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GARFIELD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
POLICY / PROCEDURE
DETENTION

SUBJECT: USE OF FORCE

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 01, 2024
Revised: July 01, 2025
Revised: June 01, 2026

POLICY:
Garfield County Sheriff's Office Detention Deputies will use the minimum amount of force necessary to compel compliance and restore and maintain order and discipline in accordance with State and Federal law.

PURPOSE:
To ensure that deputies use the appropriate level of force necessary in the performance of their duties.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Physical Force:** Any degree of physical force exceeding verbal commands.

- **Non-Lethal Force**: Physical force and/or non-lethal weapons that are of a non-deadly nature or that normally do not result in serious bodily injury or the death of a subject.

- **Intermediate Weapons:** Authorized non-lethal weapons for use, including, but not limited to:
  - Chemical Irritants
  - Impact Weapons
  - Electronic Restraining Devices
  - Other non-lethal weapons as defined by the Sheriff's Office and consistent with individual/team training.

- **Lethal Force:** The intentional use of force which can cause death or serious bodily injury or which creates a degree of risk that a reasonable and prudent person would consider likely to cause death or serious bodily injury.

- **Excessive Force:** Any physical force which exceeds the degree of physical force permitted pursuant to 18-1-707 C.R.S. The use of excessive physical force shall be presumed when an officer continues to

apply physical force in excess of the force permitted by section 18-1-707 C.R.S. to a person who has been rendered incapable of resisting arrest.

- **CHOKEHOLD***: A METHOD BY WHICH A PERSON APPLIES SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO A PERSON TO MAKE BREATHING DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE AND INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO ANY PRESSURE TO THE NECK, THROAT, OR WINDPIPE THAT MAY PREVENT OR HINDER BREATHING OR REDUCE INTAKE OF AIR, APPLYING PRESSURE TO A PERSON'S NECK ON EITHER SIDE OF THE WINDPIPE, BUT NOT TO THE WINDPIPE ITSELF,TO STOP THE FLOW OF BLOOD TO THE BRAIN VIA THE CAROTID ARTERIES.* **CHOKEHOLDS** are prohibited unless lethal force is justified.

METHOD:
The use of force is sometimes necessary in the detention environment for justifiable self-defense, protection of others, protection of property, and prevention of escapes. Use of force is to be used only as a last resort and never as punishment. Force should be employed only to the degree necessary to control the offender(s) or restore order to a disruptive group with a minimum of harm to both staff and the offender(s).

The Garfield County Sheriff's Office adheres to a use of force policy that follows a progressive continuum scale. As a general rule, the deputy will follow the listed steps in sequence in the escalation and de-escalation of force. Whenever possible or practical, initial attempts to control a subject shall be made through verbal means. However, in situations where physical resistance or a threat of bodily injury is encountered, and/or reasonable alternatives to physical force have failed, physical force may be used. It is not mandatory to follow in sequence each step in every situation. Deputies must be able to articulate the basis for the amount of force used and how that force relates to the progressive continuum. The application and degree of such force shall be consistent with Colorado Revised Statutes (18-1-701 thru 18-1-710 C.R.S.), Sheriff's Office standards and the member's training.

No Deputy shall use any level of force without first successfully completing any and all required training in that level of force used.

Use of Force Continuum:
- Deputy Presence and bearing in which Deputies present themselves in uniform
- Use of verbal skills in which Deputies control a situation by communicating verbal instructions
- Application of Physical Force without the use of Intermediate Weapons
- Application of Intermediate Weapons used together with verbal instructions to gain compliance in a non-lethal manner
- Application of Lethal Force
- **CHOKEHOLDS** are prohibited unless lethal force is justified.

Prone Restraint
Deputies who are attempting to restrain an individual(s) that presents a higher risk of assault or escape, or suspected of being armed with a weapon, or physically resisting deputies' efforts to control, may use a prone position or prone restraint on the subject(s).
- Once the subject is controlled and restrained, they shall be moved to a recovery position as soon as practicable.
- Once the subject is in the recovery position, deputies shall monitor them for signs of physical distress, injuries, or complaints of injuries.
- If there are any signs of physical distress, injuries, or complaints of injuries, a deputy or medical staff member shall immediately provide or summon medical aid (verbally by radio, by phone, etc).
- The manner of transitioning the subject into a recovery position, the signs of physical distress, and medical aid provided shall be done in accordance with training.

Care and Treatment: After force has been used against an offender, the offender will be examined by medical staff and receive any necessary treatment as soon as ***safely*** possible, including the opportunity to shower when chemical irritants were used.

Reporting Requirements: A Detention Supervisor will immediately be notified when any type of force is used above the level of verbal compliance. A written report prepared by the deputy involved will be completed no later than the conclusion of that shift. The report will include the following:

- An account of the events leading up to the use of force
- An accurate description of the incident and the reasons for using force
- A description of the intermediate weapon used, if any, and the manner in which it was used
- A description of the injuries suffered, if any, and the treatment given or received.
- At a minimum, Body Worn Camera and/or photographs shall be taken of injuries.
- A list of all participants and witnesses to the incident

All use of force incidents will be reported to the CBI UCR program via the GCSO Records Division.

Restraint Chairs:
Restraint chairs are a necessary tool used in a detention facility to secure an inmate that creates a situation where he/she is a danger to themselves or others. The use of a restraint chair to immobilize an inmate **does not** constitute Use of Force. Rather, a necessary level of force may be used in order to place an inmate in a restraint chair. When an inmate is placed in a restraint chair, the proper use and necessary monitoring shall be applied in accordance with the manufacturer's suggested use and training.

Duty to Report Excessive Use of Force: In accordance with 18-8-802, C.R.S.: A peace officer who, in pursuance of such officer's law enforcement duties, witnesses another peace officer, in pursuance of such other peace officer's law enforcement duties in carrying out an arrest of any person, placing any person under detention, taking any person into custody, booking any person, or in the process of crowd control or riot control, use physical force which exceeds the degree of physical force permitted pursuant to section 18-1-707 C.R.S. must report such use of force to the officer's immediate supervisor.

Duty to Intervene: In accordance with 18-8-802 (1.5), C.R.S.: A Peace Officer shall intervene to prevent or stop another Peace Officer from using physical force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by 18-1-707 C.R.S. The intervening Peace Officer shall report the incident to their immediate supervisor. A written report shall be completed by the intervening Peace Officer within 10 days to include: date, time, location, identities of the involved parties if known, and a description of the actions taken. This report shall be attached to all other reports of the incident. No member of the GCSO shall be disciplined in any way for intervening and reporting in accordance with law.