



Future Training Progression or Regression?

By Richard Kay

At a recent security industry forum in August 2009 on the new CPP07 training package and its impact on the security industry in Victoria, a senior member of LSD (Licensing Services Division) spoke about the importance of ensuring public safety through appropriate standards in the security industry and, in conjunction with that, the increasing need for security and police to work together to facilitate that public safety. With numbers of licensed security personnel in Victoria growing, the shared role between these and other allied industries becomes ever increasing.

Despite the proposed attention on improving workplace functionality towards end results within the industry, there seems to be a continuing trend to shy away from adequately addressing appropriate use-of-force standards and training for personnel, particularly as the force options increase in severity. This seems ironic, considering that the original reason that licensing was first introduced was because of the misuse of force by unlicensed personnel. Since licensing regulations were first implemented in 1990, it still took fifteen years and five versions of the training model before use-of-force training became mandatory for those job roles within the industry that included a use-of-force mandate (excluding firearms, which, until recently, have been regulated separately).

Some of the proposed training 'updates' are positive, such as increasing training duration

and improving the delivery/assessments strategies and, ultimately, these should see an improvement in the end-product functionality of security personnel on the job. But other changes, specifically with relation to use-of-force training requirements for firearms, are not so positive.

The proposed changes to the security licensing/training model (Victoria) are effective on 1 January 2010, and all training will be required upfront. For relevance, only roles/competencies relating to use of force have been listed, and it is the requirements for armed guard and cash in transit that is the focus of this article.

CPP20207 Certificate II in Security Operations Unarmed Guard

- CPPSEC2017A Protect self and others using basic defensive tactics

Crowd Control

- CPPSEC2017A Protect self and others using basic defensive tactics
- CPPSEC3013A Control persons using empty hand techniques

CPP30407 Certificate III in Security Operations Armed Guard Cash in Transit

- CPPSEC3013A Control persons using empty hand techniques
- CPPSEC3008A Control security risk situations using firearms

Bodyguard

- CPPSEC3013A Control persons using empty hand techniques
- CPPSEC3002A Manage conflict through negotiation (the foundation of conflict control through communication) – an elective unit at AQF2 (Australian Qualifications Framework), a core unit at AQF3.
- HLTA301B Apply first aid (the foundation of

after care) – a core unit at AQF2, an elective unit at AQF3.

- CPPSEC3014A Control persons using baton, and CPPSEC3015A Restrain persons using handcuffs (the basis for intermediate force and mechanical restraint) – not mandatory for licensing in conjunction with other use-of-force units, but are included as additional units as part of condition of licence to carry these tools.

Based on the core function of security (public safety) and the core OH&S (occupational health and safety) responsibility of companies (employee safety), the reality is, however unpalatable, that it is necessary for security to possess skills and tools to enable them to carry out this function safely and effectively, and this includes use-of-force options. The question is not do security need firearms, but rather, as some security functions require firearms, what is appropriate training for these roles?

To understand this, several key concepts relevant to use of force need to be examined.

Training and experience forms the basis for decisions made by officers in the field, and therefore the better quality training they receive (as opposed to just 'more' training), the better they will perform in the workplace. Training standards are often inadequate, with officers trained to 'pass a test', not survive operational reality. Additionally, defensive tactics and firearms training are traditionally run separately, which leads to viewing each as a separate entity, rather than parts of the same whole. Use-of-force training should be integrated, especially after basic skills have been learned. Training MUST properly prepare officers for

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the operational environment (court-mandated in the US).

In relation to lawful response options available to security personnel, officers receive training in communication and assertive presence in their general training. The pending updates require armed security personnel to also undertake training in empty hand skills in addition to firearms training. This requirement is crucial, as the most important skill for officers in violent confrontations is always empty hand options. However, there is no licensing requirement to undertake intermediate force training in conjunction with firearms; only if security carry batons and handcuffs must they must undertake the relevant training.

Officers who possess an operational force capability at the highest level (firearms) should receive training in intermediate options, whether or not they will actually be supplied with those options in the workplace. Officers who have a complete understanding of the operational environment have more knowledge at their disposal, and can make more informed decisions during a crisis situation, regardless of the options physically available. Further, eliminating key intermediate options from the operational continuum leaves a large gap between force responses, an aspect which may impact on the post-incident analysis of reasonable and proportionate response.

The one-plus-one theory is the most conservative use-of-force theory, where officers use one level of force higher than the level of resistance used by the subject to maintain safe control, responding to resistance with proportional force. One level higher than empty hand is intermediate force (batons), which, if not present, either limits officers to compete on even ground with the aggressor, or jump to lethal force. The goal of officers in a confrontation is control of the subject. It is imperative that this not be a 50/50 balance. If half the confrontations result in a failure to control a subject, officers and the public are put in critical danger.

The 90% rule states that techniques are

designed to work 90% of the time in 90% of situations. However, nothing works 100% of the time, and this is why it is important to provide officers with multiple options. Officers also require a means of evaluating techniques based upon the likely outcome of their application. Techniques employed in a confrontation should be evaluated in terms of the likelihood to gain control compared to the likelihood to cause damage (control vs. injury), with techniques offering good control and limited potential for damage preferred options. This coincides to the parity/disparity concept, an assessment measure for officers to choose an appropriate response relative to subject resistance, based on lawful considerations. Limiting options hampers officers' operational choices. Officers require ALL options, not merely some.

Of further consideration is the degree to which security are trained relative to police. Whilst the operational roles differ, the goal is the same – public safety – and to that degree force response options have similar justifications and applications. To achieve functional inter-agency cooperation, security officers need to be trained to an appropriate level of competency and possess a similar level of response, relative to their workplace function.

The rationale of Hick's Law is that increasing the number of response options increases reaction time, and relates to cognitive processing by the midbrain under fear-induced survival stress. Whilst this is true, this is not the common argument against intermediate options. Instead (and surprisingly or not), it is most often about financial viability (training costs) and legal liability (responsibility for consequence).

The decision on licensing and training requirements should not be left to companies, nor should it rest solely with training providers. Both tend to focus on the financial considerations of training, plus, as ironic as it may sound, the liability concerns of actually training people properly. Ironic because the concern is that training security too well will increase their liability in the event of officers resorting to using

force on the job. Many would rather avoid use-of-force training entirely, or if they have to do it, maintain a minimum 'sanitized' standard so they can avoid any liability in the event of an incident involving use of force – "Well, we did not train them so we are not responsible". This is in direct opposition to the reverse 'reality' logic that if officers are not trained properly (or at all) they are more likely to get it wrong and cause greater issues as a result.

Commercial considerations should not be allowed to dictate public safety policies, as there is too much risk for a conflict of interest between officer/public safety and financial viability. If the industry is truly serious about achieving its key function of providing public safety and ensuring officer safety, as well as improving its image through increased professionalism, then it must make choices on these objectives alone. Financial viability and bureaucratic rhetoric should not be allowed to dictate conditions relating to licensing and training, especially where people's safety and wellbeing is at stake.

The responsibility of the industry as a whole is to provide personnel with all the requisite skills to do the job professionally. If they are only partially prepared, the industry not only fails in this responsibility and places the officers at risk, but also jeopardizes community safety, and in an increasingly violent society, this is unacceptable. Total professionalism requires total training! ■

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