

CHAPTER 243

AN ACT concerning law enforcement officers, amending P.L.1968, c.427, and supplementing Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes and Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.52:17B-4.14 Use of force policy core principles, revisions, public hearings.

1. a. The Attorney General shall review the Statewide use of force policy applicable to law enforcement officers every even numbered year, or in such shorter time frame as the Attorney General may deem appropriate, and revise it as need may require.

Any revision of the Statewide use of force policy shall be in furtherance of at least the following core principles:

- (1) respecting the sanctity of human life and serving the community;
- (2) prioritizing other reasonable measures, including de-escalation, that must be attempted before resorting to the use of force;
- (3) promoting the use of only objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional force, including the use of deadly force only as a last resort; and
- (4) articulating other duties attendant to the use of force, such as a law enforcement officer's duty to intervene, to render medical assistance, and to report and review uses of force.

b. The Attorney General shall transmit any revisions of the Statewide use of force policy to the chief or director of every county and municipal law enforcement department, every municipal and county prosecutor, and the Superintendent of State Police.

c. The Attorney General, in reviewing the Statewide use of force policy pursuant to subsection a. of this section, shall hold three public hearings, one hearing in each of the northern, central, and southern regions of the State, at such times as the Attorney General shall determine, in order to receive feedback from the community related to such policy. Such public hearings shall include local law enforcement and community members and organizations.

C.52:17B-4.15 Incident reports, public access.

2. a. The Attorney General shall establish and maintain a procedure by which all incidents involving the use of force by a law enforcement officer are reported to the Department of Law and Public Safety, and shall compile such information for presentation on the Department's internet website, which shall be accessible to the public and shall be regularly updated in accordance with procedures established by the Attorney General.

b. The information compiled pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall be made available for public inspection pursuant to P.L.1963, c.73 (C.47:1A-1 et seq.), commonly known as the Open Public Records Act.

C.52:17B-4.16 Guidelines for law enforcement, barricaded individual.

3. a. The Attorney General shall issue and revise as needed guidelines and procedures applicable to law enforcement encounters involving a barricaded individual. Any revision to such guidelines and procedures shall be in furtherance of the components and principles enumerated in subsection b. of this section.

b. These guidelines and procedures shall address, at a minimum, the following components and principles:

- (1) Proper identification of situations involving a barricaded individual, including differentiating between situations involving a barricaded individual experiencing a mental health crisis that poses a health, safety, or welfare risk to the individual or others, and those situations involving a barricaded individual or hostage situation under circumstances that do

not involve a mental health crisis. Appropriate protocols shall be established for dealing with those situations based on their differing nature. Protocols shall include proper circumstances for the use of conflict resolution through negotiating, communication through a mental health professional, or the engagement with a barricaded individual pursuant to the Attorney General Use of Force Policy;

(2) Initial responding law enforcement officers' roles and responsibilities shall include ensuring that responding officers consider the barricaded individual's primary language and, if communication is difficult, take reasonable steps to establish communication via the person's primary language;

(3) Law enforcement de-escalation responses to barricaded individual and hostage situations, and interaction with individuals in behavioral and mental health crises, including crisis intervention, crisis negotiation, resolution techniques, and resolution tactics;

(4) Roles and responsibilities of supervisors, including establishing that it is the responsibility of the incident commander, absent exigent circumstances, to make the decision to employ resolution tactics or to enter a structure or area occupied by a barricaded individual, which decision shall be made after giving due consideration to all available alternative strategies and information, including that provided by the tactical commander, crisis negotiation team leader, and available mental health professionals;

(5) Proper coordination of activities between incident command systems and tactical teams, and providing that, when feasible, a law enforcement officer trained in crisis intervention shall respond to incidents involving barricaded individuals and assist in de-escalating the situation and recommending appropriate resources; and

(6) Appropriate role and use of mental health professionals, when available.

C.52:17B-77.20 Training for law enforcement.

4. The Police Training Commission shall develop and include barricaded individual training for law enforcement officers in all of its basic training courses. This mandatory training shall include proper identification of barricaded individuals, responses to barricaded individual and hostage situations, and interacting with individuals in behavioral and mental health crises.

5. Section 1 of P.L.1968, c.427 (C.2A:154-4) is amended to read as follows:

C.2A:154-4 Authorization to exercise police powers.

1. All correctional police officers of the State of New Jersey and investigators in the Department of Corrections, including all promotional ranks and positions responsible for overseeing correctional police officers and investigators so long as they have an underlying correctional police officer or investigator title, and parole officers employed by the State Parole Board, who have been or who may hereafter be appointed or employed, shall, by virtue of such appointment or employment and in addition to any other power or authority, be empowered to exercise full police powers and to act as peace officers, at all times, for the detection, apprehension, arrest, and conviction of offenders against the law.

Correctional police officers empowered with full police powers under this section shall, while performing their duties in a lawful manner, be deemed to be acting under lawful authority and shall enjoy all the immunities from tort liability and shall have all the pension, relief, disability, workmen's compensation, insurance, and other benefits they otherwise enjoy when performing their regular duties.

6. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 12, 2026.