

16 **Use *Distance, Cover, and Time* to replace outdated concepts such as the “21-foot rule” and “drawing a line in the sand.”**

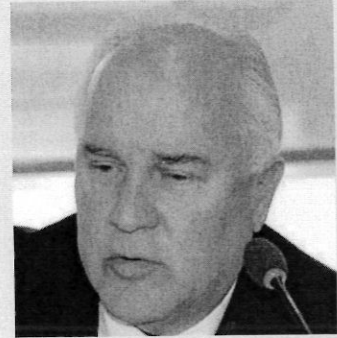
Agencies should train their officers on the principles of using distance, cover, and time when approaching and managing certain critical incidents. In many situations, a better outcome can result if officers can buy more time to assess the situation and their options, bring additional resources to the scene, and develop a plan for resolving the incident without the use of force or only with force that is necessary to mitigate the threat.

Agencies should eliminate from their policies and training all references to the so-called “21-foot rule” regarding officers who are confronted with a subject armed with an edged weapon. Instead, officers should be trained to use distance and cover to create a “reaction gap,” or “safe zone,” between themselves and the individual, and to consider all options for responding.

**Springboro, OH Police Chief Jeffrey Kruthoff:**

*“Distance + Cover = Time” Is a Concept That Is Important and Easy to Understand*

“Distance + Cover = Time” was one of the things I walked away with from the last PERF meeting. I think it was a training sergeant from Los Angeles who capsulized it so easily. I found this so concise and easy to convey, it’s almost something you want to post in your building. Or maybe this should be the last thing the sergeant says to the troops before they go out on the road.



17 ***De-escalation* should be a core theme of an agency’s training program.**

Agencies should train their officers on a comprehensive program of de-escalation strategies and tactics designed to defuse tense encounters. De-escalation can be used in a range of situations, especially when confronting subjects who are combative and/or suffering a crisis because of mental illness, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, or other conditions that can cause them to behave erratically and dangerously. De-escalation strategies should be based on the following key principles:

- Effective communication is enough to resolve many situations; communications should be the first option, and officers should maintain communication throughout any encounter.