An aerial photograph of Austin, Texas, showing the Colorado River winding through the city. The river is surrounded by lush green trees and parks. In the background, the city skyline is visible with various high-rise buildings under a clear sky.

# USE OF FORCE (UOF) TASK FORCE UPDATE

## AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESENTATION TO AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

ROBIN S. ENGEL, PHD  
JOHN GLENN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

# DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. SUMMARY OF MAY 2025 BRIEFING
2. STATUS OF USE OF FORCE TASK FORCE
3. POLICY CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS
4. TRAINING
5. ACCOUNTABILITY & OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS
6. DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING
7. PROCESS AND TIMING

# UOF POLICY CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consolidate into one policy
2. Minor changes in language throughout; streamlined
3. Re-centered on De-escalation Tactics and Training
4. New conceptualization and categorization of UOF
5. Focus on oversight, accountability, and transparency

## CURRENT APD GENERAL ORDERS

G.O. 200 - R2R

G.O. 202 - Firearms

G.O. 204 - Leg Restraints

G.O. 206 - Control Devices

G.O. 208 - TASER

G.O. 211 - Inquiry, Reporting & Review

G.O. 212 - R2R Audit Group

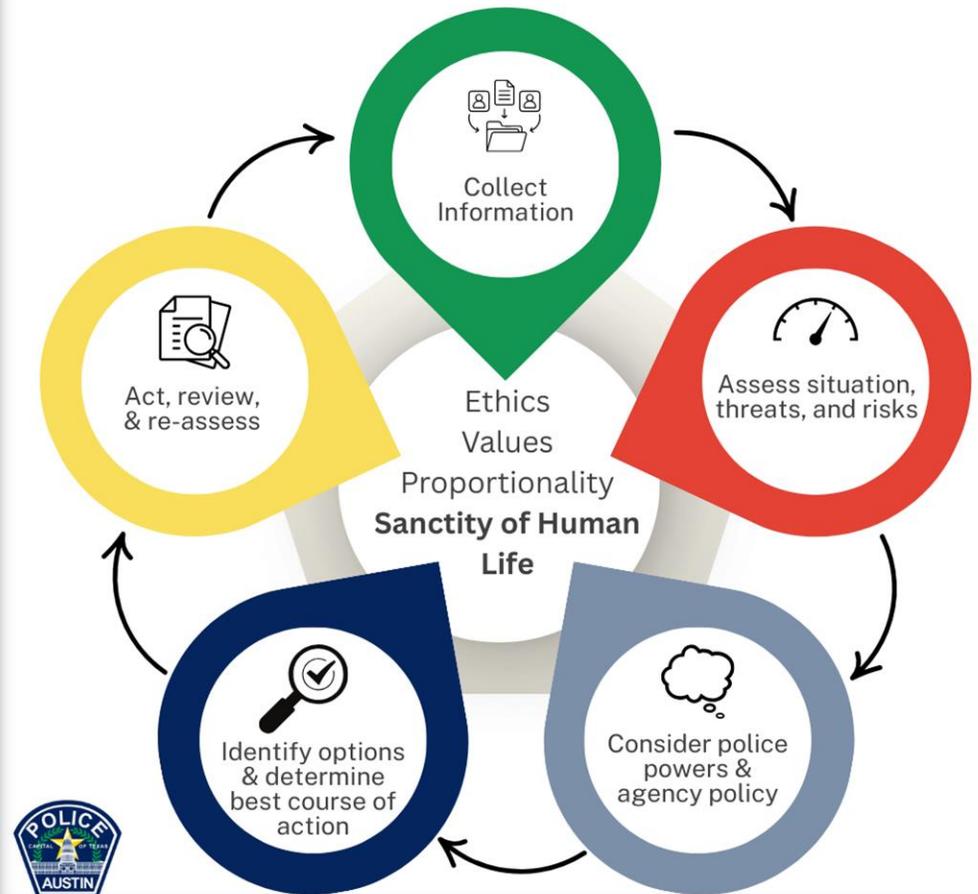
# Focus on De-Escalation: ICAT Training

Police Executive Research  
Forum (PERF)

