

MODEL OF TACTICAL POLICE ACTION WHEN USING PHYSICAL FORCE

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Abstract: *The police, as a public service, while performing its legal activities has at its disposal preventive and repressive forms of action. It is a rule that the preventive forms of action always have the priority, and only in specific circumstances the police is obliged to use repressive measures, such as: physical force, means of restraint, rubber baton, firearms, police dogs, etc. In this paper, only the use of physical force from tactical and security points of view is analyzed. This paper includes detailed analysis and elaboration of a model that refers to the most important phases of the police work. The structure of the model includes several tactical and security activities that determine the manner of tactical police actions during the whole procedure of performing police duties. The initial phase of the procedure includes: identification and evaluation of the seriousness of the threat, establishing verbal communication and maintaining optimally safe distance. The further phases, depending on the situation and according to the rules of self-defense, include using certain amount of physical force in order to reject the threat or to bring under control the resistance.*

Keywords: *POLICE, PHYSICAL FORCE, TACTICAL PROCEDURE, DEFENSE TECHNIQUES, ACTIVE RESISTANCE, PASSIVE RESISTANCE, PHYSICAL ATTACK.*

1. Introduction

In the Republic of Macedonia, the police are authorized and responsible for putting into practice the provisions of the Law on Police [18], as well as the other by-laws which are part of this Law [14, 17]. In order to execute their legal activities, the police dispose of the preventive and repressive forms of action. As a rule, the preventive forms of action have the priority, for example: rubber baton, firearms, handcuffs, etc. [7]. This paper focuses mostly on the physical force, which as a method of restraint can be applied in the following situations:

- to restrain the resistance of an individual who disturbs the public peace and order, and to restrain the resistance of an individual who needs to be detained, arrested or deprived of liberty;
- to restrain someone who is trying to attack the police or the facility which is safeguarded;
- to prevent the escape of an individual who has been found near or on the crime scene and who is suspected of committing the crime.

The use of physical force, which helps in putting under control the resistance of another person includes application of numerous defense and attack techniques, and for these reasons, it is very important to analyze all circumstances and events in regard to security, because the goal of the procedure is to apply only those defense techniques in achieving the goal of law which are least dangerous and cause little or no damage [2]. As a rule, physical force should only be applied during the defense or attack, because if it continues with the same intensity after the defense or attack, it can lead to authorization overstepping. In order to prevent this, police officers should tend to focus on those parts of the body which are less likely to be severely injured. Taking into consideration the different forms of physical force, it is extremely important to choose the most suitable method and to prevent the threat on time, because every prolongation increases the danger and risk of inadequate police actions.

2. Tactical and security procedure for the use of physical force

When police officers use physical force they should be well acquainted with the legal rules and regulations in order not to overstep their professionalism, ethic and human behavior [8]. Apart from taking into consideration and legal provisions, the police officers should work to provide conditions for adequate tactical action, mostly when it is known that physical force is used in specific circumstances that put into danger the safety and in which counterattack is prevented and disabled, and when resistance is being restrained or when escape is being prevented.

It is very difficult to establish strict tactical rules of action in cases when physical force is being used, but it is very important for the whole process to make suitable security evaluation and to make

decision for choosing the adequate techniques (ventures) which would help police officers to eliminate the danger on time and to put under control the assailant [15]. The tactical proceeding during the use of physical force includes several tactical and security activities which influence on the manner in which the individual should be brought under control before any physical contact is established, during the intervention and after the intervention [16].

2.1. Initial tactical activities when physical force is being used

The police officers, when starting any tactical procedure, in order to avoid physical contact with the individual and to exclude the possibility of using physical force, try to solve the conflict peacefully (preventively). In order to act tactically as best as possible on the beginning of the procedure, the threat is identified and assessment of its seriousness is conducted, and then, based on the information that was collected, a strategy for the further procedure is being made. When the threat is estimated, the seriousness of the danger and the possible reaction of the individual are being determined.

During the analysis of the risk factors, the police officers take into consideration every threat that has been manifested (verbal assaults, disobedience of the law, ignoring the warnings, provocative attitudes) and potential risks of assault (hiding the hands, change of facial skin color, suspicious facial expressions, widening of the pupils, fast breathing, change of moving direction, etc. When all direct and indirect danger indicators are being observed and perceived, visual control on the person is achieved by approaching him naturally, like trying to start a conversation - interview (figure 1) [10].



Figure 1. *Initial tactical approach for verbal communication with an individual*

During the establishment of this spatial position, the body is turned half-left or half-right from the face, the hands are alongside the body or put in front of the abdomen, the knees are slightly bent with equal weight distribution on both legs, and feet are shoulder width apart. With this posture, in order to provide safe

communication, the person is held at a distance of at least 1.5 meters. From tactical point of view, this distance is also called 'safety zone distance', because it allows police officers to timely react, withdraw, prevent attack, or to prevent the individual to use any sharp object or weapons [4].

