



POLICING IN MASON FAQ

Q: I'm interested in the Defund Police Movement. Can you tell me more about the Mason Police Budget, how much is allocated to Police, and if those funds could be shifted to other programs?

A: The most common concept of the defunding law enforcement campaigns is to eliminate some current funding for policing and redirecting that money to initiatives that directly serve communities, including education, healthcare, and community programming. There are some that are asking for full defunding or abolishing of the police, but those are minorities within this movement. While there is no specific reduction or standard identified in this movement, calls for police budgets to be limited to 5-25% of total budgets have been proposed by supporters, especially for cities where their police budget is over 50% of their cities total budget.

Mason is focused on critical services only as a municipality and we do not have access to funding (like CDBG) that larger communities have to address social issues. Our police expenditures compared to total expenditures averages around 13-15% of all expenditures or around 25% of our discretionary general fund.

In larger cities, at the State, or at the Federal level, these shifts in funding would be feasible while still maintaining a police department but not for a community of Mason's size.

It should also be noted, the reforms that most of these campaigns are asking for would actually require more funding. For example, there are pilot programs funding social workers to respond to certain calls with officers in some cities that are showing great success. However, the social workers are in ADDITION to the officer to responding, not instead of the officer responding. Enhanced trainings, additional mental health services or regular psychological reviews for officers are welcome reforms, but also require additional funding.

Q: I'm curious about Mason's position on the 8CANTWAIT policies? Do we have those policies in place?

A: The 8CANTWAIT Campaign is a Campaign Zero initiative that is focused on ending police violence. The campaign outlines eight policies that the organizers believe will decrease police violence significantly.

1. BAN CHOKEHOLDS & STRANGLEHOLDS

Mason Police are not trained to use chokeholds and strangle holds. Such use of force would be considered deadly force and would be defined as a "Last Resort" tactic under our Use of Force Policy (Mason Order #2401, Updated 1/1/2008, Section II.D.), and such a level of force would have to be justified.

2. REQUIRE DE-ESCALATION BEFORE THEY TURN EXTREME/DEADLY

De-escalation is part of our Use of Force Policy (Mason Order #2401, Section V) and is included in our annual training.

3. REQUIRE OFFICERS TO USE VERBAL WARNING BEFORE SHOOTING

Use of verbal commands is part of our Use of Force Policy and training. Use of verbal commands is emphasized in our training regularly, during practical exercises. Per our Use of Force Policy (Mason Order #2401, Section VI.B) and training, officers are to provide warnings when feasible.

4. REQUIRE OFFICERS TO EXHAUST ALL ALTERNATIVES BEFORE SHOOTING

Per our Use of Force Policy (Order #2401), training, and testing, officers are held to the objectively reasonable officer standard, based on case law. In addition, they are trained to use the appropriate level of force (control) based on the totality of the circumstances and threat (resistance) by the subject. The use of a firearm is reserved only for situations of imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to others or an officer, and in certain situations, to prevent the escape of a fleeing felon who poses a threat of death or serious bodily injury to others.

5. REQUIRE OFFICERS TO INTERVENE, STOP, and REPORT EXCESSIVE FORCE BY ANOTHER OFFICER

Our Use of Force policy (Order #2401, Section V.E) and training requires officers, if they have a means and opportunity, to intervene, if they observe other officers engaging in illegal or excessive behavior. This would be reported to their immediate supervisor or the Chief. After initial review and per policy, a decision would be made if the matter to be an administrative review or internal investigation. The matter may be assigned to an investigator, supervisor, or in more serious cases a request for assistance from an outside agency (Order #1104, Section II).

6. BAN SHOOTING AT MOVING VEHICLES

Use of Force policy and training restricts shooting at or from moving vehicles to a "Last Resort" situation (Order #2401, Section VI.C). For example, if a person in the vehicle is threatening the officer or another person with deadly force by means other than the vehicle itself, or the vehicle is operated in a manner deliberately intended to strike an officer or another person.