Integrating Communications Assessment  
and Tactics  
(ICAT) Training

Critical Decision-Making (CDM) Model

Austin Police Department CDM Model



# LMPD De-escalation Training Impact on Use of Force and Injuries, 2019 - 2020



2021, 11(1), 170-181, 1075

CRIMINOLOGY & Public Policy

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Assessing the impact of de-escalation training on police behavior: Reducing police use of force in the Louisville, KY Metro Police Department

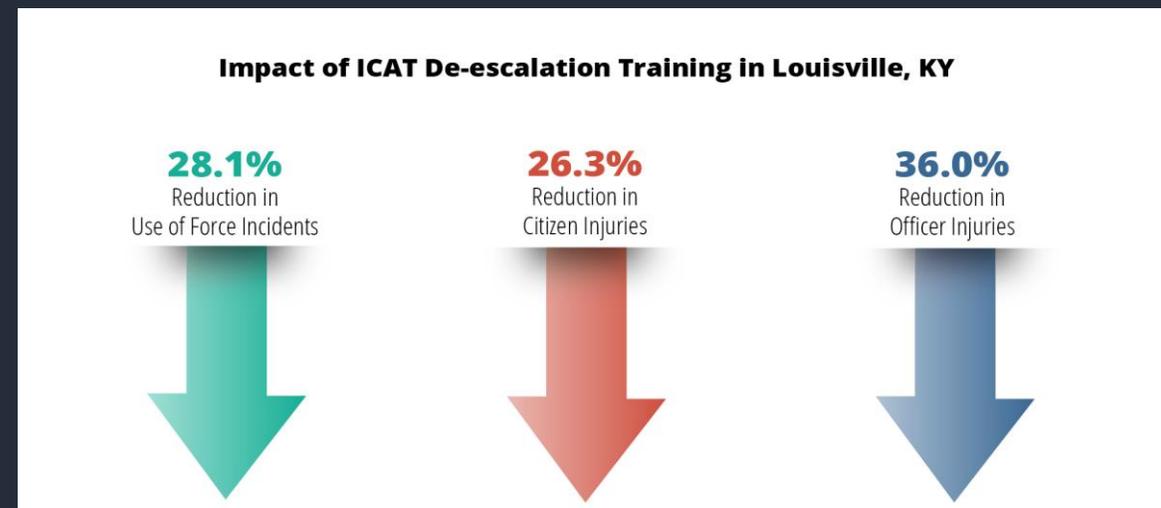
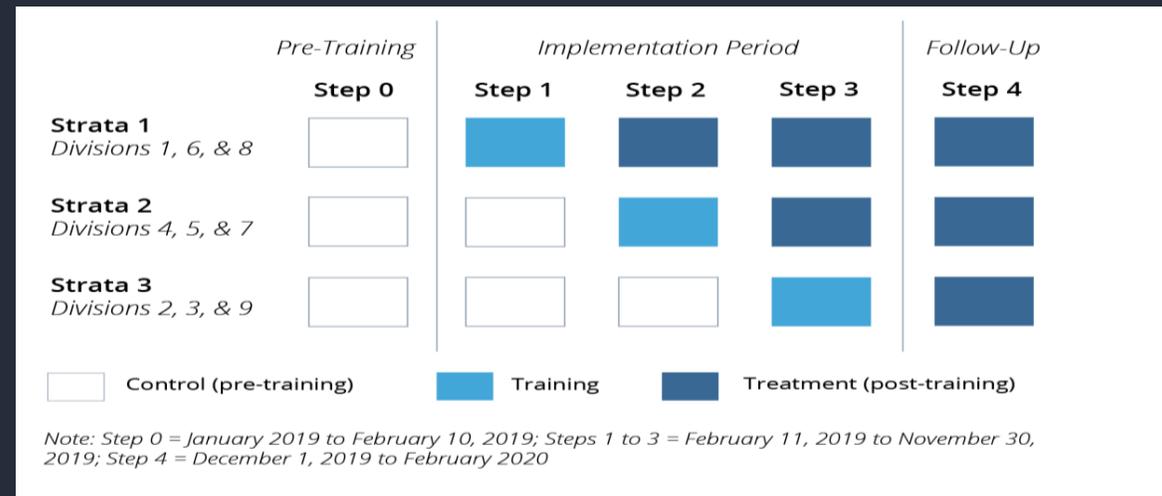
Robin S. Engel | Nicholas Corsaro | Gabrielle T. Isaza | Hannah D. McManus

