

Australia New Zealand Use of Force Principles

PURPOSE:

These Principles provide guidance for jurisdictions in the development and application of policies and procedures, and promote cross-jurisdictional co-operation for continuous improvement in the area of operational safety.

DEFINITION:

Use of force by police officers includes any situation where police use physical force or other techniques, including a weapon, instrument or implement, in the lawful execution of their duty.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

The authority to use force is derived from the law.

- Police should only use force that is reasonable, necessary, proportionate and appropriate to the circumstances.
- Police should use no more force than is reasonably necessary for the safe and effective performance of their duties.
- Individual police are accountable and responsible for their use of force and must be able to justify their actions at law.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES:

Police organisations should:

- use a situational model to guide police in the use of force
- provide police with regular skill, knowledge development and equipment to safely and effectively respond to potential use of force incidents
- make support services available to police involved in use of force incidents
- emphasise the importance of effective communication and conflict resolution skills
- provide guidance to police to manage risks associated with the use of force
- maintain governance structures to report, record, monitor and evaluate the use of force to improve public and police safety.