



**BATON ROUGE POLICE DEPARTMENT:  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO USE-OF-FORCE POLICIES**

**February 2017**

Eight policies have been identified as national best practices for regulating police use of force, because they have been demonstrated as effective to reduce the need for force and protect officers and civilian safety.

Baton Rouge Police Department's current use of force policy contains only two of those eight policies.

Moving forward, the Baton Rouge Police Department will adopt as formal elements of its use of force policy all eight of the national best practices, as summarized here.

The intent of establishing these measures as formal policy measures, and not merely training guidelines, is to assure that there is clear and enforceable accountability around the implementation and practice of these standards.

The following six policies, described here in summary form, are not contained in the current BRPD use of force policy and will be added to BRPD's use-of-force policy:

#1) Officers will be required to de-escalate situations, when possible, before using force, including through disengagement, area containment, waiting out a subject, summoning reinforcements, calling in specialized units or employing other strategies of de-escalation.

#2) Officers will not employ chokeholds or strangleholds, except in an emergency circumstances where it is immediately necessary to use deadly force and authorized weapons are inoperable, inaccessible or otherwise not available.

#3) Officers will be required to give a verbal warning, when possible, before using deadly force.

#4) Officers will be prohibited from discharging a firearm at a moving vehicle unless a person poses an immediate deadly threat by means other than the vehicle.

#5) Officers will be required to intervene to prevent another officer from using excessive force.

#6) Officers will be required to report all uses of forces and threats of force. (This will include instances in which officers point a weapon at a civilian, which current BRPD policy does not require officers to report.)

Two use-of-force best practice policies are contained in the current BRPD use of force policy.

- The general requirement that officers exhaust all other reasonable alternatives before resorting to using deadly force.
- Articulating a use-of-force continuum that defines specific types of resistance and the type of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to them.

These two measures will be maintained, with possible changes that help to strengthen or make them more specific or relevant.

## Statement regarding changes to BRPD use of force policy

This morning, Mayor-President Broome announced an overhaul of the Baton Rouge Police Department's use of force policies, to align our city's policies with nationally recognized best practices for police use of force.

These policies are well-established, having been developed by hundreds of chiefs, cops, experts and others. But it's still a big deal when cities actually embrace those practices as policy, because doing so give them teeth, makes them enforceable and has been proven to reduce instances of excessive use of force.

With the changes the Mayor-President announced today, Baton Rouge's use of force policies go from being among the weakest 30% of cities in the nation to being among the strongest 7%, in terms of alignment with national best practices.

We congratulate Mayor-President Broome on this historic change in policy and are proud to have played a role in their development.

Here are the changes announced today:

- Officers are required to give a verbal warning, before using deadly force, except where there are exigent circumstances.
- Officers are required to de-escalate situations, when possible, before using force. De-escalation strategies include disengagement, area containment, waiting out a subject, summoning reinforcements, calling in specialized units or employing other strategies.
- Officers will not employ chokeholds or strangleholds, except in emergency circumstances where it is immediately necessary to use deadly force and the authorized weapons are inoperable, inaccessible or otherwise not available.
- Officers are prohibited from discharging a firearm at a moving vehicle unless the vehicle or the persons within the vehicle pose an immediate deadly threat to others.
- Officers will be required to intervene to prevent another officer from using excessive force and to immediately report when they observe the use of excessive force by another officer.

These changes in policy will take place immediately.

