

# New Bedford Commission to Review NPBD Use of Force Policies

## Related Recommendations, Observations, and Concerns

The following recommendations, observations, and concerns were captured by the New Bedford Commission to Review NPBD Use of Force Policies throughout the months of July, August, September, October and November 2020. It is recognized that while the nature of these items is beyond the mandate of the Commission, it is important that these items be forwarded to Mayor Jon Mitchell as significant time was spent in discussion on each topic and each bears significant relevance for Police reform.

The very limited scope of the charge given to the Commission guarantees that only very minimal reform of policing in New Bedford will take place, if all we are about doing is tweaking a package of policy documents on the use of force. It is an important element in transforming policing but does not equate to the totality of transformation of policing consistent with the Obama Foundation's Mayor's Pledge. Several other measures and initiatives would need to be considered and undertaken to approach significant transformation of policing. Reforming the use of force policies alone is insufficient for overall Police reform.

A culture of accountability in law enforcement is of utmost importance. A culture of accountability in law enforcement builds trust between the Police and the community. The public holds the Police to high standards. When Police Officers violate the rules, they break public trust and lose credibility. This ultimately makes policing more difficult, as people are unlikely to cooperate with police if they don't trust them. Accountability is a key component of effective Policing efforts.

When the public sees that law enforcement has systems in place to enforce Police accountability, it is more likely to see Police as legitimate. And therefore, they will be more willing to assist the Police.

It is important for Officers to be mindful of their actions and maintain objectivity, keep an open mind, and give others the benefit of the doubt. Police Officers shouldn't be in a hurry to make an arrest and above all, never underestimate the value of courtesy and respect.

1. The Commission strongly endorses New Bedford's adoption of body camera usage for Police Officers when on duty. The Commission recommends a pilot program be created for Officers to test body cameras and that all funding sources be leveraged to ensure a body camera program is implemented and sustained."
2. The NPBD should not execute "NO KNOCK WARRANTS" without a Judge's approval.
3. The NPBD should broadly publicize and promote the procedure for filing a complaint against the NPBD to residents of New Bedford, at schools and in marginal communities.

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4. The Commission seeks more training and guidance for Police Officers on how to engage without those experiencing mental illness, intellectual and physical disabilities. Sensitive and informed practices in these matters may be extremely valuable in preventing or minimizing wholly avoidable adverse outcomes that endanger both citizens and Police Officers. This is consistent with our support for enhanced de-escalation training.
5. NPBD Police Officers should be trained annually on the use of force policies and be required annually to demonstrate proficiency in the comprehension and application of such policies.
6. All NPBD Police Officers should be trained annually on implicit bias, explicit bias, anti-racism, and cultural competency. Emotional Intelligence testing should be required for hiring.
7. An independent committee, including people who are not Police Officers, should be created to review any cases related to use of force and documents from such cases should be public.
8. Culturally responsive, comprehensive de-escalation training must be provided to all officers. Teaching Police Officers to rely on communication and negotiation tactics rather than physical force can effectively teach a guardian-style mentality.

*(12/9/20)*