



# Santa Clara Police

## Training Flash



### DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES & TACTICS

The most successful officers possess situational flexibility and spontaneous adaptability. The more options officers have, the more effective they are at de-escalation. De-escalation techniques and tactics include:

- **Pre-Contact Assessment of the Situation and the Subject:** When possible, determine the causal factors of the conflict or problem. Speak to third parties at the scene or ask specific questions to help classify what type of person you are dealing with. Consider if the conflict or problem is intentional or related to something other than criminal associated behavior.
- **Move, Distract, or Isolate:** Attempt to move or distract the subject away from the source of hostility, anger, embarrassment, or cause of adverse emotions. Create distance or isolate the subject from the source of the problem.
- **Give Them a Voice:** Listen to the subject. Sometimes people just want to tell their side of the story.
- **Use Your Supervisor Effectively:** Sometimes people get satisfaction from speaking to the officer's supervisor about what they think the officer is doing or not doing that upsets them.
- **It's Not What You Say, It's How You Say It:** Watch your tone or tonality of your voice.
- **Be Explanatory:** When tactically safe and appropriate, be explanatory. Educate and explain why you are doing what you are doing and what is going to happen.
- **Identify the Source of Hostility:** Focus directly on the source of hostility, anxiety, fear, or emotion as an external catalyst that might be infuriating your contact. Mitigate or eliminate the external source (problem) and you may resolve the hostility of your contact.
- **Control Non-Verbal Communication:** Your facial expressions, your stance, your hand gestures, and the way you act all communicate messages to others, but you control your physicality, thus you control the message.
- **Take Your Time – Slow Things Down:** Take your time. Use every source of communication that might assist you, make you more effective, or provide you a higher degree of advantage.
- **Winning by Losing:** At your discretion and when the circumstances allow for it, consider letting others win. This means letting them save face, keep their ego intact, especially in front of their friends or family, or to have the last word.
- **The Power of Civility:** Civility is treating others with respect. It is good manners and considering the feelings of others, their position, and the vast human situations—good or tragic—that they find themselves in. Civility is self-disciplined behavior and having patience with those who may not deserve it.



#### **TRAINING POINT:**

Some de-escalation methods might work for some officers and not others or in specific situations, but not all situations. De-escalation techniques that might effectively diffuse one situation very quickly might take time and prolonged efforts for the next. The more options officers have, the more effective they are at de-escalation and such options can range from applied empathy and a yielding friendly approach to immediate physical force.

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