



City of San Antonio

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Title: Briefing on the SAPD Use of Force Policy [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

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Indexes:

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Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: Police Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: William P. McManus, Chief of Police

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT: Briefing on SAPD Use of Force Policy

SUMMARY:

Review of San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) use of force policy and recent updates.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 2004, the Department added the use of force continuum to its policy which guides officers on the appropriate use of force in response to interactions with the public. The SAPD requires that officers exhibit a sense of prudent judgement in the application of any level of force and officers are required to document any force used in their report. All use of force incidents are reviewed by the chain of command and forwarded to Internal Affairs - complaints are reviewed by the Complaint & Administrative Review Board (CARB).

Over the last several years, the Department has experienced a sustained decrease in use of force reports due in large measure to enhanced training and improved supervisory oversight.

Training

A total of 84 training hours at the Training Academy are devoted to empowering officers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively communicate and interact with residents. In addition, since 2018, a total of 18 training hours on these topics have been offered through the annual in-service training curriculum. Among the courses offered to officers are: de-escalation, crisis intervention, communications, public interaction and multi-culturalism. The Department is currently reviewing its training and in-service curriculum and anticipates implementing a virtual monthly training program for officers on a variety of topics to include equity and social justice.

Supervisory Oversight

Department policy requires that any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is reasonable under the circumstances have a duty to intervene to prevent the use of such excessive force. Officers shall immediately report these observations to a supervisor.

Body worn camera (BWC) policy requires officers to turn on their BWC to record all interactions with individuals related to official police duties. The BWC policy also requires supervisory officers review body worn camera videos for each officer quarterly and to take corrective action to address violations of the BWC policy and any other violations of Department policy observed.

Policy Updates

In June 2020, the SAPD completed a review of Campaign Zero's 8 Can't Wait Campaign and determined that the Department received credit for four of the eight policy areas. These areas include ban chokeholds and strangleholds, require de-escalation, duty to intervene, and establish use of force continuum. On June 22, the Department notified City Council of policy revisions that were made to fully meet Campaign Zero's 8 Can't Wait policy recommendations.

As part the Department's ongoing policy review process, Chief McManus has requested an independent review of the SAPD use of force policy which is currently being conducted by Mr. Robert Stewart, President/CEO of Bobcat Training & Consulting. Mr. Stewart has over 27 years of law enforcement experience to include serving five years as Chief of Police with the Ormand Beach (FL) Police Department. Mr. Stewart previously completed an independent review of SAPD investigative process policies and procedures in 2018 and provided several recommendations for continued improvement.

RECOMMENDATION:

This briefing is for information purposes only.