

**The Bill Blackwood  
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**Human Factors Research Group (HFRG) / PPCT should be adopted by  
departments as their primary defensive tactics system**

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**A Leadership White Paper  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Law enforcement and corrections should make as their primary defensive tactics system, a system based on science and research. In addition, the system should be easy to learn, efficient, effective and supports use of force guidelines. In society, law enforcement and correction officers are responsible for maintaining, law / rules and order. The local, state and federal government has established various laws, rules, regulations and guidelines our society should abide by. While maintaining law / rules and order in our society, law enforcement and correction personnel must balance enforcement with the protection of the rights of our citizens and the persons they meet, on a daily basis. The guidelines for using force on the citizens or the person's law enforcement or corrections meets who exhibits resistive behavior is simple. The guideline is; the minimum amount of lawful aggression to achieve a legitimate law enforcement objective.

Law enforcement and correction departments should adopt Human Factors Research Group (HFRG) / PPCT as their primary defensive tactics system. The HFRG / PPCT defensive tactics system is an easy to learn; efficient and effective way to control resistive behavior, all this while basing the taught techniques on science, research. A system based on science, research, which is efficient and effective when the need to control resistive behavior arises while achieving the guideline for using force is essential to law enforcement. HFRG / PPCT is that system.

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## INTRODUCTION

Having and or adopting a primary defensive tactics system, which has endured over time, within the law enforcement, corrections, and some higher elite training groups is vital for a department. Trying to find the right defensive tactics system is difficult. For quite some time in both the law enforcement and corrections fields, there have been ongoing discussions, debates, and sometimes heated arguments pertaining to which defensive tactics system is best suited to be labeled as the primary defensive tactics system for a department.

Departments and various law enforcement, corrections, and even specialty groups/agencies are trying to determine the most efficient, justifiable, easy to learn, and safest ways to control resistive behavior when faced with multiple options. In the law enforcement and corrections industry, there is always a concerned about safety. In addition, the physical and mental well-being for both the officers and the subject's law enforcement and correction personnel is important. For the law enforcement (LE) and corrections (CORR) community, providing options is not always clear when it comes to the force, techniques, and defensive tactic system to use to control resistive behavior. According to Strandberg (2013), "The state of defensive tactics varies greatly from city to city, state to state and region to region" (p. 26). In addition, Strandberg (2013) expressed how departments should have individuals familiar with martial arts teach and train their people. The understanding and being familiar with martial arts is a good thing based on teaching principles such as balance, coordination and proper stance. In martial arts, certain applications of strikes and kicks with the hands and feet, has been viewed by courts as deadly weapons, thus capable of causing serious bodily injury or

death (Vazquez, 2012). On a regular basis, law enforcement along with corrections personnel find themselves having to interact with the public or inmates. Both the public and inmates at certain times choose to resist justified control or arrest measures. The choice made by subjects to resist occurs even though they are aware the law enforcement or correctional officers are acting in an official and legal capacity. This behavior takes place during the normal course of the law enforcement or corrections personnel's official duties.

In some cases, there will be situations, which allows officers to take their time and systematically process how to handle and plan what defensive tactic or tactics to employ. As the resistive behavior unfolds, the officers are processing several things. The officers must decide when is the right time to react, the appropriate level of force, and the type of technique to use. However, in certain situations and scenarios defensive tactics happens immediately. Control of a violent offender is vital. Systematically processing the situation may not be available. Quick control of a violent subject is vital. The United States Supreme Court also recognizes this dilemma and has even noted, how officers are often forced to make split second judgements in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving (*Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386). Law enforcement and the corrections community understands the legal consequences when it comes to unjustified uses of force. The legal consequences can result in being charged criminally, found civilly responsible, or both, which can include termination from the job. These consequences can be extremely life changing. Not being properly trained can be a problem. Training, and the lack thereof, could be a defense if an officer feels they may be in jeopardy of any or all of the consequences listed above,

With a clear understanding of what is on the line and the consequences of being fired by the department, sued civilly, or, if found guilty, going to jail, it is upon the departments and agencies to provide a defensive tactics system, which, when applied in training, can withstand the legal, medical, and tactical scrutiny of the courts (Siddle, 2017). It is important and vital should any law enforcement or corrections officers find themselves in a situation in court and having to justify their actions to have a recognized defensive tactics system, which has been accepted and regularly used. Human Factors Research Group (HFRG) (2018) has been used both in the United States by local, state and federal agencies. HFRG (2018) ) Over 70% of criminal justice academies, U.S. Army, Homeland Security, Transportation and Security Agency (TSA), Alcohol-Tobacco & Firearms (ATF), Secret Service Counter Assault Team (CAT), Delta Force, and the CIA HFRG (2018). Additionally, HFRG (2018) trains overseas agencies such as The Royal Hong Kong Police, 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, SAS, Minister of Defense, Hartford, England, and the Royal and Diplomatic Protection Department (Queens Guard), London Metropolitan Police, England and more. Having or adopting HFRG with a resume of the above agencies trained adds credibility to the system and can possibly increase the chances there is a positive outcome when a department faces legal challenges. HFRG should be adopted as a primary defensive tactics system for the law enforcement and corrections community.

