

TRAINING AND TACTICS

22 Provide a prompt supervisory response to critical incidents to reduce the likelihood of unnecessary force.

Supervisors should immediately respond to any scene:

- Where a weapon (including firearm, edged weapon, rocks, or other improvised weapon) is reported,
- Where persons experiencing mental health crises are reported, or
- Where a dispatcher or other member of the department believes there is potential for significant use of force.

Some departments have trained their dispatchers to go on the radio and specifically ask the patrol supervisor if he or she is en route to specific high-risk calls, such as a person with mental illness threatening his family.

Once on the scene and if circumstances permit, supervisors should attempt to “huddle” with officers before responding to develop a plan of action that focuses on de-escalation where possible. In the case of persons with mental illness, supervisors who are not specially trained should consult and coordinate with officers on the scene who are specially trained.



San Diego Police Chief (Ret.) William Lansdowne:

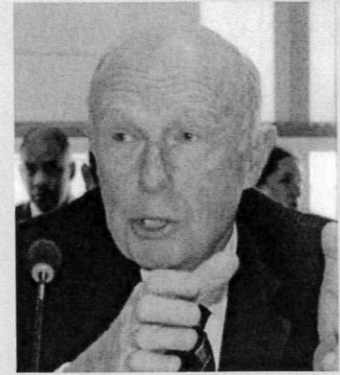
Getting a Sergeant to Critical Incidents Within 15 Minutes Reduces the Chances That Deadly Force Will Be Used

Here's the scenario that takes place on almost every single use of deadly force across the country. It takes about 15 minutes before the shots are fired. And the persons who are going to fire those shots are your patrol officers, not your specialized people, not your specially trained people.

It goes like this. The call comes in, and it takes about four minutes for the emergency operators to gather the information and put the call out on the radio. It takes about six or seven minutes in high-risk cases for the units to get on scene. The units on scene are usually going to be two patrol officers. By the time the shots are fired, it takes less than four minutes. So if you're going to come up with training and management and supervision strategies, then you've got to do those within that 15-minute time frame.

We need to start with the 9-1-1 operators, and the information they gather and the information they provide to the units responding to the call. And when I say units, I include the supervisors responding to the call. If you have a system set up within your organization that gets a supervisor to the scene early on, within the 15-minute window, your chance of having an officer-involved shooting—getting someone hurt, your officer or the person—is reduced by about 80% because they can manage the situation as a team.

The other thing we have learned is that as those officers get to the scene, if they're going to be successful in preventing an officer use of force, they've got to have not only the supervision but also options available to them, whether it's K9 units, less-lethal options like bean-bag guns, or a specialized unit that has a psychologist assigned to help manage the call. The goal should be to bring whatever resources are needed to slow the situation down and manage it. Supervisors are in the best position to make that happen.



Baltimore Commissioner Kevin Davis:

I Also Ask: "Which Supervisor Was on Scene?"

One of the first questions I ask is not only "Was there a supervisor on the scene?" but also, "Who was it?" Because the differences in the quality of supervisory response means so much. And I think it's very important to involve the sergeants and lieutenants in the scenario-based training on use of force.