During the time the police officers have this posture, they should be careful not to cause irritation and to provoke the individual with their posture, but it should only help them to provide tactical advantage and control of the whole situation. In order to maintain the necessary visual control on the person, it is necessary, by giving commands, to impose their will, in other words, to convince the individual to give up from their planned intentions. Controlling the situation, with the help of communication is of crucial importance for reducing the psychological and emotional tensions of the individual, but also in order to achieve their intentions, police officers must react quickly and to show that they are able to apply certain tactical and communication skills [5]. In such intense (insecure) situations, the verbal messages directed on the individual should be short, straightforward and unambiguous and reflect the security circumstances at the moment.

Regarding the types of the problem (impeding an attempt of taking objects that can cause bodily injuries, impeding an attempt of committing a crime, witnessing that someone is committing a crime, giving resistance by lying down, sitting, holding to some object, disobeying legal orders, trying to escape or escaping, etc), police officers, when addressing use the following phrases: 'stop every movement and stay there!', 'step back!', 'throw the object far away!', 'keep calm, we will try to solve the problem!', 'you must immediately leave this place!', etc.

In cases when the verbal advices, suggestions, warnings and orders will not give the expected results (preventive solution of the conflict), tactical actions for impeding the attack or bringing under control the resistance with the use of physical force is imminent. In order to react quickly and on time, the police officers put aside the abovementioned attitude of making conversation and engage into defensive attitude or prepare to fight (figure 2) [6]. In order to guarantee the needed stability and protection during the fight, the police officers bent down and go one step back or in front, while the hands are raised vertically to chest with the palms opened.



Figure 2. Taking fight position during the use of physical force

When the police officers take fighting position, if all specific elements which part of this process (diagonal position of the feet, elbows bent and parallel to the body, body weight equally distributed on both legs, head down) are properly applied, quality for timely and successful reaction and conduction of different tactical ideas will be guaranteed. Adequately taken fighting position is a starting point of the application of different technical and tactical elements (use of different techniques and blockades, hits, suffocations, falls and other fighting techniques), which are used by police officers during the fight in order to overcome the resistance and to stop (block) the attack [9].

In the first part of taking the fighting position, despite of the need to take suitable tactical position in space it is also very important to not allow the fighting position be a reason or motive 'act of provocation' for undertaking activities that will lead to physical confrontation, but it should help police officers to reduce the tension and exclude the possibility to solve the conflict with use of force. This mostly refers to those situations in which the

individual does not show much resistance, or shows minimal (not dangerous) intentions to attack. In order to bring the whole situation under control and to have the time to react if the following course of the action requires the use of physical force, the individual should not be allowed to approach very close, in other words, on a distance in which he/she can 'grab' the police officer [10, 16]. To maintain this distance and to prevent the individual to get very close so he can harm the police officer, it is necessary that the police officers know how to rationally manage the space. During the fight, and depending on the specificity of the security circumstances and the reactions of the individual, the police officers can move in every directions, in other words, to move the body walking in front, stepping back and moving left or right [9]. In order to maintain the body in a position optimal for fighting, it is necessary to keep the body in the previously taken fighting position. This means that police officers should not allow too much vertically directed oscillation from the center, transferring body weight only on one leg and crossing the legs.

While police officers try to maintain safe distance from the person when moving in fighting position, they must, within a short period of time, predict the further steps (intentions) of the person, and in accordance with the current situation, to plan the tactical activities during the use of physical force. Taking into consideration the complex and changeable circumstances in which they act, it is very difficult in a short period of time to evaluate all circumstances which are part of the situation and it is crucial to notice the most important elements that point out in which manner physical resistance or attack will proceed. Starting from the fact that the use of physical force is a collection of different combat activities, methods and procedures, police officers must quickly and efficiently choose the most suitable technique 'tool' that would be most adequate for the current situation and according to the rules of applying self-defense skills, to stop (disable) the person to achieve their goals (figure 3) [3].

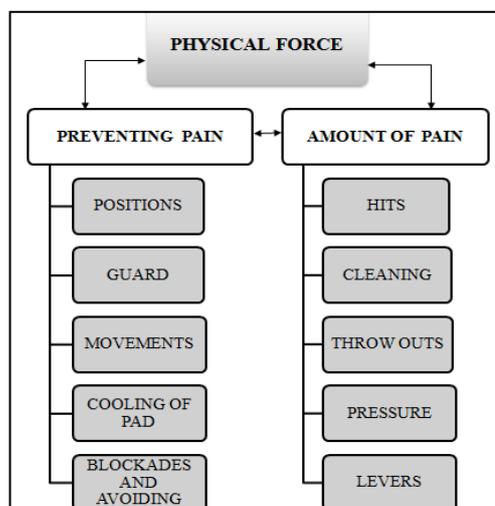


Figure 3. Types of self-defense techniques during use of physical force

Because the system of self-defense techniques that is used in the form of physical force includes numerous technical elements (positions, blockades, hits, throw outs, pressure, fixations, levers, avoiding, etc) which differ according to their structure, dynamics, intensity, time, it is very important to structure and combine them promptly during the performance of the tactical activities.

