



# 27 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CROWD MANAGEMENT

In light of recent mass demonstrations in cities and towns across the nation following the killing of George Floyd, the Center for Policing Equity produced the following guidelines to assist law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in aligning their policies with best practices around partnering with the community, de-escalation, and use of force in crowd management events.

Read the complete guidelines and learn more about the Center for Policing Equity at [our website](#).

**WE RECOMMEND THAT LEAS AMEND THEIR POLICY MANUALS TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR CROWD MANAGEMENT.**



- 1. Partner with communities to produce policy guidelines** on whether and when police officers should respond to a crowd management event, and when their presence may be unneeded or inflammatory.



- 5. Provide precise definitions** for crowd management scenarios and events.



- 2. Meet with the organizers** of any crowd management event to discuss event objectives, set plans for route and timing, and identify strategies to prevent the escalation of disruptive behavior by individuals in the crowd.



- 6. Expressly affirm de-escalation as a core principle of crowd management.** Brief and retrain all officers in de-escalation principles and practices for crowd management events.



- 3. Partner with communities to implement the policies** and practices recommended in these guidelines.



- 7. Prohibit the routine use of SWAT teams, riot gear, and other civil disturbance clothing or gear** in response to a crowd management event, except where the Incident Commander (or other officer in charge of crowd management response) deems it absolutely necessary to prevent loss of life or grievous bodily harm.



- 4. Expressly affirm officers' sworn duty to protect the First Amendment**, including the free speech and assembly rights of peaceful demonstrators.



- 8. Prohibit the use of racist, insulting, or obscene language or gestures** toward demonstrators, counter-demonstrators, or anyone else present at a demonstration.



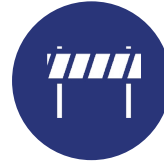
**9. Monitor and respond to verbal conflicts** between demonstrators and individual police officers before the situation escalates.



**15. Prohibit deploying kinetic impact projectiles into a crowd for any purpose, and prohibit the use of less lethal weapons** (such as tear gas, smoke bombs, flash-bangs, pepper balls, mace, and other chemical agents) to control peaceful crowds and individuals who are not posing any immediate threat of serious harm.



**10. Expressly prohibit the use of vigilantes, armed groups, or anyone who is not a police officer** for crowd management (in light of recent media reports that some LEAs have invited armed counter-demonstrators to assist police with crowd management, use of force, and arrests).



**16. Prohibit any practice in which demonstrators are boxed in** or guided to an area from which all avenues of egress are blocked (sometimes referred to as “kettling”).



**11. Affirm that crowd dispersal should not be used as a preventive measure** or as a response to individual violence or unlawful behavior by individuals in a crowd.



**17. Ensure that the Incident Commander assigns a supervising officer**, at the rank of lieutenant (or equivalent) or higher, to the Incident Command post to review and respond to serious use-of-force incidents in real time.



**12. Do not arrest demonstrators unless reasonable and probable grounds exist** to charge them with serious criminal offenses. Mass arrests should not be used for crowd management.



**18. Make clear, explicit, and mandatory the obligation to provide and call for medical assistance** for persons injured at demonstrations (whether they are injured by officers' use of force or otherwise).



**13. Specify the conditions in which a crowd may and may not be ordered to disperse.** A crowd management event should be dispersed only if the crowd presents an immediate risk to public safety, or widespread violence or property destruction appears imminent



**19. Permit journalists, legal observers, and laypersons to observe and record officers' behavior** during demonstrations as well as at other times; observers who position themselves in an area that is closed to the public, or in a way that hinders police officers from performing their duties, should be asked to move, not to stop observing or recording.



**14. Require that, when ordering a crowd to disperse, the order to disperse is audible to the entire crowd** and, if possible, repeated; it must specify the offenses that justify dispersal of the crowd; it must specify avenues by which the crowd is to disperse; and the crowd must be given an opportunity to comply before force is used.



**20. Ensure that every multijurisdictional agreement or mutual aid plan includes an agreement by all LEAs to abide by constitutional rules, state and local laws, and departmental policies** of the jurisdiction where a crowd management event takes place.



**21. Amend policy manuals to require that badges, nameplates, and other personal and agency identifiers be made visible at all times** on the outside of each officer's helmet or uniform, and that every officer provide their surname, badge number, rank, and LEA verbally upon request.



**25. Consult with public health departments, civil liberties organizations, and community groups** to identify best practices for infectious disease control in police activities.



**22. Ensure that when a person is arrested at a crowd management event, the arresting officer is in uniform**, if possible. Require that any plainclothes officer who is involved in an arrest (a) show the arrestee an official badge that identifies the arresting officer as a police officer and identifies their LEA and badge number, and (b) immediately request the attendance of a uniformed officer.



**26. Where departmental rules or state, local, or federal laws impose social distancing requirements or require that police officers (or civilian employees) wear masks**, ensure that all officers and staff comply with them.



**23. Ensure that anyone assigned to crowd management duty is a sworn police officer who has received training in crowd management and de-escalation.** Unidentified persons, untrained persons, and persons who are not sworn police officers shall not be deployed for this purpose.



**27. Where departmental rules or state, local, or federal laws impose social distancing requirements on the transport and detention of arrested persons**, ensure that all officers and staff comply with them.



**24. Ensure that officers comply with methods of crowd control** imposed by judicial decisions, municipal bylaws, state and federal laws, and directives from municipal governments and police chiefs.



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