

June 8, 2020

A message to the residents and visitors of Gurnee,

The mission of the Gurnee Police Department is based on the foundation to treat all individuals with dignity and respect. These core principles are the building blocks for procedural justice and are at the forefront of expanding fairness in our community-oriented policing goals. In addition to the *8 Can't Wait* initiatives being requested nation-wide, the Gurnee Police Department has additional previously established standards of practice to ensure the transparency and accountability of our officers. We consider these our **10 to Defend** initiatives and we would like to elaborate on what our department is doing in each category. We welcome the opportunity to have a conversation with the community to share our mission, policies, and procedures.

## 10 TO DEFEND

### 1. Ban Chokeholds and Strangleholds

Gurnee officers are prohibited by Illinois State law and department policy from using chokeholds or strangleholds unless authorized for deadly force. This means officers are not allowed to use these defensive tactics, or any other tactic, that would involve applying direct pressure to the throat with the intent to prevent the intake of air. The only circumstances that may allow for this type of action are when a civilian's life or a police officer's life is threatened with great bodily harm or death.

### 2. Require De-Escalation

Every officer within our department receives continual training through the Verbal Judo Institute. The belief behind the program is to create a safer world by delivering practical strategies to effectively de-escalate conflict and potential violence. Officers are taught the Five Universal Truths and are asked to use these truths in their everyday interactions with people within the community.

1. All people want to be treated with dignity and respect.
2. All people want to be asked rather than being told to do something.
3. All people want to be told why they are being asked to do something.
4. All people want to be given options rather than threats.
5. All people want a second chance.

### 3. Require Warning Before Shooting

Each month Gurnee officers train in various forms of use of force. During that training, they are taught to provide verbal warnings regardless of the level of force being used. Verbal warnings, along with de-escalation strategies, are used in an attempt to relieve the situation of violence.

Some situations require officers to adapt, adjust, and respond within a moment's notice. Not all situations allow for verbal warnings prior to making a decision to react quickly. For instance, officers are often faced with circumstances that appear to be de-escalating or show a minimal threat to the officer or community. In the blink of an eye, the subject officers are speaking with may pull a weapon and point it at officers or a member of the community. Officers have only a few seconds to react in order to save their lives or the lives of someone else.

If any force above physical response to resistance is used, medical assistance is contacted immediately. Officers are required to seek medical intervention for anyone who requests it or shows any sign of injury or medical distress.

**4. Exhaust All Alternatives Before Shooting**

As mentioned previously, our department's foundation for the training and standards of officers focuses on the de-escalation of force to prevent violence. Each situation is unique and it dictates the tactics we use. If force is used, it is dictated by the circumstances at that moment and is controllable by the offender. A policy to require officers to exhaust all possible alternative uses of force before shooting is not practical in all situations.

**5. Duty to Intervene**

Gurnee Police Department policy requires any officer who is present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond what is objectively reasonable under the circumstances to, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. An officer who observes another employee use force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law must promptly report these observations to a supervisor. Disciplinary action will be taken when an officer violates this policy.

**6. Ban Shootings at Moving Vehicles**

Gurnee Police Department policy outlines that officers may not shoot at a moving vehicle unless the officer reasonably believes there is no other way to stop the threat of violence or if the vehicle will be used as a deadly weapon against them or someone in the community. Officers are required to step out of the path of the moving vehicle, and they may not shoot at any part of the vehicle in an attempt to disable it.

Unfortunately, in recent years, we have seen circumstances around the globe that require our officers to take action to protect life. For example, a terrorist driving a vehicle into a crowd of people provides an instance when officers are allowed to shoot at the vehicle in an attempt to stop it. Another example is a drive-by shooting. If the occupants of the vehicle are actively shooting at officers or members of the community, officers would be allowed to engage the moving vehicle with a firearm to prevent further violence caused by the shooters.

**7. Require Use of Force Continuum**

The Gurnee Police Department implemented the use of force continuum many years ago. Officers are instructed and trained to use the level of force appropriate for the situation. This can range from police presence, verbal commands, empty-hand controls, less-lethal strategies, and lethal force. As the situation evolves, officers may move up or down the continuum model within moments.

**8. Require Comprehensive Reporting**

Any member of the police department involved in a use of force situation is required to report the incident immediately. Officers are required to submit a case report of the incident, which includes a detailed narrative of the circumstances and how they occurred. Additionally, officers are required to complete a use of force report through our BlueTeam reporting program. After both reports are complete, they are submitted to the first-level supervisor, who begins the investigation into the incident. The investigative findings are forwarded through the ranks of the department until it reaches the Chief of Police.

We thoroughly investigate all uses of force and implement further training as necessary. We also document all levels of force beyond compliant handcuffing. These practices far exceed the state and federal guidelines that require documentation only when there is an injury or a complaint.

#### **9. Vehicle and Body-Worn Cameras**

In-car camera systems are installed and maintained in every marked Gurnee police vehicle. This camera system is integrated with the body-worn cameras worn by each officer. Should any camera activate, the combined system not only allows for multiple camera angles but the ability to automatically begin recording from the other cameras.

Our cameras can be activated in several ways, including manual activation, excessive vehicle speed activation, emergency light activation, and sound activation. Any camera (body or vehicle) located within a predesignated distance will also activate when another camera is activated.

Each camera activation (body or vehicle) automatically begins recording 60 seconds before the activation occurred. This assists in determining the reason for the camera activation and the events leading up to the incident.

#### **10. Education and Training**

The Gurnee Police Department is dedicated to the continuation of education and training for its officers. Several hours are set aside each month to ensure officers receive both practical application training and course study education. The categories below highlight a few of the training classes we offer our officers. We continue to seek new and relevant education to adapt to changing times in order to provide the best quality service to the community.

- Cultural Diversity
- Cultural Competency
- Illinois Human Rights Act
- Laws of Arrest, Search and Seizure
- Use of Force Decisions and Application
- De-Escalation of Force and Communication Tactics
- Crisis Intervention Training
- Defensive Tactics
- Procedural Justice
- Constitutional Authority

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide some insight into what the Gurnee Police Department is doing to protect the safety of our community while ensuring the well-being of everyone involved. Our 10 to Defend initiatives are universal to all races and cultures, and we are honored to serve and protect this community based on these ideologies.

Sincerely,



Brian M. Smith  
Chief of Police