

What can we do to ensure that our police do not over-react or use violent methods — even if some BLM protesters or counter-protesters were to engage in property crimes?

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, George Floyd killing, Police June 6, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the George Floyd killing 

Peter Crownfield is officially retired but spends most of his time working with students in his role as internship coordinator for the Alliance for Sustainable Communities—Lehigh Valley.

Gadfly:

This statement [[Councilman Reynolds](#)] makes the point that we need to solve problems, not just express dismay.

At the most fundamental level, what do we need to do to eliminate institutionalized racism? This will take a long, deep, and open discussion throughout the community.

And what can we do to ensure that our police do not over-react or use violent methods — even if some BLM protesters or counter-protesters were to engage in property crimes? One step might be to review all policies related to police tactics and to adopt policies, backed by an ordinance, such as those put forth by the Police Use of Force Project.

Here's what the Police Use of Force Project published:

- 1 Failing to require officers to de-escalate situations, where possible, by communicating with subjects, maintaining distance, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force
- 2 Allowing officers to choke or strangle civilians, in many cases where less lethal force could be used instead, resulting in the unnecessary death or serious injury of civilians
- 3 Failing to require officers to intervene and stop excessive force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor

4 Failing to restrict officers from shooting at moving vehicles, which is regarded as a particularly dangerous and ineffective tactic

5 Failing to develop a Force Continuum that limits the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance

6 Failing to require officers to exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to deadly force

7 Failing to require officers to give a verbal warning, when possible, before shooting at a civilian

8 Failing to require officers to report each time they use force or threaten to use force against civilians

To these, I would add a ban on use of tear gas, pepper spray, or similar compounds...

Source: Police Use of Force Project [<http://useofforceproject.org/>]

Peter

*See **Alex Dobyan's comments** at Council last Wednesday. Alex raised such points as Peter does, and in response to questions from Councilwoman Crampsie Smith, Chief DiLuzio indicated that the Police department is "out front" on all of these kinds of policies and does continual training. Gadfly's sense is that the Chief was satisfied where the department stands on such policies and that no particular introspection is needed at this point. Perhaps he should take more time at a separate time to explain the department policies in detail and answer questions about them — a Public Safety meeting devoted to this topic?*

The Bethlehem Gadfly