

Chapter 3:

Reporting Use of Force

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	Page No
Introduction to Electronic Use of Force Monitoring	3
Form Completion	8
Form Submission	10
Assigning Roles	10
Security Implications	10
Further Reading	11

Chapter 3

Reporting Use of Force

Introduction to Electronic Use of Force Monitoring

- 3.1 In order to comply with statutory and oversight requirements the Police Service of Northern Ireland is required to record and report on the various types of force used by its officers. The means by which this is achieved is by way of the PSNI Electronic Use of Force Monitoring System.
- 3.2 This system is the single reporting mechanism for application of the types of force listed below whilst on duty. **(This will also refer to the use of PPW whilst off duty.)** Henceforth, all references to the use of force relate specifically to these types:

Firearms

- Drawn (handgun only)
- Pointed but not used
- Discharged
- Humane destruction of animals

Firearms No Persons Present*

- Drawn (handgun only)
- Pointed
- Directing officers to draw/point firearm

The highest level of force used by a firearm must be reported (e.g. if firearm is pointed and firearm is discharged only firearm discharge should be reported on the form).

Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP)

- Public Order - Pointed but not discharged
- Public Order - Discharged
- Less Lethal - Pointed but not discharged
- Less Lethal - Discharged

When AEP is discharged, both Public Order or Less Lethal, there is a requirement to complete a National Evaluation Form which is available on the PSNI Use of Force Monitoring System. This should be completed and uploaded onto the Use of Force report. Operational and Tactical Development Unit will collate these forms and forward to the National Less Lethal Secretariat on a monthly basis.

Conductive Energy Device

- Drawn
- Aimed
- Arced
- Red Dotted
- Drive Stun
- Discharged

The highest level of force used by a CED must be reported (e.g. if the CED is arced and the CED is red dotted only CED red dotted should be reported on the form).

Baton

- Drawn but not used
- Used
- Directing officers to draw batons

The highest level of force used by a baton must be reported (e.g. if the baton is drawn and the baton is used only baton used should be reported on the

form).

Irritant Sprays

- Drawn but not discharged
- Discharged

The highest level of irritant spray used must be reported (e.g. if the spray is drawn and the spray is used only Spray Used should be reported on the form).

Police Dog

- Direct Deployment (including bite accidental/command/provoked)
- Interim Deployment
- Indirect
- Other

Shield

- Used

Water Cannon

- Deployed
- Used

Handcuffs (compliant and non-complaint)

- Used - Rigid (including folding)
- Used - Flexi-cuffs
- Bodycuff

There is no option on the Use of Force System for the Bodycuff system. When

Bodycuffs are used select handcuffs and add a brief explanation in the incident summary to indicate their use.

Limb Restraints

- Used

Police Use of Spit and Bite Guards

- Used
- Attempted Use

When selecting a Spit and Bite Guard there will be the requirement to indicate how long the Spit and Bite Guard was in place on the member of the public in increments of 5 minutes. A small free text box is required to be completed providing a brief explanation regarding the circumstances of the removal of the Spit and Bite Guard.

When Spit and Bite Guards are used outside the custody suite there is a requirement to activate Body Worn Video. Please select from the drop down menu to indicate if Body Worn Video was used and if not, select the reason why.

Unarmed Physical Tactics

- Blocks/Strikes
- Take-downs
- Pressure points
- Physical restraint
- Other improvised tactics

3.3 Officers are reminded of the specific reporting procedures in relation to the above uses of force outlined in the respective sections of this manual.

3.4 Any incident that involves a use of force by an officer other than those listed above will be reported to the officer's supervisor and recorded in their notebook but **WILL**

NOT require the completion of an electronic use of force form.

- 3.5 A separate electronic use of force form must be completed for each location force is used (e.g. if physical restraint is used on an individual in a dwelling in K District, who if then transported to a Custody Suite in L District where handcuffs are applied, then two separate forms must be completed for the respective incidents).

Reporting Process

- 3.6 The form can be accessed via a Desk Top Icon on the Common Terminal. The Electronic Use of Force form must be completed as soon as practicable and, in any event, within 72 hours of the incident or by the termination of the officer's next duty, whichever is sooner. If for any reason officers cannot comply with this timeframe, then they should cite their reason or rationale for not doing so within the summary section of the Electronic Use of Force form.
- 3.7 In the case of an imminent transfer, officers are reminded to ensure the form is submitted prior to the effective date of the transfer.
- 3.8 Officers are also reminded of their duty to verbally report any use of force to their immediate supervisor and to comply with the directions set out in Chapter 2.
- 3.9 Whilst an electronic use of force form will be submitted by the relevant Crew Commander to report the discharge of water cannon, this does not replace the existing post-event reporting process outlined in Chapter 15.
- 3.10 Where the use of force is relating to an ongoing Post Incident Procedure (PIP), the Post Incident Manager (PIM) will ensure that completion of a use of force report is complied with. Where necessary by an officer not directly involved in the incident or use of force.

