

Response to Important Questions from Our Community

June 7, 2020

Our community, in light of recent events regarding the atrocious incident in Minneapolis, has communicated a number of questions and concerns about policies and procedures we have in place to prevent racism and biased actions by our officers. Our citizens want to know how they can be assured that what happened to George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota will not happen to someone in our community here in Santa Barbara, California. While many answers to these questions can be found in information that has been publicly posted on our website (www.sbpd.com), or on other public websites, we realize that not everyone may have the means to access this information, knowledge that it was there, or the time to sort through it all to find the answers to these important and timely questions.

The Santa Barbara Police Department prides itself on servicing all members of our community. We are angered at the actions by the officers in Minneapolis and recognize that, even events that happen in other places in the nation, impact the public's perception of our own officers. We also recognize that building trust and nurturing legitimacy is an ongoing and never-ending process, which requires not only transparency, but also open and ongoing dialogue and input from the community. The following information is an attempt to answer some of the most critical questions asked. We also hope that it encourages more dialogue. For further information you may contact professionalstandards@sbpd.com.

Mission Statement

The Santa Barbara Police Department Mission Statement defines the goals and purpose of our agency. It also serves to ground us during difficult times. It is prominently posted, along with the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics at the beginning of our policy and procedures manual for all of our employees to see, read, and reflect on:

The mission of the Santa Barbara Police Department is to provide for the public safety through the philosophy of community oriented policing. It is to protect and serve our community where all people can live in peace without fear of crime. It is to ensure a professional quality of service and accountability to the citizens of Santa Barbara and to all who should call upon our service.

Hiring and Screening of Police Officer Trainees

Santa Barbara Police Officer applicants must participate in a rigorous, multi-step hiring process outlined in the [job flyer](#) for Police Officer which is posted on the City of Santa Barbara web page. Written exam, physical agility, oral exam, department interview, background investigation, polygraph, medical examination, controlled substance screening and psychological examination are all steps that candidates must complete in order to be hired as a Police Officer Trainee.

The Santa Barbara Police Department is a California Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) compliant agency. As such, those completing the background investigations for SBPD candidates follow the [POST Background Investigation Manual](#), available online through the POST website. During the course of their investigation background investigators look for indicators that a candidate may not meet the various "job dimensions," summarized on page 25 of the manual and described in further detail throughout. One of the key job dimensions for police officer is the ability to display appropriate interpersonal skills and social sensitivity. Indicators that a candidate may not meet the job dimensions for Police Officer include past instances of making "hasty, biased judgements based on physical appearance, race, gender or other group membership characteristics."

It is the background investigators' responsibility to talk to many people, including those who are listed as references, as well as people who are not listed but may know the applicant (past coworkers, neighbors, etc.). One of the questions asked of these individuals is "has the applicant expressed or displayed any bias or prejudice towards others?" Questions regarding the applicants observed performance under stress, if they have become upset or lost their temper, and soliciting remarks about moral character, habits, honesty, and integrity. Any candidate who does not meet the job dimensions will be disqualified from the background process and will not move on to become a Santa Barbara Police Officer.

Background investigators follow POST recommended best practices and California law when checking social media and open source internet information about each candidate.

Other steps in the process include a polygraph examination to verify the honesty of the applicant's responses, and a psychological exam performed by a psychiatrist to determine suitability for the position.

The goal in hiring new SBPD employees is not only to find people who are qualified and capable of doing the job (meet POST dimensions), but also to find those who fit the culture of the Santa Barbara Police Department. The Santa Barbara Police Department has adopted principles outlined and recommended by the [President's Task Force Report on 21st Century Policing](#). This guide in many ways defines our current culture and philosophy. This report, and the recommendations within it, have been disseminated through department training, used as an outline for management workshops, and briefed in small team environments.

The final step in the hiring process is our Command Staff and Chief's review of the background investigation and interview with successful candidates who move forward in the process. Only candidates who meet the strictest standards, as defined by Chief of Police Lori Luhnnow, will be successful in this process.

Training

After an applicant successfully makes it through the multi-step hiring process they are given a final job offer as a Police Officer Trainee. Basic training comes next. Most of our officers receive their basic training (Police Academy) at the Ventura County Criminal Justice Training Center, a POST certified academy. A portion of their training addresses racial discrimination (Learning Domain 42). A visit to the Museum of Tolerance is one of the experiences our police trainees currently receive as part of their early education and training.

Following successful graduation from the police academy, and throughout their entire career, our officers participate in regular continuing professional training. SBPD officers do receive training that addresses racism. POST currently requires that all police officers complete Racial and Cultural Diversity/Racial Profiling training every five years. POST has recently released a new training on this topic and our officers will be completing this course soon.

