

# De-escalation in the digital age:

**HOW TO LEVERAGE NEXT-GENERATION  
TECHNOLOGIES TO EMPOWER LAW  
ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO SAFELY  
HANDLE EVERY SITUATION**

# Overview

De-escalation is a critical skill for law enforcement officers who work in high-pressure situations. It can mean the difference between a safe resolution and a potentially dangerous or even deadly outcome.

However, de-escalation is not always easy to teach. Classroom lectures and actor-based exercises alone may not fully prepare officers for real-world scenarios. Agency trainers and trainees face challenges that require a novel approach.

Next-generation technology solutions, such as the InVeris SURVIVR Virtual Reality Training System, offer a game-changing approach to de-escalation training.



## The need for advanced de-escalation training

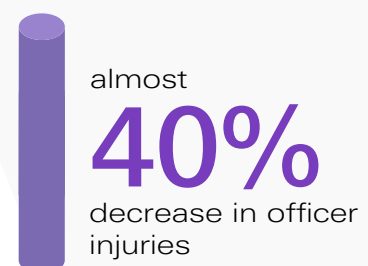
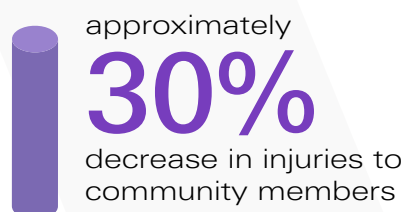
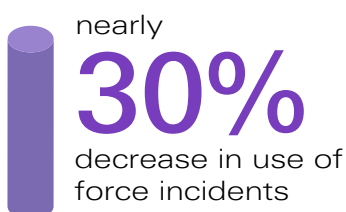
In recent years, there has been a growing trend in the US toward implementing de-escalation training as a means to improve use of force discretion by law enforcement officers.

This trend has been driven by several factors, including a growing recognition of the benefits of de-escalation in law enforcement situations.

Police chief and educator Ronnell Higgins, M.A., for one, **says** that their agency has seen how de-escalation training improves outcomes. De-escalation, in his opinion, needs to be covered in great detail in the police agencies' training programs.<sup>1</sup>

An **ICAT de-escalation training impact survey**, on the other hand, revealed that de-escalation training resulted in a nearly 30% reduction in use-of-force incidents and injuries to community members. The training also resulted in a 40% reduction in law enforcement officer injuries.<sup>2</sup>

### De-escalation training benefits



Source: *International Association of Chief of Police (IACP) / University of Cincinnati (UC) Center for Police Research and Policy*

# Officers want more advanced scenario-based training

De-escalation training typically involves teaching officers in a classroom setting and testing their learning through scenario-based exercises.

A 2021 Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) survey found that one of the long-term priorities of law enforcement agencies is to provide officers with more training and educational opportunities. Scenario-based training is one of the areas where they want to increase training investments.<sup>3</sup>

According to a report, 80% of law enforcement agencies said their need for training has increased. However, only 34% of them said they had the budget they needed to afford regular training.<sup>4</sup>



Source: PowerDMS

## Advancing de-escalation training, maximizing training funds using VR

The Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act of 2022<sup>5</sup> mandates the Department of Justice (DOJ) to devise scenario-based training curricula or identify existing curriculum materials that cover subjects such as:

- de-escalation tactics,
- alternatives to the use of force, and
- safe response to individuals experiencing a suicidal, mental, or behavioral health crisis.

The law requires that the training curricula must include scenario-based exercises, pre-training tests, post-training tests, follow-up evaluative assessments, and consultation. The legislation also allocates **\$70 million** per year for training purposes, which encompasses scenario-based exercises and evaluations.<sup>6</sup>

Training agencies are receiving financial support to address the growing demand for training. One example of this is the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT) at Sam Houston State University, which has been awarded a two-year grant worth \$981,760 by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The grant will be used to establish a de-escalation training center.<sup>7</sup>

## Funding to meet growing de-escalation training demands

**\$70 million annually**

will be granted by The Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act for training, including scenario-based exercises and evaluations.

Source: *NACo*

**\$981,760**

worth of 2-year grant funding through COPS provides funding for Sam Houston State University's LEMIT's de-escalation training center establishment.

Source: *Sam Houston State University*

Regardless of the de-escalation training method used, the goal is to equip officers with the right skills to manage a situation without resorting to use of force, where possible.

According to the **Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC)**, the outcome of any situation in which law enforcement is called to intervene is dependent on many factors, including:<sup>8</sup>

- effective communication,
- emotional intelligence,
- empathy,
- sound tactics,
- resource and plan development and implementation, and
- teamwork.

By considering these factors and using next-generation technology solutions, such as virtual reality (VR) training systems, agencies will be able to implement powerful de-escalation training programs.

**According to Verified Market Research**, the adoption of VR technology for law enforcement training is increasing, with the virtual training and simulation market expected to reach USD 1036.2 million by 2030, growing at a 13.30% CAGR from 2022.<sup>9</sup>

North America is expected to dominate the market share due to the increasing reliance of law enforcement agencies on virtual training and simulation methods for cost-effective officer training.



## Increasing adoption of VR technology for de-escalation training

### USD 1036.2 million by 2030

The virtual training and simulation market is expected to be worth USD 1036.2 million by 2030, with a 13.30% CAGR beginning in 2022.

### Cost-effective training

One of the main reasons the market is growing, especially in North America, is because training can be done at a low cost.

