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THE HONORABLE JAMES L. ROBERT

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

AT SEATTLE
CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
DEPUTY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Plaintiff,

vs.

CITY OF SEATTLE

Defendant.

CASE No. C12-1282-JLR

**MEMORANDUM SUBMITTING
2015 TACTICAL DE-
ESCALATION AND INDIVIDUAL
FIREARMS TRAINING**

Pursuant to paragraphs 127, 128, and 177 of the Settlement Agreement, the Parties and the Monitor hereby submit the Seattle Police Department's 2015 Tactical De-Escalation Training Plan, attached herewith as Exhibit A, and its Use of Force Skills Two: Individual Firearms Training, attached herewith as Exhibit B. Both trainings were previewed and summarized as part of the Department's 2015 Training Plan that the Court has previously approved. *See* Dkt. 192.

The 2015 Tactical De-Escalation Training builds upon training that officers received in 2014. The four-hour training emphasizes that "[d]e-escalation is more than a set of disparate skills; it is an overarching approach to incident resolution" Ex. A at 7. De-escalation refers to the tactical and strategic "slowing down [of] an incident" in a manner that "increases the

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTING 2015 TACTICAL DE-ESCALATION
AND INDIVIDUAL FIREARMS TRAINING -1
Case No. C12-1282-JLR

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1 potential for resolving the situation with a minimum of required force.” *Id.* at 10. Such de-
2 escalation:

3 increases officer safety, reduces the likelihood of officer or suspect injury,
4 mitigates the immediacy of potential threats, reduces community complaints,
5 promotes the perception of procedural justice, and most importantly, promotes
6 resolution of events with suspect compliance.

7 *Id.* at 7.

8 For some time, many Seattle residents, like others throughout the country, have suggested
9 that officers receive training on how to de-escalate situations in order to reduce the potential for
10 force needing to be contemplated. However, in many instances, the concept of “de-escalation”
11 has tended to be imprecisely defined and served as a kind of “catch-all” term or approach used to
12 refer to anything that might defuse difficult police encounters. Clear and precise training on
13 what de-escalation means in Seattle began in earnest last year. This year’s training will deepen
14 officers’ understandings of how de-escalation is strategic, tactical, and valuable both to officers
15 and the communities that they serve. By providing clear detail and real-world techniques that
16 officers can apply immediately in the field, it puts substantial “meat on the bones” of what “de-
17 escalation” is in its full scope and how, when, and why such techniques should be used. This
18 training is a notable step forward.

19 Specifically, the 2015 training in tactical de-escalation specific skills and strategies that
20 can be used to gain time, distance, space, and tactical flexibility during dynamic situations.
21 Among others skills, “[o]fficers will be taught modified active listening, effective de-escalating
22 communication, and appropriate recognition and reaction to body language.” *Id.* at 9.

23 The Individual Firearms Training represents the sort of training on firearms skills that the
24 Seattle Police Department, like other law enforcement agencies, provides to officers on a regular
25 basis. The four-hour training reinforces basic rules of firearms safety, techniques associated with

1 employing a firearm in the context of a fast-moving situation, and the importance of
2 communication with other officers when deploying a firearm in the presence of a team of
3 officers. Ex. B at 12–14. Importantly, the training presents officers – in interactive, scenario-
4 based training – with situations where they must “address[] an unknown threat,” evaluate the
5 threat, determine whether and how to give verbal commands and utilize other de-escalation
6 techniques, and make decisions about whether the use of force (including less-lethal force) is
7 necessary. *Id.* at 13. The training therefore “give[s] officers de-escalation experience under
8 stressful situations” and, in doing so, emphasizes that deployment of the firearm necessarily
9 operates in a larger strategic and tactical context. *Id.* at 12. Indeed, officers will be attending the
10 Firearms Training on the same day as the Tactical De-Escalation training, which further
11 emphasizes the array of strategies, tactics, and tools that officers may use to safely and
12 effectively resolve dynamic and fast-moving situations.

13 As with prior trainings, the Monitor, Department of Justice, and City of Seattle have
14 closely reviewed and provided comments and feedback both trainings. Following that review
15 and revision process, the Monitor agrees with the Parties that both training initiatives satisfy both
16 the letter and spirit of the Consent Decree. Accordingly, the Monitor respectfully requests that
17 this Court approve the Seattle Police Department’s Tactical De-Escalation 2015 Training Plan
18 and Individual Firearms Training.

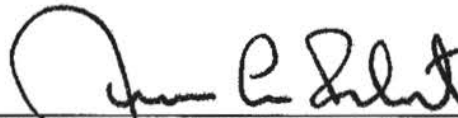
19 DATED this 1st day of April, 2015.

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21 Merrick J. Bobb, Monitor
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1 The Court hereby approves the Seattle Police Department's Tactical De-Escalation 2015
2 Training Plan, filed herewith as Exhibit A, and its Individual Firearms Training, filed herewith as
3 Exhibit B.

4
5 DONE IN OPEN COURT this 15th day of April, 2015.

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9 THE HONORABLE JAMES L. ROBERT
10 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on the 1st day of April, 2015, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such filing to the following attorneys of record:

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DATED this 1st day of April, 2015.

/s/ Carole Corona
Carole Corona