

Use of Force Committee

2018 Year End Summary

The Use of Force Committee members are charged with reviewing use of force reports generated by Urbana Police Officers. The Committee members are Ofc. Adam Marcotte, Inv. David Roesch, Sgt. Kary Keleher and Sgt. Andrew Hewkin. Oversight for the committee is provided by Lt. Jason Norton and the committee chair is Sgt. Matt Bain.

The committee reviewed 141 reports this year compared to 137 reports in 2017 and 122 in 2016. All reports were identified as incidents where officers encountered resistance from subjects they came in to contact with and how they overcame that resistance. Officers responded to varying levels of resistance by using control or defensive tactics/techniques, impact weapons, oleoresin capsicum (OC), duty pistols, patrol rifles, and TASERs.

The purpose of this committee as outlined in Urbana Police Policy 301, is to ensure officers are properly and accurately documenting actions taken when using force against a person. The committee is also responsible for identifying trends and/or deficiencies and offer suggestions, through the chain of command, on how to address those issues. In addition, the committee is charged with identifying when force is used by an officer that is not consistent with Urbana Police Department policies and report on that issue.

There are several tools at the disposal of the Urbana Police Department for officers to overcome a resistive subject depending on the circumstances. The use of force committee tracks the use of each tool. The following is a summary of how each tool was used in 2018.

Urbana officers used their duty pistol to control someone on 47 occasions in 2018 as compared to 49 occasions in 2017 and 29 occasions in 2016. Urbana officers used their patrol rifles to control someone on 4 occasions in 2018 as compared to 4 occasions in 2017 and 5 occasions in 2016. There were no reports of the less lethal shotgun being deployed in 2018, same as in 2017 and 2016. There was no reported discharge of any firearms as it relates to the use of force in 2018.

Oleoresin capsicum (OC) was reportedly used on a subject 3 times in 2018, 2 of these instances being large fights. Officers displayed OC on 1 other occasions but did not discharge it. No officers reported using their baton as an impact weapon or as a pry tool in 2018. There were 16 TASER incidents reported in 2018. The TASER was not discharged on a subject, with all of the incidents being displaying the TASER to control someone's actions. Officers used pressure points on subjects 8 times in 2018.

Some other statistics on various methods of use of force include:

1. Tackles/Takedowns – 33 times
2. Punches/Strikes – 8 times
3. Use of the hobble – 11 times
4. Strength – 46 times

Strength is a “general” term where an unspecific method was utilized that cannot be defined. Examples of this would be a “bear hug”, pulling someone’s arm from underneath their body, or pinning them against something to gain control. It should be noted that several of the 141 incidents reviewed included multiple use of force methods.

In 2018 there were a reported 11 officers injured while using force against a resistive subject. 2 of those officers required medical treatment, with one resulting in a serious injury. There were a total of 8 subjects injured during a use of force incident. 2 of those subjects required medical treatment. A majority of the total injuries for both officers and subjects were “minor” scrapes and abrasions. .

Use of Force Committee Suggestions for 2019

Committee members met and conducted their yearend meeting on 042219 at 1630 hours. The members looked over the notes annotated on the 2018 spreadsheet and discussed several topics.

1. We can still do a better job documenting injuries (or lack of) in whole. Officers/Supervisors are doing a fairly good job documenting their injuries in the report. Explanations and documentation of offender injuries can improve. A statement as simple as “there were no apparent injuries as a result of this use of force” would be helpful. It needs to be documented more consistently when Officers/Offenders go to the hospital, especially on the face sheet.
2. Supervisors will be reminded when to do an additional investigation. There were some instances where these additional investigations were not complete or “completed” and not documented. This should not be happening and the investigation is for our own protection.
3. There were a few instances of officers using techniques that are not taught in control tactics, specifically grabbing people around the neck. These incidents were identified and addressed by the officer’s monitoring Sgt. We did not see any major issues with these incidents when further explanation was given, in the form of a sup report.
4. Officers involved in use of force situations are encouraged to write reports, even if they do not feel like they “did anything”. This helps in several ways, such as affirming what other officers stated they did, confirming they were there and assisted although minimal, therefore helping their recollection when/if the case goes to criminal or civil court, and covering all basis of being named in another officer’s report (and not doing a report). I am not saying the “backing officer”

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HAS to write a report. I am cautioning to make sure there is absolutely NOT a reason to do a sup to avoid problems in the future. With the utilization of body cameras now, different angles of view provide different aspects from different officers, all which can be helpful to the use of force incident.

5. The discussion was begun on when the board will review BWC footage in regard to use of force incidents. As of now, it was recommended that the same or similar criteria as the supervisor review standards be cause for BWC footage be reviewed.

An e-mail was sent to all sergeants and administration covering these topic (as listed above).

Discussion about a replacement for Sgt. Keleher (retired) and Colby Wright accepted the invitation to be on the board. Lt. Bain will replace Lt. Norton as oversight for the committee and Sgt. Smysor will take over as the committee chair for this board. This concludes the 2018 summary.