Center for Police Research and Policy, University of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Correspondence: Robin S. Engel, SAC/UC Center for Police Research and Policy, University of Cleveland, 10000, 1000 Teachers Dyer Complex, 3600 Mulholland Drive, Cleveland, OH 44115, USA. Email: [rengel@ucjps.org](mailto:rengel@ucjps.org)

**Abstract**  
**Research summary:** Changing police use of force policies and training to incorporate de-escalation tactics is one of the most routinely recommended police reform measures. Despite widespread promotion and proliferation of de-escalation trainings, to date, no research has empirically demonstrated that these trainings reduce use of force in the field (Engel, R. S., McManus, H. D., & Henold, E. D., 2020). Therefore, it is unknown if de-escalation trainings actually reduce force, have no impact, or have unintended consequences that possibly increase injuries to officers or citizens. We collaborated with the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) in 2019 to evaluate the impact of the Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) de-escalation training developed by the Police Executive Research Forum. Using a stepped-wedge randomized controlled trial research design, the panel regression results demonstrated statistically significant reductions in use of force incidents (-28.1%), citizen injuries (-26.3%), and officer injuries (-36.0%) in the post-training period. These significant reductions were larger than any changes in LMPD arrest patterns during the

Criminology & Public Policy 20(2), 1-18 | [doi.org/10.1177/15412941211011707](https://doi.org/10.1177/15412941211011707) | © 2021 American Society of Criminology | 4



# IMPD De-escalation Training Impact on Use of Force and Injuries, 2022 - 2024



## Evaluation of Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) Training with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police

