

# Research paper on policing

[Society](#), [Terrorism](#)



## **Criminal Law**

Policing is a dangerous job due to the prevalence of accidents, injuries and the possibility of death during the course of performance of the police duties.

Reno, Fischer, Robinson & Brennan (1999) stated that police officers are given the authority to use force in particular circumstances that puts their lives in danger. These police officers have undergone proper training in the use of force and commonly confronted with several incidents while on service. Some of the typical scenarios that make the lives of police dangerous are when they have to employ force during arrests, restraining unruly combatants, or controlling a disruptive demonstration (Reno et al., 1999).

Pilant (2000) stated that the landmark case of *Tennessee v. Gardner* where the Supreme Court that the use of deadly force to apprehend apparently unarmed nonviolent criminals attempting to escape is considered as unreasonable seizure under the 4th Amendment of the Constitution. As a result, the police department has included implemented the use of less-than-lethal (LTL) weapons as part the LTL program. Some of the distraction devices that are being used by the police against escaping felons is the pepper spray, which is a product derived from hot peppers. In a study conducted by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) there are two types of weapons that are being proposed based on existing technology: the magnetophosphene gun and the thermal gun (Pilant, 2000). The magnetophosphene gun has the ability to make the offenders “ see stars” by giving the sensation that feels like a blow to the head of the subject. This device will work in cases where the subject to be apprehended is under the

influence of drugs, alcohol or mental illness. It has a range of 10 to 20 yards and has the ability to be delivered through a wall if needed urgently. Another device is the thermal gun which can be aimed through a wall where the range that can reach up to 50 yards, raising the body temperature of the suspect to 107 degrees, which can result to his or her incapacitation (Pilant, 2000).

After the 9/11 attack in the U. S., the government has enacted counterterrorism policies by law enforcement agencies installing surveillance cameras in critical areas of airports. The purpose of using this technology is to prevent potential aircraft piracy or hijacks by using intelligence collection and data analysis. The initial step is to prevent terrorists from boarding the aircraft and to use a trace detection device that will allow airport security personnel to screen the air passengers for any hidden weapons, firearms and explosives. Sophisticated surveillance cameras and scanners such as the “Rapiscan” are placed in airports to check the luggage and conduct screening of passengers. Inside the CCTV camera is a software that will analyze the facial expression and behavior of passengers. There is also a bio-monitor that has the ability to scan the blood pressure and heart rate of potential terrorists who may be about to board the plane (Kiger, 2011). Another technology is the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System or “PISCES” program is another anti-terrorism interception program which has ability to undergo series of tests to record and study facial figures and biometrics of passengers such as fingerprints of criminals and potential terrorist (Maras, 2012). Another innovation in policing is using the technology called the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) which uses a chip that

provides the passport information of people that enters the airports by making use digital imaging. The machine will enable the airport security personnel to identify any of the suspected terrorists. While the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, widely popular as “NSEERS” was developed after the 9/11 terrorist attack. This is the technology permitting the issuance and use of temporary visas to protect the country from act of suspected terrorists while inside airports (Maras, 2012).

According to Dempsey and Forst (2010), the new license plate recognition (LPR) technology is being used to conduct criminal investigation of the police to search for stolen vehicles listed as stolen or those that are driven by wanted persons. The technology that uses the camera and computer data to discern the letters and numbers of vehicle license plates and compares them with the records stored by federal and state databases including records from the department of motor vehicles and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The LPR technology was initially used to record the time the vehicle enters a parking lot and to access control vehicles to enter secured areas. The data obtained from the license plate readers shall only be used for legitimate purposes such as criminal investigations and criminal prosecutions.

Orthmann and Hess (2012) argued that the records obtained from the department of motor vehicles (DMV) can be used during criminal prosecution for offenders who are being charged for auto theft or for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. The modern-day police department officers use technological devices including transponders, bumper beepers and other similar homing devices to disable the vehicles of suspects before they can

escape the scene of the crime. Dempsey and Forst (2011) stated that the tracking system uses a transmitter that is attached to the vehicle of the suspect, along with a receiver. The receiver will pick-up the signals from the transmitter. According to Dempsey and Forst (2011), the new tracking systems presently used include the RF (radio frequency) tracking systems, cellular tracking systems and the global positioning system or the GPS. The modern equipment currently in use will track down the location of criminals that can lead to their arrest and eventually lead to lower crime rate (Dempsey and Forst, 2011).

One issue in policing that needs to be resolved is the excessive use of force. The excessive use of force and mishandling of calls for service had become part of the high profile complaints for misconduct against the police department. Although there are instances when these allegations are true, the police departments fail to sanction the erring police officers. Most of the complaints on the excessive force used by police officers are during searches and seizures and arrests. In fact, there are police officers who have gone as far as deadly force especially in the case of mentally-ill persons wherein less extreme measures should have been applied.

The use of force appears to be irrelevant to the personal characteristics of the police officers including the age, gender, and ethnicity. However, the use of force should be taken with great caution in terms of individuals under the influence of alcohol, drugs or those suffering from mental illness (Reno et al, 1999). Since the police are allowed to use their own discretion, it is proper that they be sanctioned in case of error in their judgment. Such action

promotes public security and safety without compromising the rights of the persons to be arrested.

## References

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