USE OF FORCE BY SECURITY PERSONNEL
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The International Association of Professional Security Consultants has issued this consensus-based and peer-reviewed Best Practice for the guidance of and voluntary use by businesses and individuals who deal or may deal with the issues addressed in the context of third-party premises security litigation.

POSITION STATEMENT

The International Association of Professional Security Consultants has issued this consensus-based and peer-reviewed Best Practice for the guidance of and voluntary use by businesses and individuals who deal, or may deal, with the issues addressed in the context of the use of force by security personnel.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Best Practice is to provide guidance to organizations in the development of an internal policy for the use of deadly and non-deadly force by their security personnel when such force is permitted. Organizations should take into consideration the laws of their jurisdictions and any existing model policies for guidance.

It is recognized that some organizations prefer that their security personnel limit their role to that of an “observe and report” function and not use force in the course of their work.

II. DEFINITIONS

Deadly Force: Any use of force that is reasonably likely to cause death or serious bodily injury.

Documentation: Documentation includes written reports, written statements, video recording, audio recording, photographs, etc.

Non-Deadly Force: Any use of force other than that which is considered deadly force. This includes any physical effort used to control or restrain another, or to overcome the resistance of another, including that force necessary to remove an individual from a premise.

Objectively Reasonable: This term means that, in determining the necessity for force and the appropriate level of force, security personnel are to evaluate each situation in light of the known circumstances, including, but not limited to, the seriousness of the incident, the level of the threat or resistance presented by the subject, and the level of the threat or resistance to the community.
**Security Personnel:** Individuals, other than public employees (federal, state or local government), employed part- or full-time, in uniform or plain clothes, contract or proprietary, hired to protect the employing party’s assets, ranging from human lives to physical property (the premises and contents). This definition includes individuals who are not security personnel, but who regularly perform security-related tasks (e.g., individuals who perform security-related functions in a bar/nightclub, retail loss prevention, etc.).

### III. POLICIES

#### A. Use of Deadly Force

Security personnel are authorized to use deadly force to protect the officer or others from what is objectively and reasonably believed to be an imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm.

#### B. Use of Non-Deadly Force

1. Where deadly force is not appropriate, security personnel may use only that level of force that is objectively reasonable to bring an individual under control.

2. Security personnel are only authorized to use non-deadly force techniques and issued equipment to:
   a. Protect the security personnel or others from physical harm;
   b. Lawfully restrain or subdue a resistant individual; and/or
   c. Bring a situation safely under control.

#### C. Training

In addition to training required for firearms qualification pursuant to local law, security personnel are to receive periodic employer training/instruction to enhance the security personnel’s discretion and judgment when using force in accordance with this policy. Employers should provide appropriate training given the type of equipment and force, which may be used by their security personnel.

#### D. Documentation

All incidents involving the use of force by security personnel will be documented.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES

This bibliography is not to be construed in any way as an endorsement by the International Association of Professional Security Consultants of the publications or the respective authors.


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DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

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ADDENDUM A: Sample Policy Statement and Use of Force Factors

Sample Policy Statement

It is the policy of [this organization, business/enterprise] that security personnel use only the force that reasonably appears necessary to effectively bring an incident under control, while protecting the lives and safety of the invitees, employees, and others as is reasonably possible. Security personnel should attempt to de-escalate any situation before using any level of force upon a person. Should the use of physical force be deemed required, security personnel are to use only that amount of force necessary to overcome the opposing resistance. The use of force must be objectively reasonable. The
security personnel must only use that force which a reasonably prudent person would use under similar circumstances.

**Use of Force Factors:**

The following are among the factors that should be considered when developing a use of force policy:

1. Seriousness of the act or crime
2. Size, age and weight of the subject
3. Apparent physical ability of the subject
4. Weapons possessed by or available to the subject
5. Known history of violence by the subject
6. Whether the subject appears to be under the influence of an intoxicating substance
7. Presence of bystanders
8. Distance from the threat, ability to retreat, and the availability of back up

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