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KCPQ

Behind the Scenes Look at Seattle Police Training

We take an inside look at the use of force training Seattle officers receive and how they decide when to use their weapons.

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Tukwila

We got a behind the scenes look at how Seattle Police Officers learn split second decision making techniques at a training academy in Tukwila.

Inside the "Use of Force" training we saw firsthand just how hard some of those decisions are by watching a computer simulator cops use. It plays a video on a screen and the officer has to decide when is the appropriate time to shoot or not shoot at all.

"We've had people react too early and we ask them to explain their actions because if that happens in real life they have to explain their decision to the rest of the world," says Officer Rich Pruitt.

Of course, everyone hopes a gun is never needed, so Seattle Police are arming more cops with an alternative weapon. About 370 officers have Tasers right now and the Department is adding 60 more by the end of the year.

The use of Tasers is controversial. Critics say they can still kill when person hit with a Taser is high on drugs. Just this month, two suspects, one in Gold Bar and another in Spanaway died after police fired a Taser at them. We don't know whether either was on drugs, but Seattle Police don't believe a Taser in and of itself is a deadly weapon.

"The problem is sometimes people do enough damage to themselves before we arrive that they're going to have problems and they may even die regardless of what we do. We use the best techniques and tools available to us," says Officer Chris Myers.

By the end of the year, Seattle Police will also add 60 to 80 CIT, or Critical Intervention Training, officers to the force. These officers specialize in verbal techniques to calm a suspect down before using force at all. We also learned by the end of the year, all 1,800 Seattle Police employees will have completed racial diversity

training.

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