**Robin S. Engel, Ph.D.**  
The Ohio State University

**Nicholas Corsaro, Ph.D.**  
University of Cincinnati

**Ryan T. Motz, Ph.D.**  
University of Cincinnati

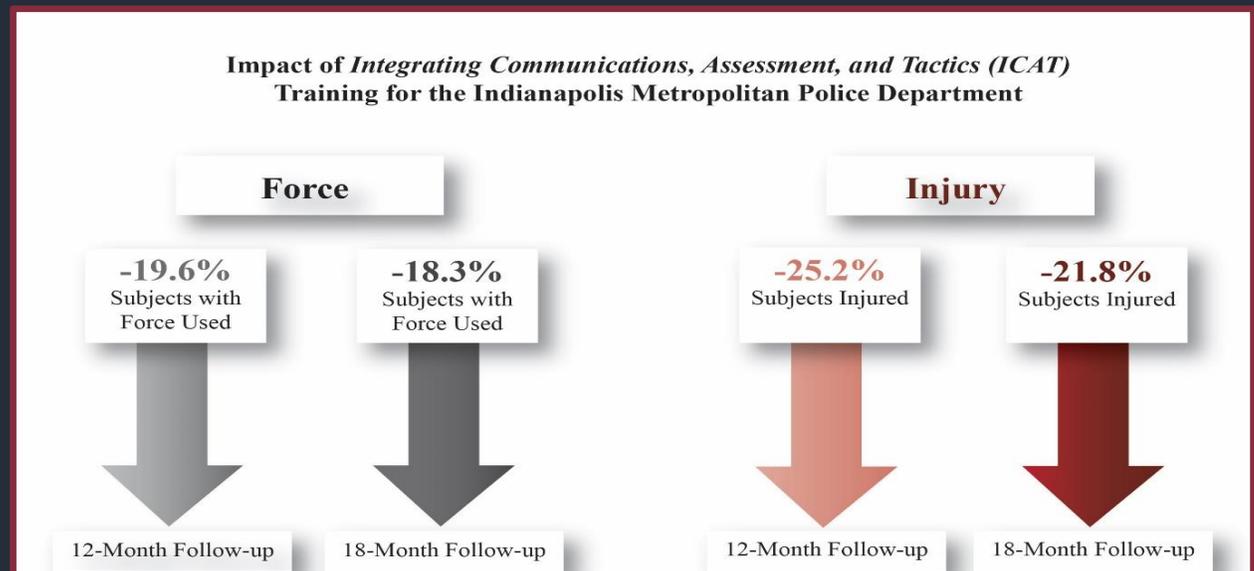
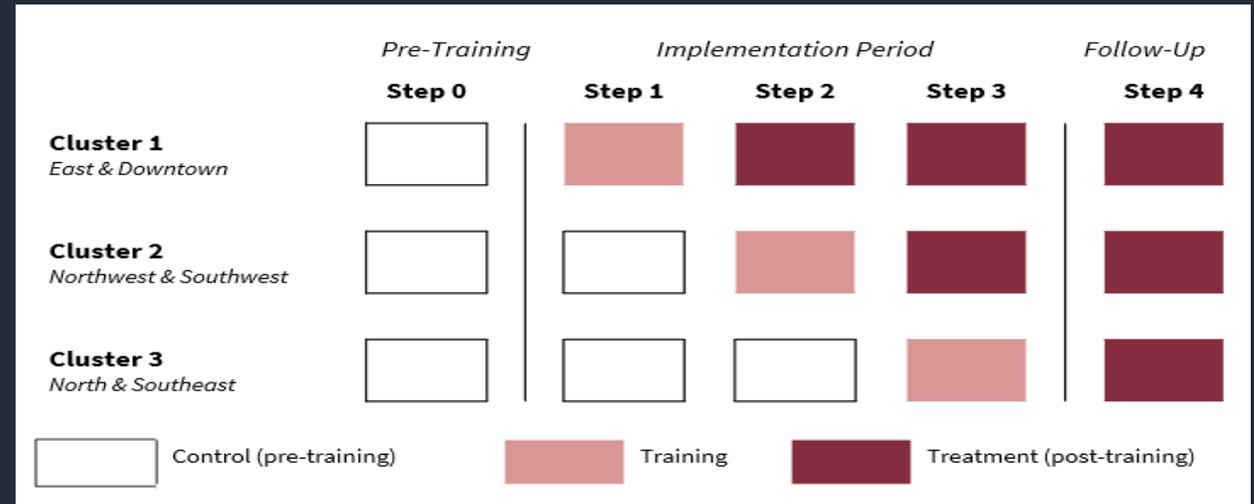
**Jennifer Cherkauskas, Ph.D.**  
The Ohio State University



Disclaimer: This project was supported by Award No. 2020-R2-CX-0026, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Direct all correspondence to Principal Investigator Dr. Robin Engel, engel.254@osu.edu

June 30, 2025



# Officer Receptivity to Training

Most officers (regardless of their demographics, experience, or views) are highly receptive to ICAT training, but some variations across officers

**Receptivity is important because....**

Officers *most* receptive to ICAT have **49.5% probability** of reporting use of skills in their most recent encounter with a person in crisis

Officers *least* receptive to ICAT have **4.5% probability**

# Key Points for Supervisors

More supervisory support  
for training →

More positive attitudes  
by officers →

More use of skills in field

LMPD officers - perceived support for ICAT from sups led to more favorable attitudes towards key components of ICAT training

IMPD officers - perceived sup reinforcement of training were 1.7x more likely to self-report using ICAT skills

But ... untapped first-line supervisor potential...

# LMPD Supervisors Self-Reported ICAT Activities

## How frequently do you...

...talk with subordinate officers generally about the use of ICAT skills?

