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IMPD announces new use of force policies

INDIANAPOLIS – Today, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) announced the adoption of updated use of force policies that place an emphasis on de-escalation, proportionality of force principles, and limitations on the use of lethal and less-lethal devices.

“The adoption of these new use of force standards is a substantial milestone, one that I hope demonstrates our commitment to building community trust and developing stronger neighborhood partnerships to address violent crime,” said IMPD Chief Randal Taylor.

“For the last several years, we have worked to improve training and policies for IMPD officers,” said Mayor Joe Hogsett. “From implicit bias and de-escalation training, to the proposed Use of Force Review Board, to these updates to IMPD use of force policies – these changes aim to ensure IMPD better serves every member of the Indianapolis community.”

“Since our community conversations began in 2018, the council has been working with both our neighbors and public safety partners to make our justice system more fair. And over recent weeks, our community has rallied around change and we have heard them,” said City-County Council President Vop Osili. “These new use of force policies are a significant step forward on the path to a more equitable, safer city.”

IMPD’s new policies for use of force:

1. **Outline clearly defined de-escalation requirements:** The new policy explicitly outlines the use of de-escalation tactics such as communication, time, and distance and requires that officers attempt to de-escalate situations with the goal of resolving encounters without the use of force whenever feasible. IMPD training has included de-escalation techniques for some time, but the department’s commitment to de-escalation is now made explicit in the use of force policy itself.
2. **Create a clear standard for use of deadly force:** IMPD has adopted the standard for deadly force outlined by California Assembly Bill 392, which provides greater clarification and limitations on when deadly force may be used.
3. **Prohibit the use of chokeholds:** While IMPD training does not consider chokeholds an appropriate technique, the approved Use of Force policy explicitly prohibits this tactic or any similar neck restraint.

4. **Require the use of proportionate force:** Officers must use only the minimum amount of force appropriate, based on the circumstances known to the officer, to achieve the officer's legitimate public safety objectives.
5. **Define an officer's duty to intervene and report when inappropriate force is used:** Officers now have an explicit duty to prevent or stop the use of excessive force by another officer and report any violation of the Use of Force policy to a supervisor. This was not previously outlined in IMPD's Use of Force policy.
6. **Clearly specify rules for using less-lethal force:** The new use of force standards are outlined in two policies – one that governs the use of specific types of less-lethal devices, and one that covers IMPD's general use of force principles. The rules for deployment of less-lethal levels of force are consistent with continuum of force and proportionality principles.
7. **Prohibit shooting into, or from, moving vehicles.**
8. **Direct the department to review these policies for compliance with national best practices at least annually.**

Following the June 5th announcement that use of force standards were being updated, IMPD engaged Faith in Indiana, among other community and advocacy groups. Input from these conversations informed the policy as adopted.

Uses of any level of force will continue to be reported and investigated according to existing IMPD policy. Once established, the forthcoming Use of Force Review Board will have the authority to review any use of force by an IMPD officer.

IMPD is currently working to redevelop the training curriculum in line with this new policy and will begin the process of training all officers to these new directives as soon as next month.

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