



NEWPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

"Police and Community - Partners in Excellence"

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY



March 17th, 2025

Over the weekend, the City of Newport hosted an extremely successful St. Patrick's Day Parade. There were thousands of visitors who came to enjoy a world class parade in a world class city. The members of Newport's Public Safety Team deployed a large operation to ensure the residents and visitors were safe and enjoyed themselves during the event.

As we see with any large event gathering, there are those people who may become ill or injured, or in some unfortunate circumstances, do not behave appropriately. It was up to our Police and Fire Departments to come together and mitigate these few situations.

As we know, video footage often circulates on social media following incidents that involve physical interaction between the police and members of the public. I want to take this opportunity to address how our department processes such incidents, especially when they involve the use of force.

First, I want to acknowledge that seeing two people engaged in a physical confrontation—particularly one where force is being used to control the actions of another—can be deeply unsettling. It goes against our basic sense of civility, and I understand the emotional response this can evoke, especially when it's happening within our own community. Regardless, the impact of these situations can be jarring. If you know the individuals involved, or if you have strong personal views on policing, those emotions can intensify.

As Chief of Police and Director of Public Safety, I want to be very clear: I understand these emotional responses, and I take them seriously. After any use of force incident, it's my responsibility to ensure that the actions taken by our officers align with the legal standard of reasonableness and comply with our agency's policies. I want to make it absolutely clear that excessive force is not tolerated, either by myself or any member of my team.

We ensure professional application of force through continuous training of our officers in the subject of de-escalation and the physical techniques involved in the apprehension of a person. When force is used, we initiate a tiered review process. This review of the force used during an incident occurs regardless if there is a complaint or not. It happens every time the police use force. For our purposes, we define 'use of force' broadly—it encompasses any physical exertion or the use of force tools by officers to overcome resistance or to protect the safety of the public and officers. Immediately after the application of force by the police department, an on-duty police supervisor is called upon to immediately assess the circumstances of the situation and the force used during the incident. That supervisor will then make a decision as to the reasonableness of the force and its adherence to policy. Regardless of the decision made by the initially responding supervisor, a second review is initiated in the days following the incident by

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a supervisor assigned to our "Office of Officer Safety and Conflict Resolution". The supervisor assigned to this office is our in-house subject matter expert on the professional application of force and all of the nuances surrounding use of force investigations. This supervisor reviews the use of force a second time and also reviews the decision made by the initial responding supervisor. At times, this second review has the advantage of additional information that may not have been available during the initial review. Under certain circumstances, force may be reviewed by the Attorney General and a team from the State Police.

This past weekend there were a number of incidents where our officers applied some type of force. Most of these use of force incidents are making their way through the standard review process and are at different stages at this time. Even though posts on social may elicit varied levels of emotion, remember that there can much more to a situation than what you may see in a short video clip. After the multi-tiered review of the force used by Newport Police Officers in the circulating video clip from this past weekend, I have determined our police officers acted in accordance with the reasonableness standard, in compliance with our department's policy and without excess.

It is my hope that this explanation of our review process brings some transparency about our department procedures and shows our commitment to our community.

Respectfully,

Ryan G. Duffy
Chief of Police
Director of Public Safety

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