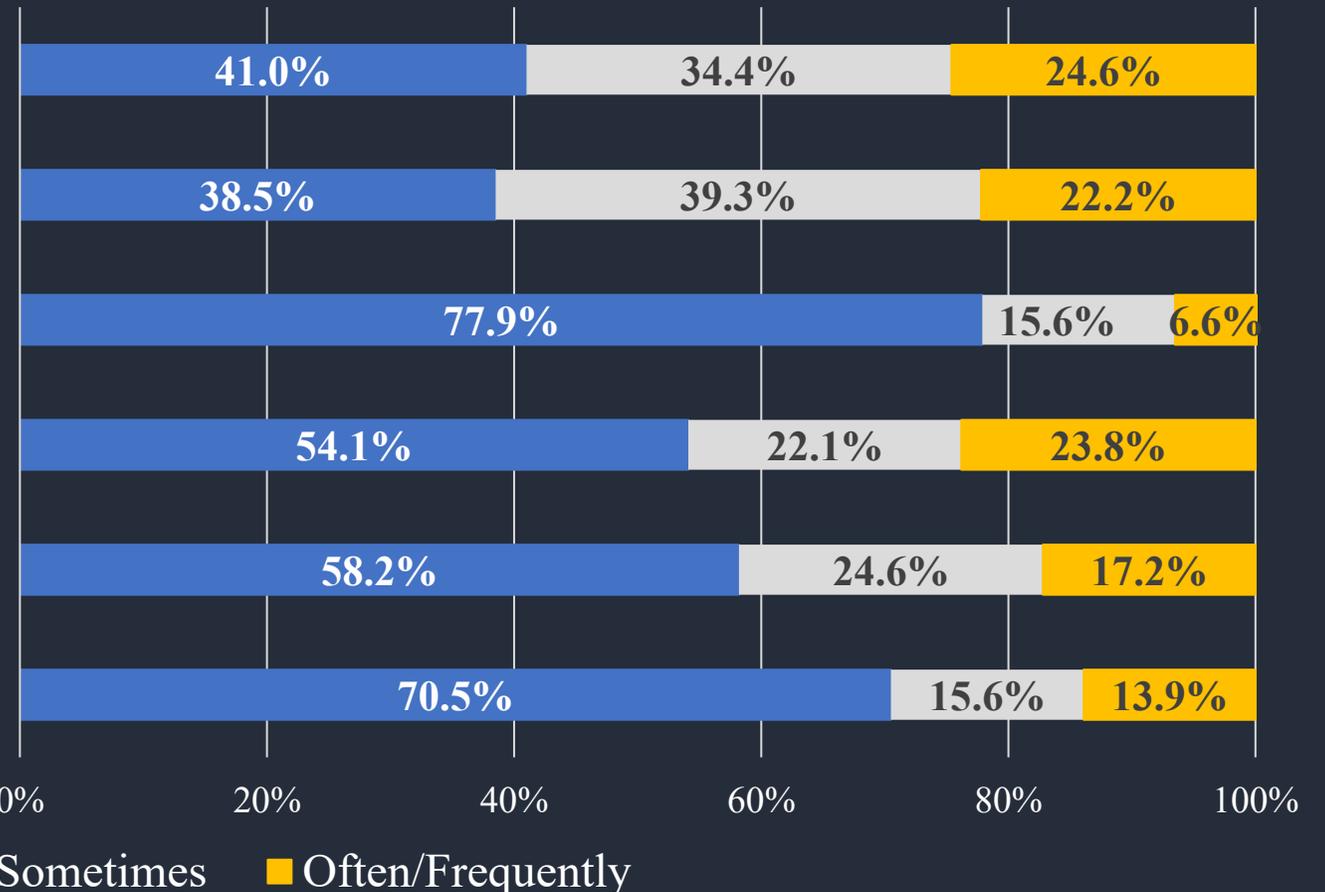
...have discussions with subordinates about their use of ICAT skills?

...counsel subordinates about not using ICAT skills when they should have?

...document use of ICAT skills in use of force reports?

