



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Back-Up

Eff. Date: 01/29/2024

Purpose

To outline the guidelines for Madison Police Department (MPD) utilization of back-up. Back-up refers to any additional commissioned personnel assigned to a call for service or other self-initiated activity beyond the primary officer responsible for handling the situation. The Madison Police Department believes that, under certain circumstances, multiple officers on a scene may increase the safety of all involved. The MPD also believes that a delay in initial contact could possibly lead to negative outcomes and therefore the decision to await backup should be a balancing test that accounts for the totality of the circumstances.

Procedure

Consistent with the department's Core Values, the members of the Madison Police Department are committed to valuing and preserving human life. The protection and preservation of all human life – including the lives of individuals being taken into custody – is the department's fundamental objective and the primary duty of all MPD employees. The department is committed to the attempted resolution of conflict through the use of communication skills, crisis intervention, and similar de-escalation tactics when it is feasible. De-escalation tactics and techniques are actions used by officers, when safe and without compromising law enforcement priorities, that seek to reduce the likelihood of the need to use physical force during an incident or may increase the likelihood of a positive resolution.

The number of officers on scene may increase the available force options and may increase the ability to reduce the overall force used. Accordingly, officers shall not disregard backup, if so assigned by dispatch, prior to arrival at the scene and assessment of the situation. Supervisors are expected to routinely monitor calls for service to ensure these guidelines and protocols are being followed. It is realized, however, that it may be occasionally necessary, when circumstances dictate, for a supervisor to direct a course of action outside these guidelines.

An officer should await back-up or proceed with back-up present or immediately available, if feasible, under the following circumstances:

- When approaching an individual whom they reasonably anticipate may be taken into custody (criminal suspects, potential chapter 51 protective custody/emergency detention, etc.)
- When officers reasonably anticipate the need to use force to temporarily detain persons as part of an investigatory stop
- When responding to incidents involving violence or the threat of violence
- When responding to incidents involving firearms or other weapons (use, display, or threat)
- When conducting follow-up or interviews in spaces where officers are expected to be disarmed by facility regulations (e.g. secured psychiatric ward), where responding officers may be delayed by access control or unfamiliar layouts, or where radio communications may be poor (e.g. schools, underground parking). This does not include secure law enforcement or correctional environments, such as a jail.

Instances where it is not feasible to await back-up may include, but are not limited to examples of exigent circumstances (such as a threat to the safety of the officer, subject, or member of the public, a likelihood the subject will flee or escape, or a risk that evidence will be destroyed).

When responding to any type of incident, officers should be aware of factors that might result in limited backup availability (being in an area with poor radio communications, during peak workload times when

officers are not available, or when the Officer-in-Charge has initiated priority calls only status, etc.).

Original SOP: 09/15/2017

(Reviewed Only: 12/26/2017, 01/31/2026)

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