## **POSITION**

Science and research is the foundation of the Human Factors Research Group (HFRG) Defensive Tactics System. As stated, research (n.d.) is the diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover or revise facts,

theories, applications, etc. Bruce Siddle is the founder and CEO of HFRG. Siddle documents the science and research used to understanding the specific steps taken by HFRG to measure the participants stress, physiological changes, and more, Siddle (2017). Siddle (2015) provided details of actual versus perceived performance by participants. One of the major shootouts in Los Angeles, CA was the North Hollywood Shootout (Smith & Mather, 2017). Smith and Mather (2017) gave details of the two subjects, Larry Phillips Jr. and Emil Mățășăreanu, who took action to rob the North Hollywood Bank of America branch. Of the over 600 rounds that were fired by the officers, only 40 hit the criminals (Smith & Mather, 2017). Many questions arose from the public. Answering why so many rounds and so few hits on the subjects not only should be looked at from a practical view, but also from the science and research view. In situations and incidents like the North Hollywood Shootout, there are additional variables, which contribute to the low hit to rounds fired ratio. Variables such as the officer (s), vision (sight picture on the subjects), heart rate, reaction / time to react to the threat, and so much more. Addressing these variables and the “why” from a scientific and research point of view is what Human Factors Research Group does. Their science and research not only looks at firearms type situations, but also hand to hand defensive tactics type situations.

When addressing the use of force, HFRG uses a human factors methodology. According to Siddle (2017), “The design methodology for a use of force system is the established rules, methods, and procedures designed to select and implement a system of techniques to control unlawful, resistive or dangerous behavior” (pg. 2-1). In looking at a use of force design methodology, HFRG first takes a very broad perspective. This

includes the environment, stress, behavior of the resistive subject, along with other possible areas. During this process law enforcement, corrections and the courts understand time is not often a luxury an officer can afford. The United States Supreme Court recognizes how time is important; “police officers are often forced to make split second judgements in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving” (Graham v. Connor, 1989, p. 397). Finding a way to reduce reaction time by understanding what humans are capable and incapable of doing is important. In one study related to human reaction time, Hicks (1952) found “the increase in reaction time with number of alternatives, attributing it to such causes as the division of attention” (p. 11). In plain language, the time it takes to make a decision, increases as the number of alternatives increases. Hyman (1953) also stated, “In the typical reaction-time experiment, S’s reaction time is greater when he has to respond differently to one of two equally probable stimuli instead of to just one stimulus” (p.188).

In the law enforcement and corrections community, one of the many duties and responsibilities are to protect citizens. Additional duties and responsibilities, should the need arises, are to control unlawful behavior, and enforce the various local, state, and federal laws. The citizens served and the judicial system will not tolerate excessive force. Finding and adopting a defensive tactics system which studies and understands human behavior, abilities, limitations, and in plain language, “what makes us tick” should be something which is examined and, upon confirmation of validity, adopted by law enforcement and corrections agencies.

As mentioned previously, “what makes us tick” can be the cause of why an officer reacted in a certain way and the reason for selecting a certain force option. In



cases where deadly force is used, every law enforcement and corrections department conducts an investigation. When conducting an investigation those investigators should have some knowledge of the autonomic nervous system. It is important to know there is something known as the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The autonomic nervous system has two branches. Those branches are the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) and the sympathetic nervous system. The ANS is what regulates the organs of our body, such as the heart, stomach, intestines, which controls organs and muscles within the body Siddle (2005, p.1-1). This is important due to video cameras or witness statements may be different from what the involved officer actually seen, heard or processed during the event.

Should an officer have to use deadly force, an investigation will follow. It is vital, when an investigator looks further into a deadly force encounter, the investigator need to have an understanding of the event as a whole (I.e. physical circumstances, the officers viewpoint and abilities, etc.), as it pertains to the investigation. An example of understanding an officer's viewpoint and abilities would be a situation where an officer may find him or herself actions or responses to the event based on the impact of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS). As stated by Siddle (2005), "the SNS is recognized as the "fight or flight" system" (p. 1-1). The SNS is the system of the body that prepares for survival. Over time in both law enforcement and corrections, researchers noticed and recognized stress as an ingredient when it comes to deteriorating cognitive and physical abilities. Until the studies of the ANS, the complete understanding of the various bizarre behaviors were not fully understood. Now they are. Human Factors Resource Group understands once SNS is activated, certain limitations and abilities of

the officers involved when it comes to use of force becomes occurs. Excitement occurs, and vision becomes affected once SNS begins. The collapse of the peripheral field takes place Siddle (2005, p 1-1). As stated by Logsdon (2017, para 1), “Gross motor skills are the skills that we use to move our arms, legs and torso in a functional manner, which involves the large muscles of the body”. Gross motor skills are what enables such functions as walking, kicking, sitting upright, lifting, and throwing a ball. Administrators, investigators, prosecutors, and others should review the findings and information provided by HFRG in order to get a complete picture of a critical incident surrounding an officer-involved use of force and the investigation, which will take place (Siddle & Grossman, n.d.).

