



The Denver Police Protective Association



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PPA GUIDELINE TO ASSISTING IN COMPLETING EFFECTIVE STATEMENTS (INCLUDING USE OF FORCE STATEMENTS)

Officer statements should be completed in a manner capturing all aspects of an incident.

This guide is designed to help you think about how to write a good, quality statement that will not only protect the officer but be of such quality it helps with the prosecution of an individual committing a crime. Each individual officer should write his/her statement in a manner making he/she feel comfortable with the final product.

This is only a guide and does not cover everything.

SET THE STAGE

- Was this a dispatched call or self-initiated action?
- Were you on duty when you received the dispatch, or self-initiated contact?
- Describe what you were doing at the time of dispatch, or self-initiated contact.
- Explain the details of the call or contact as you recall them.
- Where were you when you received the initial dispatch?
- Did you have BWC?
- Did you activate BWC?
- If not activated BWC, explain why.

DESCRIBE WHAT WAS OUTSTANDING TO YOU ABOUT THE CALL OR CONTACT.

- Was there anything different about the dispatched call, other than that you have experienced before?
- Were you a solo officer or had a partner?
- How did you respond? Code 9 or 10?
- What, if any, thoughts you had enroute, or upon contact?
- Did you have a clinician with you? Or was there one working in your District? Did you call for one? Why or why not? Did you check City wide?
- Did you start to consider what, if any, options you might use upon arrival?
- Did you receive or ask for any updates from dispatch?
- Describe the traffic conditions? Weather conditions if severe.

UPON ARRIVAL, PLEASE DESCRIBE EVERYTHING YOU OBSERVED

- Were you alone or had other officers arrived?
- Were there any communications with witnesses, other officers, or the suspect?

DESCRIBE YOUR SURROUNDINGS, INCLUDING TERRAIN, LIGHTING

- How was the initial contact with the suspect?
- What crime(s) were you aware of had been committed?
- If this was self-initiated, what was your probable cause? (*no turn signal, expired plates etc.*)
- What was your reasonable suspicion?

**YOU MUST ARTICULATE (EXPLAIN) IN GREAT DETAIL,
IF YOU ARE ONLY ACTING ON REASONABLE SUSPICION**

- Did he/she make any threats? What was their demeanor? Were they dismissive, over compliant, non-compliant, claiming injury, any anomalies?
- Describe the actions of the suspect, visual and audible.
- Did you recognize any potential mental health signs? If so, what?
- Describe any verbal exchange.
- Did you give any verbal commands?
- Were other officers giving commands?
- What were the suspect's responses to those commands?
- Explain what attempts you made to de-escalate the situation (verbal non-verbal).
- What actions did you take at this time?
- Did the suspect have a weapon, that you knew of, was it possible the suspect had a weapon?
- What information led you to believe the suspect might have had a weapon?
- If you knew of a weapon, what was it?
- Did the suspect appear to be under the influence of drugs, alcohol? You must describe why you felt this.
- Explain what you did to maintain control of the situation and or suspect without putting yourself in a position of disadvantage or in a position that would increase the chance for a force encounter.
- Plain and simple, did you maintain time and distance?

IF FORCE WAS USED, PLEASE EXPLAIN IN DETAIL WHAT FORCE WAS USED

- Were there any factors that played into your decision to stop de-escalation attempts and apply force (*like innocent bystanders, dangerous conditions for the suspect, officer, public*)?
- What did you perceive were the suspect's abilities at the time of using force?
- Were there opportunities for the suspect to cause you or someone else harm?
- What were your choices at the time of using force?
- How did the physical contact initiate with the suspect?
- When force was applied, why did you choose that type of force?
- Was the force effective?
- Did the suspect comply?
- Did you achieve the result you were looking for while using that force?
- If the force was not effective, did you apply another type of force?
- Was the suspect saying anything during the use of force?
- Describe the suspect's actions during this incident.
- Once the incident was under control, what steps did you take to ascertain if the suspect was injured/required medical attention?
- Did you call for an ambulance or attempt to render aid?
- How did you document the scene (*photographs, video, other business video, witness statements*)?

**REMEMBER YOU CANNOT GO BACK AND GET THIS EVIDENCE.
MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS SECURED BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE SCENE.**

**Documentation is the key to a good explanation for any kind of statement
and it can be the key to a successful criminal prosecution!**