



Richard Kay

Approach to Control

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Part 2 - Tactical Considerations

In part one of this article (Security Oz Issue #32), we began to examine the various considerations involved in approaching and arresting potentially dangerous and violent offenders. Those factors included training, understanding the body's responses to stress and legal parameters involved in making an arrest. In part 2 looks at the various tactical factors relative to approaching and controlling a subject.

Many alarm responses (though not all) occur at night. Therefore, a torch should be considered a vital piece of equipment which every officer should carry. Furthermore, a security officer should practise techniques and drills for employing it tactically. Also, an understanding of how the eye reacts to light and dark and how this relates to reaction time, threat assessment and identification are critical factors that every officer should understand and be able to use to their advantage.

Use of Force Evaluations

In a confrontation, the goal of an officer is to gain control of the subject. To maintain control, each technique employed in a confrontational situation must be evaluated in terms of its 'likelihood to gain control' compared to its 'likelihood to cause damage'. Techniques that offer a high degree of control and a limited potential for damage are preferred options. A common misconception about the force continuum concept is the assumption that officers must exhaust every lower option before moving to a higher response. However, it should be noted that the force continuum is only designed as a guide for use by officers in selecting reasonable force options. In evaluating techniques, a final consideration must be made to ensure officer safety. This involves the officer's ability to instantly disengage or escalate in response to a confrontation. Techniques which effectively tie an officer to a subject must be rejected just as techniques which do not enable an officer to escalate a force option in response to a subject's threat are unacceptable.

Action v Reaction

In a defensive situation, we are often required to react to the situation as it unfolds. The preferable option is to be proactive, making conscious, assertive decisions. The reason for this is simple...action is quicker than reaction. For this reason, it is vital to maintain assertive control over the situation and subject at all times. If proactive action is not possible, for whatever reason, safe degree of separation from an attacker is critical to give you adequate reaction time. The process of attack and defence can be summed up as follows:

Process of attack

Intent → Convergence → Attack

Process of defence

Perception → Evaluation → Reaction

Safe Separation

Distance means the space between you and the subject, also called the 'reaction gap' because it indicates the amount of time you have to react when the subject attacks. If you are too close, you

will have very little time to react appropriately unless you have trained specifically for this type of range and are highly skilled. Always maintain safe separation between you and others, especially whilst negotiating with them. As a general rule of thumb, your reaction gap against an unarmed person should be no less than 6 feet. Against an armed subject, the reaction gap increases to 10 meters plus the feet of the weapon. Related to distance and safe separation are the ranges at which attacks can be employed.

| Range | Example |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Far | Ballistic weapon |
| Long | Club, kick |
| Middle | Punch |
| Close | Elbow, knee, head butt, grappling |

It is often difficult to choose distance. However, whoever controls the distance controls the situation. Most ‘fights’ occur at middle range, where the key tools are hands. Kicking and grappling become supplementary if you mismanage the initial range. You should learn to switch ranges according to your needs (except grappling – once in this range you usually become trapped due to grabbing). ‘Bridging the gap’ or closing distance between you and an offender is a misconception. The attacker will close distance for you. Bridging the gap usually only applies to the officer when verbal control of the subject has been established and the officer needs to move in to restrain and control the subject. High awareness

should always be maintained during this phase of an arrest due to the vulnerable nature of entering the subject’s space.

Balance

The principles of human movement should form the foundation of all your defensive techniques. The ability to use the basic principles of body mechanics dramatically increases an officer’s potential to control a confrontation, while decreasing the chances of injury. Balance is the crucial key to a successful outcome in any physical encounter. Without balance you cannot move effectively or exert physical control over another person. To maintain balance, remember the pyramid concept of wide (stance), deep (stance) and low centre (of gravity) with a straight posture. From this one position of balance, all your defensive countermeasures can be employed effectively.

