



## How PERF's Use-of-Force Guiding Principles Were Developed

Approximately 200 police chiefs and other police officials from various ranks, along with federal officials, academics, and mental health experts, came to Washington, DC on January 29, 2016, for a meeting convened by PERF to continue discussions about new strategies for reducing police use of force in certain types of situations that do not involve suspects with firearms.

The discussions focused on a draft set of "[30 Guiding Principles](#)" that PERF has proposed, based on years of work involving hundreds of police officials, including several national conferences and field work in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the New York Police Department.

Much of the background information for the 30 Guiding Principles can be found in PERF's August 2015 report, "[Re-Engineering Training on Police Use of Force](#)." This report provides analysis of the critical issues in the words of police chiefs, deputy chiefs, training directors, and others from across the nation who participated in a May 2015 PERF conference. This includes discussion of the so-called 21-Foot Rule regarding encounters with persons wielding knives, policies against shooting at moving vehicles, crisis intervention training to improve the police response to persons with mental illness who are behaving dangerously, and other new approaches to training of officers on use of force.

PERF's February 2015 report, "[Defining Moments for Police Chiefs](#)," also includes discussion by police chiefs of key issues in the 30 Guiding Principles, such as de-escalation strategies to prevent incidents from reaching a point where the life of a police officer or a member of the public is threatened.

A number of other reports by PERF in recent years also provide context and support for the 30 Guiding Principles, particularly PERF's 2012 report, "[An Integrated Approach to De-Escalation and Minimizing Use of Force](#)," which is based on a conference of more than 150 police officials, mental health experts, and others regarding the police response to incidents involving persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities such as autism, drug addiction, or other conditions that can cause them to behave erratically.

It was at that conference that PERF member police chiefs first discussed the importance of "slowing the situation down" in order to allow more time to bring a supervisor and additional personnel and resources to the scene. Slowing down certain types of situations provides time to develop a plan for resolving the incident in a way that is safe for everyone.

It is important to emphasize that PERF's 30 Guiding Principles are about resolving situations in which subjects either have no weapons, or may have knives, rocks, or other weapons – but not firearms. It is these types of encounters in which officers may be able to "slow it down" and consider various options designed to prevent the situation from ever reaching the point where deadly force would be required.

It is also important to note that the first page of the 30 Guiding Principles document emphasizes that the entire approach is designed to increase officers' safety. In all of PERF's conferences leading up to this point, PERF member chiefs have said that the strategies we are proposing will increase officers' safety by helping to ensure that officers do not rush into potentially dangerous situations. It should go without saying that no PERF police chief or anyone else at any of our meetings has ever contemplated compromising officers' safety to achieve other goals.

The PERF 30 Guiding Principles are also based on what we learned in the fall of 2015 when PERF arranged for American police executives from two dozen agencies to travel to Scotland and observe police training there. The UK experience is instructive because police in the UK, like police in the United States, encounter persons with mental illness and persons with knives on a regular basis. Police in the UK have achieved great success in safely resolving these situations without

### Announcements

- [New report: "The Utah Model: A Path Forward for Investigating and Building Resilience to Cyber Crime"](#)
- [New report: "Building Interdisciplinary Partnerships to Prevent Violent Extremism"](#)
- [New report: "Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Success"](#)

### Upcoming Events

- [May 30 - June 2: 2017 PERF/MCCA/NEIA Joint Meeting in Las Vegas](#)
- [June 16: The Future of Emergency Telecommunications](#)

having to use deadly force and without endangering officers. The American police delegation left Scotland with new ideas and insights on how to handle these types of situations using options other than a firearm.

PERF also conducted field research with the NYPD's Emergency Service Unit (ESU), which is a national leader in combining critical incident skills with tactics and equipment to resolve a wide variety of situations. PERF also went to Northern Ireland, where officers use various tactics and tools in situations involving edged weapons.

Most recently, PERF held two conferences of police officials to develop the 30 Guiding Principles that were released at the January 29 meeting. On December 17, 2015, a group of officers, sergeants, and lieutenants from agencies that had been involved in the Scotland field work or had expressed interest in this work came Washington to discuss the issues that had emerged over the last year or more. And on January 12-13, PERF held a second meeting of more than 100 police officials from all ranks, from officers to chiefs, to review a draft of the guidelines.

Many American police executives in recent months have told PERF that they would like assistance from PERF as they begin to implement many of the elements of the PERF 30 Guidelines. Since the January 29, 2016 meeting, PERF has been gratified to see a number of news stories about chiefs who intend to adopt these concepts in their policies and training, such as the following TV news video reports in which chiefs were interviewed:

**Baltimore:** "[Police departments examine use-of-force recommendations report](#)"

**Denver:** "[Denver Police Chief talks about new use of force recommendations](#)"

In the coming weeks, PERF will continue to work with police chiefs to refine the 30 Guiding Principles and produce a comprehensive report detailing all aspects of this work. PERF also will be working with a number of police agencies that have asked for assistance in adopting these principles.

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