7. REQUIRE USE OF FORCE CONTINUUM THAT RESTRICTS THE MOST SEVERE TYPES OF FORCE TO THE MOST EXTREME SITUATIONS AND CREATES CLEAR POLICY RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF EACH POLICE WEAPON AND TACTIC

Several of Mason's policies (including Order #2402, Updated 1/8/2020), re-enforced by training, practical exercises, and testing, related to the use of force, subject control, use of ASR (OC spray), use of CEW (Tasers), firearm, and subject aftercare and medical care, require post use of force reporting reviews by supervisors and the Chief. In addition, record keeping, as a risk management tool, is used to guide, control, teach and ensure appropriate, minimal and lawful use of force.

8. REQUIRE COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING FOR USE OF FORCE

In addition to an incident report, a separate comprehensive Use of Force report is required and submitted. They are reviewed by the supervisors and the Chief as well as maintained in a record keeping system. As of January 1, 2019, Mason also began to voluntarily self-report Use of Force the Department of Justice (DOJ) National Use of Force Data Collection. Incidents which meet certain levels of seriousness are reported. If no Use of Force incidents meet the criteria for seriousness to occur, a "zero cases" submission is still reported. No Use of Force incidents have met the threshold to be submitted to the DOJ.

Q: Does the Mason Police Department have a policy restricting no-knock warrants?

A: Mason’s Search and Seizure Policy (Order #2006) requires officers to knock and announce prior to executing a warrant. However, it previously allowed for an exception if there could be harm to an officer to knock and announce. We will be eliminating that exception as part of our policy reform and in reaction to the Breonna Taylor case.

Q: Body cameras are important tool for transparency. What is Mason’s policies regarding body cameras?

A: The City of Mason maintains an Operations Order for Patrol Digital Audio-Video Recording. Body-worn cameras were added with existing dash cameras in 2015 to create greater transparency and accountability in its interactions with the public. The City requires police officers to turn on their camera on dispatched calls, self-initiated field contacts and whenever making citizen contacts (Order #2003, Section A). We have been having difficulty with providing the footage easily upon request due to the outdated equipment that restricts our ability to redact items legally required to be removed. The City of Mason has in its Capital Improvement Plan an investment to be allocated this year to an upgrade to ensure the technology meets the needs of the public and our City to ensure transparency.

Q: Are citizens in Mason allowed to record police interactions with their cell phone?

A: While it’s legal in Michigan for citizens to record a police officer doing their job in public, an exception comes when the citizen starts interfering with the officer’s work. In other words, if what you’re doing in any way interferes with the officer’s ability to do their job or carry out their duties, that officer can order you to stop what you’re doing. If a police officer asks you to move away from the scene, it’s important to do so.

If you’re in a public place and you’re simply recording the officer but not making any attempt to interfere with their actions, the video is your property. It’s unlawful for the officer to order you to stop filming or attempt to take the phone away or tamper with your phone in any way. The police also can’t order you to delete the video. To even see what’s on the video, they would need a warrant.

Q: How many calls does Mason police respond to? How many have resulted in Use of Force?

A: Mason Police respond to a variety of emergency and non-emergency calls for service and self-initiated activity.

	2018	2019	2020 (partial)
Incidents Requiring an Incident Report:	2632	2783	907
Of total, incidents related to Traffic Stops	1800	1722	436
Of total, incidents involving Use of Force:	18	17	4

Use of Force/ Subject Control Continuum Incidents

Level of Use of Force	Description	2018	2019	2020 (partial)
Officer Presence/ Verbal Direction	Physical Appearance/ Professional Bearing	2	6	2
Compliance Controls	Clear and deliberate verbal commands	4	6	0
Physical Controls	OC, Come Alongs, Wrist Locks	10	5	1
Intermediate Control	Strikedowns and Takedowns	2	0	0
Deadly Force	Firearms and Strike to Vital Areas	0	0	0