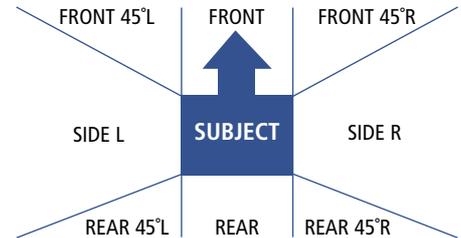
Use of Hands

During a confrontation the hands are often the first line of defense to an attack. They must be kept above the waistline and in front of the body to allow a rapid response to a sudden assault. The hands, forearms and elbows should not be over extended where they can be grabbed, nor should they be too close to the body where they provide little protection to the head and upper body. In addition to offering protection and quick accessing of tools, your hands are essential in communicating with the subject. Showing them your palms is positive, assertive body language. Closed fists

and pointing are negative and aggressive gestures which should not be employed at any stage.

Angle of Advantage

This model shows the relative positions you can adopt around the subject.



- The Front 45° position, also called the Interview Position, is used to communicate and observe the subject. Active countermeasures are best deployed from this position.
- The Rear 45° position, also called the Escort Position, is used to restrain and escort the subject. It offers the greatest tactical advantage.
- The side positions offer only marginal tactical advantage while the front and rear positions should be avoided at all times.

Dialogue

Dialogue is intended to incite compliance rather than combat and is the best defensive tactic. It is the most fundamental use of force that can be employed. Dialogue, as a means of persuading an individual to comply, is the foundation on which all additional force is built. ‘Talking’ a subject into compliance avoids the inherent dangers of

a physical confrontation in which the officer or subject may be injured. A clear, smooth, neutral tone and specific instructions increase the likelihood of subject compliance. Improper dialogue, however, can turn compliance into combat.

De-escalation Phrases are used to defuse potentially violent situations by verbally offering alternatives to the subject's current intentions, or outlining consequences of their course of action. Compliance Commands are used once you switch from negotiation to assertive action. Your voice should be strong and even and your instructions to the subject should be short, clear, specific and easily understood. Complex instructions are confusing and can easily be misunderstood. The following are examples of simple, direct compliance commands:

“Security. Don't move”

“Stay back!”

“Show me your palms!”

“Turn around!”

“Get down on the ground!”

“Look away from me”

Basic Restraint Concepts

Officers face two general types of subjects, compliant and resistive, and require simple restraining techniques that are rapid, forgiving and safe and are effective under stress. Safety for both the officer and subject is critical.

Prior to restraint, the palms of both hands should be facing the officer, as no officer has been shot when the palms of the subject's

hands were visible. The officer should stand outside the quick response range of the subject, giving you the option to disengage or escalate if the subject becomes resistive. Most people are right handed. Therefore, officers should play the percentages, realising that nothing is 100%, and focus on restraint of the subject's right (dominant/weapon) hand ‘first and last’. Restraints are first applied to the subject's right hand and when removing handcuffs, the right hand is released last.

Stabilisation is the process of positioning the subject's hands after control has been established and prior to mechanical restraint. A subject can be stabilised on the ground, against a wall or in an open space, in a standing, kneeling or prone position. Options are advisable to give you tactical flexibility based on subject and circumstances.

The longer a technique takes from contact to restraint, the more likely the chance is that combat will occur. When dealing with compliant subjects, it is important to avoid turning compliance into combat. The quick, smooth practiced application of restraints is critical. Search an offender only after restraints have been applied, as this provides a position of advantage for the officer and limits the potential for resistance by the subject. Restraints are not weapons. A prolonged effort to retain restraints may expose the officer to greater danger, especially if the officer is carrying a firearm. When faced with a resistive subject, the restraint may ‘cease to exist’ as the officer makes a decision

to disengage or escalate the force option.

Restraints are only a temporary control measure. Subjects should be processed and the restraint removed as soon as is practical. During the transportation of an offender, care should be taken to ensure they are not placed in a position that could cause the restraints to impinge on the wrist in a manner that may cause injury. Furthermore, the subject, once restrained, must be placed in a position which enables them to breathe freely and easily. Do not leave restrained offenders lying on their chest for prolonged periods as this can result in positional asphyxia and death.

Summary

Combine sound tactics with effective technique. Restraints are only a temporary control device. They do not ensure officer safety and are not intended for long-term control. Restraints do not completely control or immobilise a subject and a restrained subject should still be considered a threat. A restrained subject should be kept under observation. Check the subject's hands and wrists on a periodic basis to avoid soft tissue or nerve damage from restraints. Be sure to document any marks or injuries to the subject. ■

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