The Santa Barbara Police Department recognizes the importance of training our employees to respect and empathize with all of our community. Beyond POST requirements, we provide training such as Principled Policing, which addresses Implicit Bias. Many of our officers have already completed this training and it is our goal to have 100% of our employees complete this course.

Also provided for our officers, as well as our community, is our VOICES experience. VOICES is an innovative workshop where officers and civilian community are able to engage in a meaningful, bilateral exchange of ideas and perceptions through structured dialogue and facilitated scenarios. Community facilitators collaborate with police facilitators to create a curriculum conducive to police and community trust building, individualized for each organization. These organizations include those who serve members of the community that have been historically marginalized.

This workshop environment allows and encourages dialogue to occur, in a safe environment, in the community, without the strains and stressors for both police and community members during calls for service.

Currently all of our police academy graduates participate in VOICES. Finally, in accordance with state law, all employees of the Santa Barbara Police Department are provided Non-Discrimination and Harassment training at regular intervals throughout their career.

Use of Force

The Santa Barbara Police Department's current Use of Force Policy can be read in its entirety under section 300 of the updated [2019 Department Manual](#), located at www.sbpd.com. In our policy "force" is defined as the application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents, or weapons to another person. It is not considered a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed, or restrained. All incidents where force is used on a person are documented and tracked.

300.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Santa Barbara Police Department's highest priority is safeguarding the sanctity of life, dignity and liberty of all persons. Officers shall demonstrate this principle in their daily interactions with the community they are sworn to protect and serve. The Department is committed to accomplishing this mission with respect and minimal reliance on the use of force by using rapport-building communication, crisis intervention, and de-escalation tactics before resorting to force, whenever feasible. Vesting officers with the authority to use reasonable force and to protect the public welfare requires monitoring, evaluation and a careful balancing of all interests.

This policy recognizes that the use of force by law enforcement, in response to resistance or threats to public safety, requires constant evaluation and is a serious responsibility. The purpose of the policy is to guide an officer's decisions regarding the use and application of force to ensure such applications are used only to effect arrest or lawful detentions or to bring a situation under legitimate control and assist the Department in achieving its highest priority. No policy can anticipate every conceivable situation or exceptional circumstance which officers may face. In all circumstances, officers are expected to exercise sound reasonable judgment and critical decision making when using force options.

The policy includes sections regarding both de-escalation and application of other alternatives to higher levels of forces, as well as a duty to intercede by officers observing the use of force by another officer that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable. Those sections read:

300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERCEDE

Any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. An officer who observes another employee use force that exceeds the degree

of force permitted by law should promptly report these observations to a supervisor.

300.2.2 DE-ESCALATION

An officer shall use de-escalation techniques and other alternatives to higher levels of force consistent with his or her training whenever possible and appropriate before resorting to force and to reduce the need for force. Whenever possible and when such delay will not compromise the safety of the officer or another and will not result in the destruction of evidence, escape of a suspect, or commission of a crime, an officer shall allow an individual time and opportunity to submit to verbal commands before force is used.

Officer trainees receive extensive training in both use of force law as well as arrest and control tactics during the basic academy. Continuing professional training requires that every officer, as part of the two-year training cycle, receive updated training on arrest and control tactics, use of force (including use of a "Force Option Simulator"), firearms training, and First Aid/CPR. In addition to this required training, informal refresher training is regularly conducted at patrol briefings.

In 2018 the Santa Barbara Police Department purchased a Force Option Simulator (FOS) through generous donation from the Santa Barbara Police Foundation. This technology allows officers to test their decision making under stress in a safe training environment, and to practice selecting the appropriate level of force given the problems present in the rapidly evolving training scenario. SBPD Officers began training inhouse with FOS in early 2019.

SBPD Officers are also trained in [Responding to People in Crisis](#), which includes Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). The goal of this training is to increase safety for both the officers and the public that we serve. De-escalation is an important concept incorporated into CIT training, further supporting our department's use of force policy.

Below are the use of force statistics gather by SBPD from January 1, 2016 – June 1, 2020:

| Force Type | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 (through June 1st) | Grand Total |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|------------------------|
| <i>Carotid Restraint</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| <i>Control Hold/Grappling</i> | 14 | 10 | 17 | 11 | 11 | 4 | 67 |
| <i>Extended Range Impact Weapon</i> | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| <i>Impact Weapon</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| <i>K-9 Bite</i> | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| <i>Leg Restraint</i> | 21 | 18 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 54 |
| <i>OC Spray</i> | 4 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 18 |
| <i>Other</i> | 8 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 24 |
| <i>Strikes/Kicks</i> | 18 | 16 | 26 | 18 | 26 | 9 | 113 |
| <i>Take Down</i> | 87 | 56 | 59 | 75 | 83 | 39 | 399 |
| <i>Taser</i> | 11 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 36 |
| <i>WRAP</i> | 0 | 0 | 5 | 22 | 17 | 11 | 55 |
| Total Force Incidents | 165 | 116 | 132 | 147 | 157 | 71 | 788 |
| Total Official Police Contacts | 71635 | 74925 | 71422 | 59269 | 58588 | 19938 | 355777 |
| Percent Force Used | 0.23% | 0.21% | 0.18% | 0.25% | 0.27% | 0.36% | 0.22% |