## **COUNTER ARGUMENTS**

Opponents of the HFRG defensive tactics “straight arm bar takedown” technique resist its effectiveness and believes the leg sweep (a.k.a. foot sweep) technique is an effective and justified takedown. As stated by Grant (2015), “The foot sweep; one of the most basic, versatile, and flat-out cool takedowns in all of grappling”. The foot sweep in some mix martial arts is considered an incredibly valuable tool for any grappler. With the foot sweep, once a subject is taken to the ground, a follow up type technique, such as handcuffing, can be implemented.

However, for the law enforcement community, this type of technique must be or is being re-thought. The leg / foot sweep technique is more of a martial arts type technique, which takes a lot of practice, for an individual to be proficient. In general, some of the law enforcement defensive tactics has an element of the martial arts. This when it comes to certain wristlocks and takedowns. The instructors normally have a

background in some form of martial arts. However, the average officers being taught the techniques who are in the departments are not martial artist. Normally the leg sweep type of techniques are practiced in a controlled environment with mats and with students who know how to properly fall (Bonsal, 2016).

Montoya v. City of Flandreau (2012) concluded the “leg sweep” constituted “excessive force” (p. 5). In this particular court case, the officer attempted to control the subject and in doing so, used the leg sweep. From the application of the leg sweep to the subject, the injury resulted in a tibia plateau fracture on the left knee. This resulted in surgery, and even after four to five months following the surgery, she could only walk with the help of crutches, followed by several weeks of physical therapy.

Another area to address is the thought of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and the various martial arts training as the primary defensive tactics system for law enforcement and corrections. This is where martial arts can come in and assist police officers in the field (Martial Arts Guy, 2015). Police officers who have some training in the martial arts can defend themselves in situations wherein they do not have a weapon in their hands. Martial arts can help police officers control a suspect without necessarily hurting him. At the same time, it can give the officer the option to inflict pain and cripple the suspect if the altercation forces him to (Martial Arts Guy, 2015).

Faulkner (1997) asserted martial artists taught the first defense classes. While proficient in their craft, these instructors possessed no clear concept of escalating force. This is because multiple offensive moves in martial arts are performed for one of three reasons: to kill, maim, or cripple. In the majority of situations where officers confront resistive subjects, such a response is not acceptable.

MMA has rules, guidelines and marketing. Marketing has strongly influenced what people think the mixed martial arts are. Thus, MMA is more competition type fighting than what is on the streets. MacYoung & MacYoung (n.d.) states, "Therefore, the overstated claims regarding the effectiveness and value of mixed martial arts are demonstrably false" (p. 1).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Having or adopting a primary defensive tactics system, based on science and research, is vital. Science and research should support the taught techniques. The foundation of a defensive tactics system should not be the "most popular" technique. A chosen, primary defensive tactics system should not be one where the training of techniques is questionable on whether it will work. The law enforcement and corrections community must remember the primary defensive tactic system must work for all of the officers. It should not be a system which can only be effective if use by a selected group of officers.

It is also important for the defensive tactics system to understand human methodology. Physical control on a subject or subjects, who choose to exhibit resistive behavior, can happen. Having a clear understanding of how the human body in conjunction with the brain will act is important. Having the ability to incorporate techniques and tactics based off the limitations of the human body and its capabilities is paramount for the officers to survive a confrontation.

Another and lastly very important aspect of having a primary defensive tactics system in the law enforcement and corrections community is having the understanding of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS). If a situation or event occurs and officers

find themselves having to use force, an investigation has to take place. So knowing the impact of the SNS on use of force investigations becomes very important.

The cost of the implementation and adopting the Human Factors Resource Group (HFRG) as a primary defensive tactics system varies. This due to the number of officers trained, equipment provided by the agency versus the instructor, etc. Negotiations with your agency and the Instructor Trainer you choose will determine the cost. The Instructor Trainer (IT) would be able to certify students as an instructor with the certification lasting three years. The IT can instruct up to 24 students at a time (Siddle, 2017). The department or agency would just need to contact HFRG in Millstadt, IL, and request the services of an Instructor Trainer to conduct training for the department or agency. Not having this type system, can possibly cost an agency and the officers more in civil litigation or criminal proceedings.

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