According to the already given classification, the first group of techniques that are applied during the use of force allows successful situational approach and space management without allowing the possibility certain dangers to arise which would cause physical injuries (preventing pain), while the second group of techniques is applied to control the person by causing him certain amount of pain on certain parts of the body.

2.2. Tactical phases of the use of physical force

Taking into consideration the wide spectrum of elements which are part of the groups of techniques, they are mostly applied during the conduction of the following tactical phases [1]:

- Tactical phase of use of physical force during defense;
- Tactical phase of use of physical force during an offensive (counter-attack);
- Tactical phase of use of physical force when preventing an attack.

When the tactical phase of defense is being carried out, the primary goal of the police officers is to establish suitable position in regard to the attacker, to move in space quickly, precisely and with good maneuvers and to use suitable blockade techniques. In cases when the attack has already started, the defensive tactic or the self-defense includes combined techniques which cover moving in fighting position and blockade techniques. Regarding the attack (hits with the fist, hits with an open palm, hit with an elbow, knee, leg, foot, using different objects) and the maneuver in which these are applied (directly, laterally, semicircular, from up to down and vice versa, backwards, combined, etc.), different types of defense movements are being carried out (stepping forward straightly or diagonally, stepping backwards, stepping left or right, rotating on one leg, etc) which block the attacks by rejecting them, using different body parts (avoiding) without allowing physical contact with the attacker (figure 4) [9].



Figure 4. Use of physical force during defense

When this tactical phase is being carried out, it is extremely important not to allow the attacker to use series of attacks that would unnecessary put into danger the personal security of the police officers. The tactical action should help police officers to provide conditions for transition from defensive to offensive attack or counter-attack.

Due to the time limitations which are typical for both tactical phases, police officers must quickly and energetically develop defense transformation and prepare a plan (action) for application of certain self-defense tactics during the further course of action. Because the process of planning and preparing offensive attack is timely limited, the choice of suitable techniques must be strictly coordinated to the behavior of the person, because it will reduce the possibility of increasing the resistance and police officers will gain time to bring the person under control.

When the offensive attack is launched, the elaboration of the information and the speed of the reaction after the defense are the elements which determine the structure of the attack and the selection (composition) of the techniques of self-defense which are applied as strategic methods during the attack. In such complex (uncertain) circumstances when the police officers determine the structure of the attack, two types of offensive attacks can be put into practice [12]:

- Attacks with simple (easy) structure, and
- Attacks with complex structure.

The simply structured offensive attacks contain limited number of techniques and methods (one to three defense techniques. These

techniques, even limited, can belong to different groups and subgroups of the different methods used in the form of physical force (figure 5). In this context, different groups (combinations) of techniques can be applied, such as: hits with the fists (direct punch with open or closed palm, semicircular punch with the fist, semicircular punch with the elbow), leg kicks (direct leg kick, roundhouse leg kick, lateral leg kick, knee kick), throws or flips (throwing some object, manual flips, leg flips), levers (levers with stretching out the ankle, levers with bending the ankle, levers with twisting the ankle, combined levers), grabbing techniques, suffocation techniques, etc [11].



Figure 5. Use of physical force during an offensive attack

Unlike the simple offensive techniques, the structure of the complex attacks includes more segments (techniques, group of techniques, compositions) which are significantly more numerous than the elements of the attack with simple structure. Most frequently, the attacks with complex structure are used when police officers fail to bring under control the resistance of the person by using attacks with simple structure.

The tactical stage of the use of physical force during prevention of attack is applied when the person has not still launched the attack or is starting to launch it (initial phase). In order to prevent this attack or to disable its further development, suitable tactical space positioning and the ability to quickly and timely approach the person is crucial for solving the conflict. The self-defense techniques that are used in order to prevent the attack are applied individually or combined with the other techniques, as well as in the previous tactical phases (figure 6).



Figure 6. Use of physical force during attack prevention

Taking into consideration all complex and changeable situations which require the use of physical force during the conduction of the tactical phases, it is impossible to previously establish strict sequence of actions, because these phases are mutually interrelated and connected to each other.

3. Conclusion

The legal obligation and duty of the police during the conduction of the regular and special actions is to act on a manner which would minimize the need of applying use of force when possible. Unfortunately, in reality, the police come more and more frequently in contact with citizens who express certain dissatisfaction which often impedes the possibility of peaceful solution of the conflict. The concept of applying persuasion, advice and warning which aim to deter, can only be achieved when the citizens who are communicating with the police at that given moment rationally understand the consequences of their actions. On the other hand, those citizens, who in most of the cases are

unpredictable or who manifest aggressive behavior are most frequently repressed, or physical force is applied on them. As a result of the many dynamic and uncontrolled variables which are result of the conflict between the police and citizens and which leads to the possibility of physical injury of one or both parties, it is extremely important that the police show that they are able to act professionally, rationally and tactically which is in accordance with the stipulated legal, security and ethic rules and norms.

3. References

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