

In addition to the above department training, the Medford Police Department adheres to, and is trained on the Use of Force Continuum Model as presented by the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC). The following is a synopsis of the training.

**MPTC USE OF FORCE REFERENCE GUIDE**

Perceived Circumstances

Perceived Subject Action(s)

Reasonable Officer Response(s)

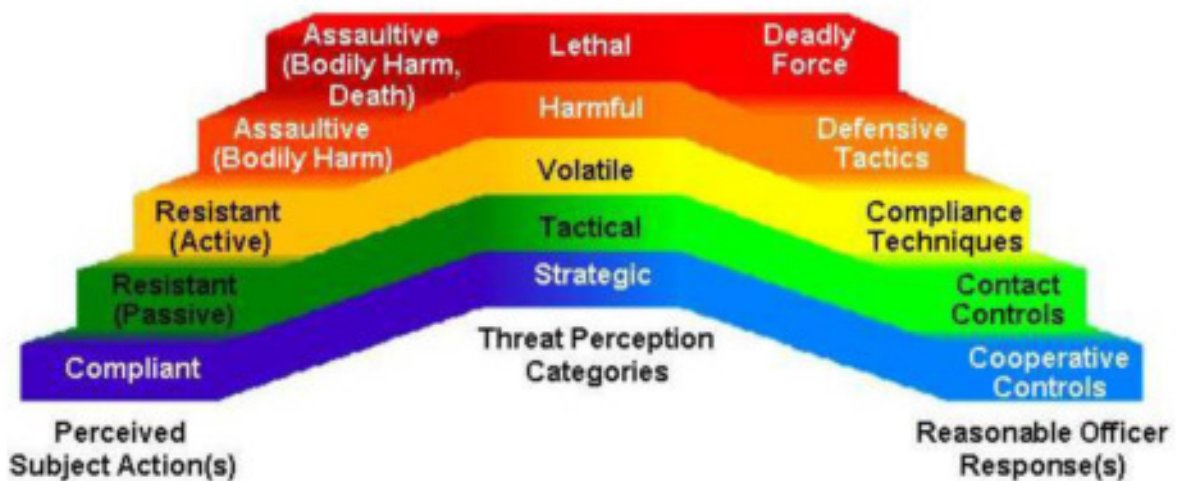
The **Totality Triangle** depicts the three elements which must be considered in determining whether an application of force was objectively reasonable.

**Perceived Circumstances** - the situations that are perceived by the reasonable officer within a confrontational environment, which present a risk or potential risk to officer safety. Issues including the severity of the crime, degree of subject non-compliance, knowledge of the subject’s previous actions, etc. can act as a test for reasonableness and a criterion for placement in one or more of the perception categories on the Model.

**Subject Action** - the action(s) perceived by the reasonable officer that place the subject in one or more of the Model’s compliant/non-compliant categories.

**Officer Response** - the “balanced” response the reasonable officer could and or would select from the Model’s identified categories, in order to maintain or re-gain subject compliance and control.

MPTC Use of Force Model



As is readily apparent, the proper perception and assessment of risk is the core consideration in the decision making process toward proper force utilization. It is the functional foundation for the two other major Model categories and integral to their understanding and application.

The five (5) assessment categories include;

**Strategic** - the broad foundation of the Model. Here the officer is engaged in duties with occupationally produced perception of responsibilities of responsibilities and risks. An officer must maintain the proper mindset and awareness level whenever working.

**Tactical** – At this level the officer perceives an increase of risk within the confrontational environment and safety strategies are deployed. When an officer perceives this increased risk, he or she must deploy those base tactics that set the ‘stage’ for a potential increase in the threat level.

**Volatile** - the third category on the Model indicates an activated degree of alertness, where the officer identifies specific risks. The officer perceives that the situation that he or she has encountered has been elevated to the point where it could explode into a physical encounter. The officer must not only recognize this threat potential but also act upon it. Many times this category represents the most critical intervening level or phase within a confrontation. If the officer assesses the subject’s actions properly he or she may be able to stabilize the degree of non-compliance at a resistant level before it escalates to an actual assault on the officer or others. Here, a tactical plan of action must be developed and deployed to gain compliance and control. This advanced degree of risk potential should motivate the officer to increase the level of receptiveness more formally away from the actor and more directly toward the actions of the subject and others present.

**Harmful** – this level denotes an accelerated perception of danger and a more directed focus on officer/citizen safety and defense. At this level, the officer perceives that this encounter has escalated to the point where he or she is faced with a situation where a physical assault is imminent. The officer must take immediate steps to stop the attack and/or individual and gain or regain control.