Below is the breakdown of the ethnicities captured for each of the above listed use of force incidents:

| Ethnicity | Number Use of Force Incidents | Percent of Use of Force Incidents |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Asian | 12 | 1.5% |
| Black | 69 | 8.7% |
| Filipino | 1 | 0.1% |
| Hispanic | 349 | 44.2% |
| American Indian | 2 | 0.2% |
| Middle Eastern | 3 | 0.3% |
| Other/Unknown | 12 | 1.5% |
| Hawaiian | 1 | 0.1% |
| White | 339 | 43% |
| Grand Total | 788 | |

Carotid Restraint

On 6/6/20 the Santa Barbara Police Department removed the "carotid restraint" from the SBPD policy manual. This means that this it is no longer an approved technique to be used by officers in the field. The carotid restraint was only applied three times in the last five years, comprising just .38% of the department's total use of force incidents during that period of time.

The policy manual with this redaction will be publicly posted on the SBPD website.

Policy and Procedure

The Santa Barbara Police Department has a robust policy manual, available for review on the Santa Barbara Police Department website under "[Department Policies](#)." The section below specifically prohibits discrimination, although other sections of the policy manual, as well as the Santa Barbara City Charter, and the Employee Handbook, also prohibit such actions by our employees:

CONDUCT WHICH MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINE:

340.3.3 DISCRIMINATION

(a) Discriminate against any person because of age, race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical or mental disability or medical condition.

Complaint Process

Citizens who feel they have been a victim of police discrimination may file a formal complaint in a number of different ways, including in person at the Santa Barbara Police Department or [online](http://www.sbpd.com) at www.sbpd.com. All complaints are received, reviewed, and necessary investigation conducted in order to determine the appropriate disposition. Citizen complaints are retained in compliance with State law for no less than five years. The complainant is notified of the final disposition, typically by USPS mail.

The following is a breakdown of the citizen complaints we have received during the last four calendar year:

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| TOTAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED | 40 | 27 | 27 | 46 |
| NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS SUSTAINED | 3 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| COMPLAINTS INVOLVING RACE OR ETHNICITY | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| COMPLAINTS INVOLVING USE OF FORCE | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 |

Video and Audio Recording by Officers

The Santa Barbara Police Department currently has Mobile Audio Video (MAV) broadly deployed in the Field Operations Division. This consists of video cameras in the cars, and audio recording devices on the officers. Some officers also have body-worn cameras which are currently in the testing and evaluation phase.

Mobile Audio Video procedure is outlined in section 446 of the policy manual. This policy sections requires activation of the MAV system in any of the following situations:

(a) All field contacts involving actual or potential criminal conduct, within video or audio range, which includes:

1. Vehicular pursuits
2. Suspicious vehicles
3. Arrests
4. Pedestrian checks
5. DUI investigations including field sobriety tests
6. Consensual encounters
7. Responding to an in-progress call

(b) All self-initiated activity in which an officer would normally notify Combined Communications Center.

(c) Any call for service involving a crime where the recorder may aid in the apprehension and/or prosecution of a suspect, such as:

1. Domestic violence calls
2. Disturbance of peace calls
3. Offenses involving violence or weapons

(d) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording.

(e) Any other circumstances where the officer believes that a recording of an incident would be appropriate. Once the MAV system is activated, it shall remain on and shall not be turned off until the incident has concluded. For purposes of this section, conclusion of an incident has occurred when all arrests have been made, arrestees have been transported, and all witnesses, victims, etc. have been interviewed. Recording may cease if an officer is simply waiting for a tow truck or a family member to arrive or other similar situations.

Community Partnerships

The Santa Barbara Police Department values its relationships with the community we serve and we view these relationships as crucial to both the building and maintaining of trust and legitimacy in our community. The following are some of the community groups that SBPD has partnered with: AHA!, AmeriCorps (United Way), Anti-Defamation League, Behavioral Wellness, Child Abuse Listening and Mediation, Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (CADA), Domestic Violence Solutions, Greater Santa Barbara Clergy Association, Just Communities, New Beginnings, Pacific Pride Foundation, Restorative Community Network, Santa Barbara Foundation, and many more.

