize observations. Take note of the time; survey the entire area for relevant facts; take note of individuals who are present and who departed the scene, witnesses, potential suspects and suspect vehicles.

- G. Preserve the incident scene as time and capabilities permit before supervisory and other assistance arrives:
1. Secure the area. Establish a perimeter with a crime scene barrier or crime scene tape and limit access to authorized persons necessary to investigate the incident and assist the injured.
    - a. Exclude all unauthorized persons from the incident scene.
  2. Protect evidence from contamination, alteration, loss, destruction or damage that is likely to occur before backup can arrive. Ensure that evidentiary items are not moved. If the items were moved, then note the original location and position of persons, weapons, and other relevant objects and evidence.
    - a. A preliminary determination should be made as to whether or not there is a need for a search warrant or if there exists an exception to the search warrant requirement. If a search warrant is needed, notify a supervisor immediately. However, if it is reasonably believed that persons may be in need of aid, make a prompt warrantless search for possible victim(s) and/or perpetrator(s).
  3. Record the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all witnesses and other persons present at the shooting/incident scene and request that they remain at the scene in order to ascertain if they possess valuable information. Efforts should be made to keep individual witnesses separated from one another.

## **II. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE SCENE**

The responding supervisor will be responsible for attempting to control and stabilize the incident scene. The Patrol Bureau Office-in-Charge (OIC) shall respond without delay and shall take the following actions in the order deemed appropriate and depending upon the fluidity of the situation:

- A. Aid the injured and assess needs. Ensure the safety of the officers and determine their conditions, along with that of any suspects and third parties. Summon emergency medical service providers to the scene as necessary
  1. Medical aid should be rendered without unnecessary disturbance of the scene. Be observant of tire impressions, footwear impressions, blood spatter, etc.
- B. Safeguard injured officers. If an officer has been seriously injured during the incident:

1. Ensure that another officer accompanies and remains with the injured officer at the hospital.
  2. Implement those portions of the Department's directives pertaining to line-of-duty deaths/serious injuries that may apply to the situation.
- C. Safeguard uninjured officers who were involved in the serious use of force incident. Move such officers away from the center of activity, accompanied by an officer who was not involved in the incident.
- D. Follow-up on initial actions. Confirm that the initial on-scene responsibilities have been adequately addressed, and if they have not, take the appropriate actions.
- E. Ensure that next-of kin notifications are made in accordance with Department policy.
- F. Ensure that the scene of the incident is secured and that access within the incident scene perimeter is restricted in accordance with Department policies and procedures.
1. In all cases involving the discharge of a firearm, CEW, or LLM by an officer, the OIC shall insure upon his arrival to the incident scene that an intensive search of the surrounding area is made to attempt to determine the trajectory of any fired round(s) or cartridge(s); where the round(s) or cartridge(s) may have struck or in the case of a CEW where the leads may have struck and/or what may have been subjected to the weapon's electrical discharge; and whether or not any persons/animals were injured or property damaged.
  2. The OIC shall coordinate evidence retrieval with BCI upon the arrival of the BCI and FIT.
  3. The OIC shall furnish a full oral report to the FIT upon its arrival, explaining the circumstances surrounding the incident and any findings of fact.
- G. Ensure that any witnesses to the incident are identified and sequestered according to Department policies and procedures.
- H. Make notifications to other Department personnel, to include:
1. The Chief of Police or his designee and the Division Commanding Officer(s) of the officer(s) who engaged in the serious use of force.
    - a. The Chief of Police or his designee shall determine whether or not to activate the FIT, and shall communicate his/her choice of officer for the FIT when applicable.



- J. In accordance with “The Attorney General’s Protocol Regarding Use of Deadly Force Incidents and Custodial Deaths” (attached), the Attorney General’s Office and the Rhode Island State Police will be notified whenever a serious use of force by police results in the death of or serious bodily injury to any person
  - 1. One representative from each of the aforementioned agencies will respond to the incident scene and join the FIT in the investigation of the incident.

### **III. WEAPONS CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. Whenever the FIT is activated, and in the interest of evidentiary preservation, any officer having discharged a firearm, CEW, and/or LLM, or having used any other type of weapon in the course of engaging in a serious use of force incident, shall turn-over the weapon(s) so discharged/used and any remaining magazines, cartridges and/or rounds, to the Commanding Officer of the Weapons Bureau (WBCO) or his designee.
  - 1. In no case shall demand and turn-over occur any sooner or later than is determined to be practicable and prudent via the combined discretion of the WBCO or his designee and the OIC.
  - 2. Turn-over shall be performed in a discrete manner, outside the view of the media or the public.
- B. Re-issuance of a Department-issued replacement weapon and/or Department-issued magazines/cartridges/rounds shall be at the combined discretion of the WBCO or his designee and the OIC.