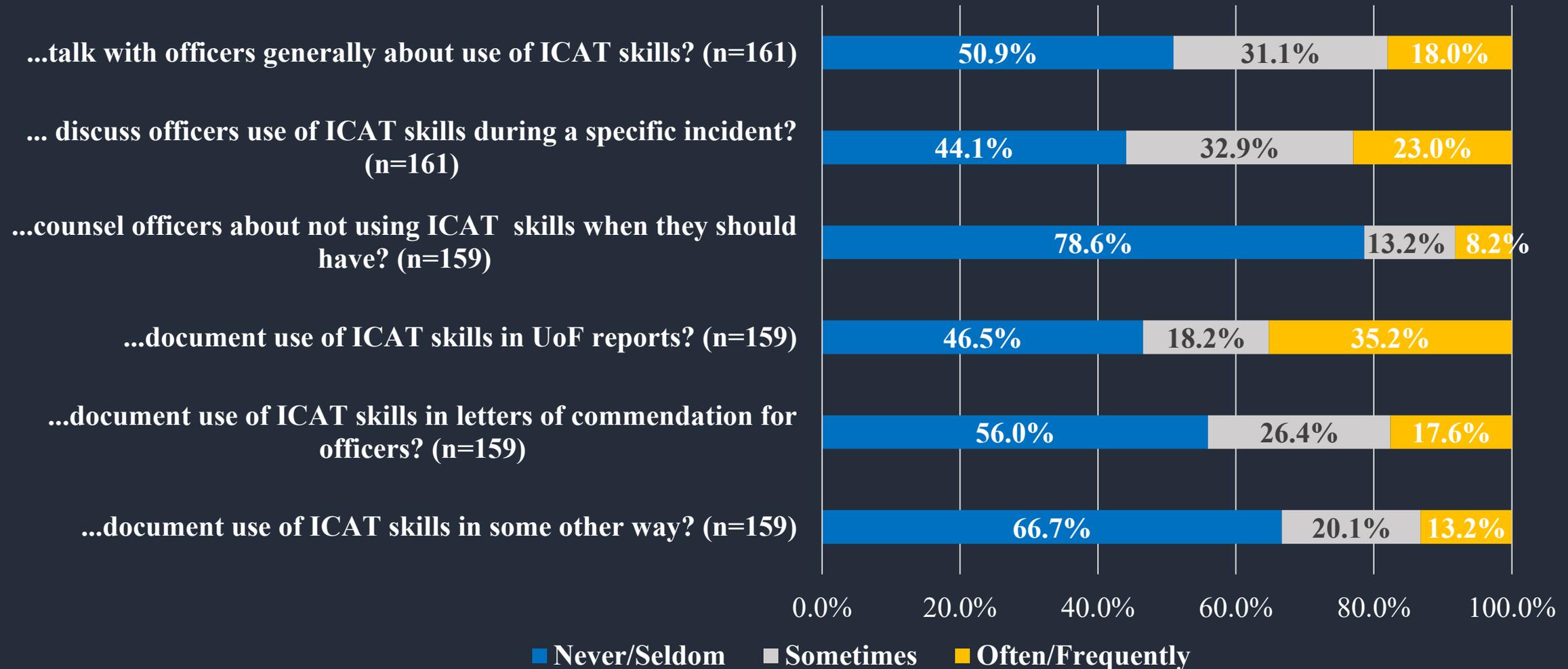
...document use of ICAT skills in letters of commendation for subordinate officers?

...document use of ICAT skills in some other way?



# IMPD Supervisors Self-Reported ICAT Activities

How frequently do you ....



# Conclusions on ICAT Training

The evidence shows ....

1. ICAT training can reduce use of force and subjects injured
2. ICAT training content and delivery matters – trainee receptivity is critical
3. Focus on first-line supervisors could have the greatest immediate and long-term impact
4. Holistic approach (policy, supervision, managerial reinforcement) will improve impact
5. Continuing to build evidence base is critical – can be supplemented by agency self-assessments and use of force studies

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