Form Completion

- 3.11 Officers are reminded that the primary record of the use of force will be their **official police notebook** and subsequent statement of evidence. This should include their justification for the use of force in line with the National Decision Model.
- 3.12 The form is divided into a number of sections and will expand depending on which options are selected. There are a number of mandatory fields marked * and the form cannot be submitted unless these fields are completed.
- 3.13 **Reporting officer** – the reporting officer **must** be the officer who has used the force being reported (unless 3.10 above applies). This section provides details of that officer and all sections must be completed. In the case of long term absence of the reporting officer, a supervisor should contact Operational and Tactical Development Unit.
- 3.14 **Incident Attended** - this section records such details as the date and location of the incident, information on the type of incident and the type of protective equipment and tactical options equipment carried by the officer. The form places each incident into one of the following categories:
- Force used on individual(s).
 - Animal destruction.
 - Water cannon.
 - Direct other officers to draw batons (only to be completed by the officer actually giving the direction).
 - Firearm drawn/pointed where no person is present.
 - Directing other officers to draw/point firearms where no persons are present e.g. a tactical firearms search (only to be completed by the officer giving the direction).
- 3.15 **Force used on individual(s)** is the default setting. As a general rule, when one of the other categories is relevant, officers should ensure that the 'Force used on individual(s)' box is **deselected**. The only exception being where an officer

directs other officers to draw batons and has occasion to use their own baton to strike an individual(s). In such circumstances the officer will select both 'Force used on Individual(s)' **and** 'Direct other officers to draw batons'. When both categories are selected, the officer will be required to complete details on the individual(s) on whom force was used (baton used) **and** details in relation to the number of officers to whom they gave the direction and the estimated size of the crowd etc. Officers who have received the direction are not required to submit a form unless they have used their baton to strike an individual(s) or used an additional type of force. In such circumstances they will complete the 'baton used' section only and complete details on the individual(s) on whom force was used. This rule is also applied in the case of directing officers to draw or point firearms, where no persons are present.

- 3.16 **Offender Details** - this section records all the necessary details in relation to the alleged offender. It includes information on any incidents of assault carried out by the alleged offender and details of any weapon(s) carried. This section also includes details of the type(s) of force used by police. To allow for any additional information to be collected, the form will expand depending in the option(s) chosen. The facility exists to add additional pages if more than one offender is involved.
- 3.17 **Summary** - This section provides a summary of the details provided in previous sections of the form and allows the officer to check that all the necessary information has been included. This section also provides a 'free text' box to allow officers to provide additional information if they feel any form of **brief explanation** is required or they wish to supply details not captured in previous sections of the form. **This is not intended for the officer to provide the rationale and justification of their use of force. This should be recorded in their Official Police Notebook and inspected by a Supervisor.**
- 3.18 **Control Works Closing Codes** – officers should ensure that all serials are updated when a Use of Force return is required. The Control Works operator should be asked to apply the appropriate sub type closing code (**FORC**) so that these incidents can be monitored.

Form Submission

3.19 When the officer is satisfied that all the necessary information has been completed they will submit the form for supervision check. The officer will choose from a dropdown list of Line Managers from within their District/Department. Unless due to annual leave, sickness etc., the officer's first choice will be the officer to whom they are responsible (Line Manager). **The supervision check is a quality assurance process which ensures that the information presented accurately reflects the circumstances and application of the officer's use of force.** If the Supervising Officer is not satisfied that the data is fully completed then the form should be rejected and returned to the Reporting Officer for appropriate amendments. The Supervising Officer will then forward the completed form to Central Statistics Unit who will collate the data on behalf of the Police Service. Personnel authorised by the District Commander/Head of Branch have the facility to monitor use of force form submissions for their respective areas.

Assigning Roles

3.20 There may be occasions when an officer or member of support staff requires access to the form due to role realignment within the organisation or for a specific purpose. Typical roles would include,

- (i) Supervision check (Line Manager) - **responsible for the quality assurance process.**
- (ii) Validator
- (iii) Interested party
- (iv) Area Ops Manager
- (v) Administrator

3.21 In such instances a written request should be forwarded to Operational and Technical Development Unit for consideration.

Security Implications

3.22 All officers are reminded of their responsibility to protect the confidentiality and

PSNI Manual of Policy, Procedure and Guidance on Conflict Management

integrity of PSNI information and the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The information contained in the Use of Force Form has been protectively marked OFFICIAL SENSITIVE and should only be disseminated to those who are authorised to have access. It is the officer's responsibility to store, handle and dispose of the information contained in the form in compliance with the PSNI Manual of Protective Security. This manual is available on Point.

Further Reading

- 3.23 Officers are reminded of the specific reporting procedures in relation to the above uses of force outlined in the respective sections of the **PSNI Manual of Policy, Procedure and Guidance on Conflict Management and Article 4 of PSNI Code of Ethics**.