

**FACT SHEET: Chapter 3: Speaking Techniques, Physical Controls  
and Personal Body Weapons  
Model Use of Force Policy**

The Model Policy emphasizes de-escalation before use of physical controls and body weapons. De-escalation includes, but is not limited to, speaking techniques. Officers have a continuing obligation to de-escalate their use of force to the minimum degree required to maintain control of an individual as circumstances change.

**WHAT ARE SPEAKING TECHNIQUES?**

<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p><i>Verbal Persuasion:</i> A method of communication to persuade, as opposed to command, a subject to refrain from a specific action or non-action, and if applicable, to persuade a subject to voluntarily surrender before an officer uses any form of force, including verbal commands.</p> <p><i>Verbal Command:</i> A method of control/force that includes instruction or direction from an officer to a subject in the form of a verbal statement or command. The statement instructs a subject to engage in or refrain from a specific action or non-action (e.g., “Put your hands behind your back.”).</p>	<p><i>Verbal Persuasion:</i> You seem to be a reasonable person, [continue with verbal command].</p> <p><i>Verbal Command:</i> Put your hands behind your back.</p>

**WHAT ARE PHYSICAL CONTROLS?**

<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p>An officer’s use of his/her arms and/or legs to physically apprehend, restrain, immobilize, restrict, or otherwise subject an individual to an officer’s physical control.</p>	<p>Physical controls include empty hand controls such as wrist locks, twist locks, finger flexes, arm bars and escort positions; the application of force to pressure points; the application of an officer’s body weight; and pain-compliance techniques.</p>

**WHAT ARE PERSONAL BODY WEAPONS?**

<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p>An officer’s use of his/her body parts, including but not limited to hand, foot, knee, elbow, shoulder, hip, arm, leg or head by means of kinetic energy transfers (impacts) to gain control of a subject.</p>	<p>Personal body weapons include palm heel strikes, common fist strikes, bottom fist strikes, elbow strikes, knee strikes, front kicks, side kicks, roundhouse kicks, leg sweeps, hip throws, front leg wraps, and front and rear take downs.</p>

## **DE-ESCALATION REQUIREMENTS BEFORE USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE**

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Before using physical force, officers must first attempt to speak to a subject—or use verbal commands, if persuasion is ineffective—to de-escalate a situation and to gain compliance.

## **WHEN CAN PHYSICAL CONTROLS AND PERSONAL BODY WEAPONS BE USED?**

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Whenever physical force is used, officers must use the minimum level of force necessary to accomplish a Lawful Objective. Lawful Objectives are strictly limited to the following situations:

- Conducting a lawful search;
- Preventing serious damage to property;
- Effecting a lawful arrest or detention;
- Gaining control of a combative subject;
- Preventing and/or terminating the commission of a crime;
- Intervening in a suicide or self-inflicted injury; and/or
- Defending an officer or person from the physical acts of another.

## **KEY PROVISIONS**

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- Before using physical force, officers must first attempt to speak to a subject—or use “Verbal Command,” if “Verbal Persuasion” is ineffective—to de-escalate a situation and to gain compliance. Officers have a duty to consider possible reasons a subject may not be complying, such as hearing disabilities, neuroatypicality, or language barriers.
- The Model Policy clearly defines what constitutes a physical control and a personal body weapon unlike many other policies.
- The Model Policy requires that physical controls be avoided if at all possible, and used only when necessary to prevent imminent harm and where less-harmful alternatives either have not worked or reasonably appear unlikely to work.
- If speaking techniques and Physical Controls do not gain control of a subject and the subject’s physical actions become actively resistant to the point that they pose a substantial risk of causing imminent bodily harm, an officer may use Personal Body Weapons against the subject, but only to the extent necessary to carry out a Lawful Objective.