Police use of force is in the national spotlight. There are four main types of police use of force: verbal, physical, chemical, and firearm. Each type has different implications and outcomes.

**WHEN CAN THE POLICE USE FORCE— AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY DO?**

**WHY DO POLICE USE FORCE?**

1. **Gradual control or solution:** When police are trying to control a situation or bring about a solution.
2. **Protection of others:** When police are trying to protect others from harm.
3. **In self-defense:** When police are defending themselves against harm.

**WHEN CAN POLICE USE DEADLY FORCE?**

Deadly force is used when there is an immediate threat to life or serious injury. This can include situations where an individual is armed and actively threatening the lives of others or themselves.

**DEATHS FROM POLICE USE OF FORCE ARE RARE**

In the United States, there are about 67 million contacts between the police and the public, and only 1 death every month. This means that police use of force is a rare event.

**WHEN IS THE AMOUNT OF FORCE USED BY POLICE CONSIDERED LAWFUL OR JUSTIFIED?**

**Reasonableness**

- Training
- Experience
- Circumstances encountered

**“Reasonable” force**

- Situations requiring less force
- Officer's actions in line with training and experience

**“Unreasonable” force**

- Situations requiring more force
- Officer's actions not in line with training and experience

Just because an officer can use force in a situation does not mean he or she should.

**WHAT FACTORS ARE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING THE “REASONABLENESS” OF ALL FORCE USED BY THE POLICE?**

- Type and amount of force used
- Officer's knowledge, skill, and judgment
- Whether the force was necessary to accomplish a legitimate purpose

**WHAT’S NOT CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING REASONABleness?**

- Race, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics
- Officer's intent or subjective belief that force was necessary

**HOW IS A POLICE USE-OF-FORCE INCIDENT INVESTIGATED?**

- Independent investigation is conducted
- Focus on facts and evidence

**EXAMPLES OF INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION**

- Civilian review boards
- Internal investigations
- External review boards

**“Just the Facts”**

- Over 600 officers have died in the line of duty since the passage of the uses-of-force bill in 2019.