### **IV. THE FORCE INVESTIGATION TEAM (FIT)**

- A. The FIT shall be responsible for conducting the investigation into the serious use of force incident.
  - 1. The FIT may call upon any member of this Department, or any member of any other agency to assist in the conduct of its investigation.
  - 2. The FIT shall receive a general briefing and walk-through by the supervisory officer (or designated first responder) regarding the circumstances surrounding the incident under investigation.
    - a. If the involved member is present and able to assist at the scene, a supervisory officer will be assigned to act as the liaison between the involved member and FIT to aid in reconstructing incident as it unfolded.

3. The FIT shall ensure that all non-Department material witnesses are located, identified, and interviewed. These interviews shall become part of the official record and FIT report.
4. The FIT shall ensure that all involved Department members complete their preliminary reports of the incident as soon as practicable. Said members may consult with counsel and/or union representative prior to completing their preliminary reports. (A preliminary report does not constitute an interrogation or interview.)
  - a. Preliminary reports include:
    - i. An After Incident Report (AIR).
    - ii. An Incident/Arrest Report.
    - ii. A Witness Statement.
  - b. The completion of a Supervisor's Use of Force Review Inquiry will not be necessary whenever a serious use of force incident occurs as long as the FIT's arrival is contemporaneous with the incident.
  - c. Reasonable time extensions may be granted when deemed appropriate by the OPR Commanding Officer or his superiors.
5. Whenever a serious use of force by police results in the death of or serious bodily injury to any person, the Commanding Officer of OPR and the FIT's OPR representative shall ensure that all involved members are separately interviewed on audiotape as soon as practicable.
  - a. Involved members shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges that are guaranteed under Rhode Island law and the Constitutions of the State of Rhode Island and the United States of America. All such interviews shall also be conducted in accordance with the provisions contained in the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights under Rhode Island General Law § 42-28.6.
6. In the event that the Office of Attorney General determines that a serious use of force incident shall be presented to a grand jury, as is mostly the case whenever, for instance, the incident has resulted in a fatality, all subsequent investigative efforts shall be coordinated with and approved by the Office of Attorney General prior to commencement.

7. The FIT shall forward a report to the Chief of Police within thirty (30) days of the incident, along with a recommendation as to whether or not the incident should be reviewed by the Use of Force Review Board. The Chief of Police shall then decide if the Use of Force Review Board shall review the incident.
  - a. The FIT report shall contain all incident/arrest reports, witness statements, AIR forms, photographs, interviews of officers and suspects, and any other reports, records, dispatch logs, audios and/or videos, and any other pertinent documentation associated with the incident under review.
  - b. The FIT shall also contain a cover document prepared by the FIT's OPR representative and signed by all members of the FIT. This document shall convey, at a minimum:
    - i. The identities of the FIT members.
    - ii. A summary of the unfolding of the incident under review and the actions of the key players.
    - iii. A summary of the investigative steps taken during the investigation.
    - iv. Any conclusions drawn from the body of evidence pertaining to the investigation.
    - v. A recommendation as to whether or not the case should undergo further review by the Use of Force Review Board.

**V. THE USE OF FORCE REVIEW BOARD**

- A. The Use of Force Review Board (the "Board") shall review the FIT report and avail itself of any resources it deems necessary to conduct a complete and thorough examination of the incident under review.
- B. The Board shall complete its review and report its findings to the Chief of Police or his designee within thirty (30) days of it being called to order. It shall furnish conclusions and recommendations to the Chief of Police, which may include but may not be limited to:
  - a. Actions within policies and procedures.
  - b. Actions not within policies and procedures.
  - c. No action necessary.
  - d. Retraining required.



- e. Department training required.
  - f. Disciplinary action recommended.
  - g. Policy/procedure amendment recommended.
- C. The Chairperson of the Use of Force Review Board shall draft the conclusions and recommendations of the board. Upon review and agreement by the members of the board, the draft shall be finalized and signed by all of the Board members.

**VI. PROVISIONS**

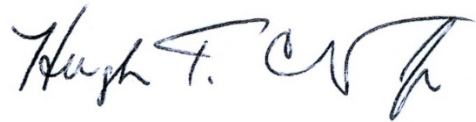
- A. The Chief of Police and the Commissioner of Public Safety shall have the final decision regarding the conclusions and recommendations of the Use of Force Review Board and any actions stemming therefrom.
- B. The Chief of Police and the Commissioner of Public Safety reserve the right to request that additional actions be performed relative to any aspect of a serious use of force incident.
- C. A Use of Force Review Board file shall be established within the Administrative Division. All final reports shall be forwarded to the Administrative Division with copies to the Office of Professional Responsibility, where they shall be maintained. Access to these files shall be strictly controlled via a written request to the Chief of Police.

**APPROVED:**



STEVEN M. PARÉ  
COMMISSIONER  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

**APPROVED:**



HUGH T. CLEMENTS, JR.  
COLONEL  
CHIEF OF POLICE