**Lethal** – is the highest category of risk on the Model. This potentially lethal category of risk is the most infrequent and yet the most crucial for officer/citizen safety. The officer perceives that he, she or another is at risk for serious bodily harm and/or death.

### Subject Action Categories

This facet of the Model consists of five categories of perceived subject actions, potentially providing the additional foundational focus for an appropriate, "balanced" response of controlling force.

All that the subject does or does not do, all that is said or not said, along with numerous other factors (i.e., size, age, prior knowledge, etc.) are considered when an officer is

evaluating the type of subject they have encountered. The officer's perceptions will be based on these actions as they relate them to their personal experience, job experience, training, etc.

The five categories of subject action include:

Compliant - within the normal realm of interaction, the vast majority of officer/subject encounters are positive and cooperative. The officer maintains or gains compliance to desired directives via options of tradition, time, communication skills, etc.

The subject is perceived as being compliant because he or she has obeyed all of the lawful commands or orders of the officer.

Resistant (Passive) - in some confrontational contacts, the subject may offer a preliminary level of noncompliance. Here the subject's degree of noncompliance is free of physical or mechanical enhancement, other than sheer unresponsiveness.

The subject is perceived as being uncooperative in that he or she is not obeying some or all of the lawful commands given by the officer. The subject is not using any physical or mechanical assistance to assist in the resistant effort

Resistant (Active) - at this level, the subject's noncompliance has become more active in scope and intensity. The indifference to control has increased to a level of an energy-enhanced physical or mechanical defiance.

The officer perceives that the subject's level of resistance has reached a level where there is a physical or mechanical effort associated with it. This effort to resist the arrest could be any physical effort that does not amount to an assault.

Assaultive (Bodily Harm) - the officer's attempt to gain lawful compliance has met with active, non-compliance culminating in an actual attack upon the officer or others. It would be the reasonable officer's assessment that the scope and severity of the attack would amount to a level of bodily harm and would not reach the level of serious bodily harm or death or serious bodily, to the officer or others.

From all that the subject does and says, along with any additional information gained, the officer perceives the risks associated with this particular situation to be a risk of bodily harm to himself, herself or others.

Assaultive (Serious Bodily Harm/Death) - this category represents the least encountered yet most serious risk to officer safety. Here the reasonable officer could conclude that the officer or another is subject to death or great bodily harm as a result of the subject's actions.

The officer perceives that this subject(s) has the opportunity, ability and intent to cause serious bodily harm and/or death to himself, herself or others.

Officer Response Categories

This facet of the Model consists of the five categories of officer-initiated responses, which must be "balanced" in regard to the officer's reasonable assessment of risk and subject action. This response is based on the reasonable officer's risk assessment as well as the subject's actions.

Cooperative Controls - includes the fundamentals of professional training capitalizing upon the acceptance of authority by the public at large. These cooperative controls would include communication skills, fundamental tactics, body language, officer presence, etc.

Contact Controls - This first instance of non-compliance that an officer is confronted with. The officer must deploy those fundamental tactics to proportionately gain control and cooperation through "hands on" techniques designed primarily to guide or direct the subject. The primary force options at this level could be transitional tactics and non-pain compliance techniques (such as touch techniques and the basic Escort Position), etc.

Compliance Techniques - The tactical procedures used at this level now must address the non-compliant subject who has begun to use physical or mechanical energy to enhance non-compliance. The officer deploys "balanced" force to overcome this non-compliance, while remaining increasingly vigilant for more aggressive behavior from the subject. At this stage the force forms could include elements of pain compliance, joint restraints, etc. Specific tactics include all of the empty hand and baton controlling techniques, distraction techniques (which includes Pressure Points, use of Pepper Spray as well as the TASER in the Drive Stun mode).

Defensive Tactics - at this stage in the confrontation, the non-compliant subject now directs an assaultive act toward the officer or others. The officer is justified in taking appropriate steps to immediately cease the assaultive action and to gain compliance and maintain control of the subject. Forms of force could include empty hand and baton strikes, takedown techniques, and the firing of a TASER cartridge, etc.

Deadly Force - the officer is now confronted with an assaultive situation that reaches the ultimate degree of danger. Absolute and immediate tactics must be deployed to stop the lethal risk and secure conclusive compliance and control. Force options could include those leading to permanent debilitation or even death.