



Minneapolis Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Number:
5-300

Volume Five – Code of Conduct and Use of Force

Use of Force

5-306 Force Option- Empty Hand Techniques

(08/23/25)

Revisions to prior policies: (09/08/20) (12/22/20) (04/04/21) (01/01/23)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that members using empty hand techniques adhere to the force guiding principles described in P&P 5-301. The force guiding principles include, but are not limited to, the Sanctity of Life (as incorporated below), the Duty to De-escalate, and Objectively Reasonable, Necessary, and Proportional Force.

MPD and its members shall uphold the sanctity of life (P&P 0-102 and P&P 5-301) by striving to protect and preserve human life in all situations and keep the community and MPD members safe from harm.

II. Policy

A. Conditions for Use

Empty hand techniques may only be used in accordance with the requirements described below. In addition to the conditions in this policy, the use of empty hand techniques must be objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional, and members shall use the lowest degree of force necessary (P&P 5-301). When using empty hand techniques members must apply the critical decision-making model (CDM) (P&P 7-801) to continually assess the situation and modulate their use accordingly as the subject behavior changes.

1. Restriction on weaponless strikes

Weaponless strikes shall not be used with people who are complying with orders or are passively resisting as defined by policy.

2. Choke holds prohibited

In accordance with P&P 5-304, choke holds are prohibited. Accordingly, members shall not use their knees or other body parts to pin a subject's neck to the ground.

3. Separate uses of force

Each use of empty hand techniques is a separate use of force that members must separately justify as objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional.

B. Treatment and Medical Aid

In accordance with P&P 5-301, any member who uses force shall, as soon as reasonably practical, determine if anyone displays a visible injury or signs of medical distress, has lost consciousness, has complained of injury or medical distress, or has requested medical attention, and shall render medical aid consistent with current training and request Emergency Medical Service (EMS) if necessary (in accordance with P&P 7-350). Members shall keep the person under close observation until they are released to medical or other law enforcement personnel.

III. Definitions

Empty Hand Technique: Force that employs the member's own body as the mechanism of force (also called bodily force). Empty hand techniques do not include the use of an intermediate or improvised weapon. Empty hand techniques include the following:

Body Weight to Pin: Using body weight to pin a person to the ground or floor, or to a fixed object while the person is lying down.

Control Pressure: Pressing a person into a fixed object, while the person is not lying down (such as applying pressure while the person is against a vehicle or building).

Control or Escort Hold: Temporary holding of part of the person's body, such as the hand, wrist, arm or shoulder, to physically control or direct the person.

Joint Manipulation: Forcefully controlling a person's joint to limit or direct movement. This also includes locks such as wristlocks, armbars, shoulder locks, joint locks, etc.

Pressure Point Compliance: Directed touch pressure that is delivered to gain compliance and may result in brief transitory pain.

Shove: A forceful or severe push, intended to suddenly displace the person or disrupt their balance. Shove does not involve the deliberate blow of a strike.

Takedown: Bodily force used by the member that compels a standing or seated person to the ground or floor, or forceful actions that result in the person ending up on the ground or floor (whether intentional or unintentional).

Examples of actions that constitute takedowns include, but are not limited to:

1. Two-officer or single-officer takedown.

2. A push, pull or shove (including baton pushes and baton shoves) that results in the person ending up on the ground or floor.
3. A vehicle extraction that ends on the ground or floor.
4. Tackling the person.
5. A leg sweep.

Touch Contact: Gentle or moderate force applied to a person who offers minimal or no resistance. Touch is intended to create space, guide or move someone, but is not forceful.

Weaponless Strike: A deliberate hit or blow intended to cause injury or pain. Strikes are more aggressive and are intended to achieve pain compliance or incapacitate the person. Strikes can involve a kick, punch, slap, knee, or any similar action.

Using Empty Hand Techniques: Using force that employs the member's own body as the mechanism of force (also called bodily force).