Source: *Verified Market Research*

Next-generation technology solutions, such as simulation-based training platforms, are not intended to replace classroom lectures and scenario-based training for de-escalation. But they can help fill the gaps by addressing the challenges that agency trainers and trainees experience when building training programs, training officers, and applying what they've learned in real-world scenarios.

## Revolutionize de-escalation training using SURVIVR

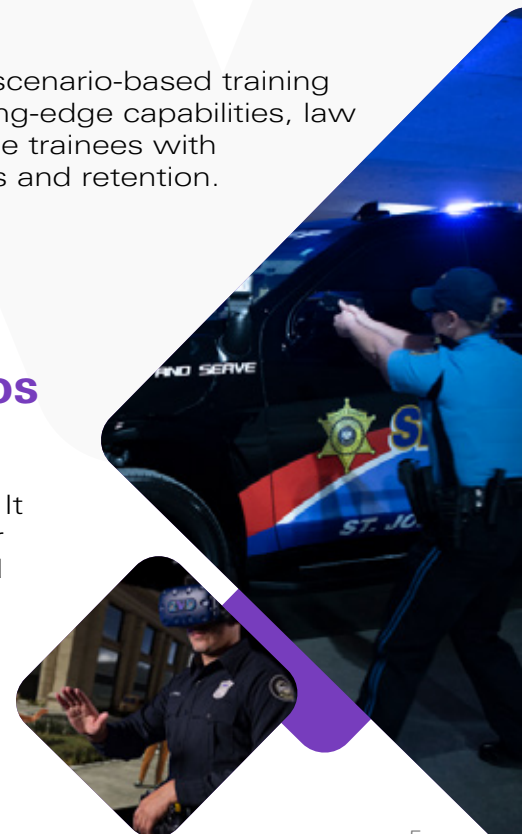
The InVeris SURVIVR Virtual Reality Training System is an advanced virtual reality (VR) simulation training system for critical, real-world preparation for de-escalation of force situations.

InVeris SURVIVR safely trains and rehearses de-escalation of force scenarios in a 360° virtual training environment. It enables law enforcement agencies to safely and rapidly improve trainees' communications skills, sharpen their decision-making ability, increase situational awareness, and ensure adherence to policies and procedures.

SURVIVR complements and supplements classroom lectures and scenario-based training strategies by offering powerful capabilities. Using SURVIVR's cutting-edge capabilities, law enforcement agencies can author and customize scenarios, provide trainees with real-world tools and experiences, and assess training effectiveness and retention.

### Author and customize your own scenarios

SURVIVR allows trainers to author and customize scenarios that accurately reflect the situations officers may encounter on the job. It allows them to take into account the unique circumstances of their community, as well as stay up-to-date with the latest research and best practices in de-escalation.





SURVIVR allows instructors to easily build customized scenarios using any environment to train based on their policies and procedures. These scenarios can then be conveniently saved to the library for future use.

## Provide real-world tools and experiences

SURVIVR prepares law enforcement officers for the realities of their work. It enables them to adapt to unpredictable and high-pressure situations, especially when the de-escalation techniques are new. It provides them a safe space to make mistakes and learn from them without consequences.

SURVIVR's dynamic training environments and endless branching options increase the trainee's psychological immersion and focus when dealing with the situation at hand. SURVIVR also comes with critical tools for de-escalation training—including the following:

- ▶ Handguns
- ▶ Stinger LED Flashlight
- ▶ Remington 870 Shotgun
- ▶ Tasers
- ▶ Expandable Baton
- ▶ MK-3 OC Spray
- ▶ M4 Rifle

## Assess training effectiveness and retention

SURVIVR's immersive, lifelike, and interactive training environment can help improve retention. Officers can act out any situation and interact with different settings and characters in SURVIVR by tracking hands, putting on handcuffs, opening doors, and other ways. It is accessible around the clock, allowing instructors and trainees to receive as many training repetitions as required.

Furthermore, depending on the trainee's actions, the instructor can dynamically escalate or de-escalate the scenario. Trainers can also review trainees' decision-making skills from any angle during the after-action review.

**Table 1. At a Glance: How to revolutionize de-escalation training with SURVIVR**

De-escalation training requirements	SURVIVR’s solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create scenario-based training that cost-effectively meets growing and evolving training demands</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Easily build and customize scenarios using:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Over 180 suspect and bystander avatars, with variations in gender, ethnicity, and clothing</li> <li>◦ Expanded suspect verbiage and actions to support various conversations and officer commands</li> <li>◦ Over 40 high-quality environments with adjustable weather, time of day, and trainee/suspect/bystander starting locations.</li> <li>◦ Over 120 drag-and-drop props (e.g. contraband, weapons)</li> <li>◦ Nuisance generator to create realistic background noises and visuals (e.g. barking dog, shots fired, yelling)</li> <li>◦ The ability to easily create, edit, and save custom scenarios</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prepare officers for real-world scenarios</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide officers with real-world tools and experiences, using:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Supported weapons and tools—including M4 Rifle, Remington 870 Shotgun, handguns, tasers, MK-3 OC spray, stinger LED flashlight, and expandable baton.</li> <li>◦ Cooperative training for up to 4 simultaneous trainees in a safe environment</li> <li>◦ Up to 12 simultaneous weapons/tools per system configuration</li> <li>◦ Highly realistic weapon material, weight, and feel</li> <li>◦ Scalable footprint from 10’ X 10’ to 35’ X 35’.</li> <li>◦ Practice shooting range for trainees to practice weapon deployment on targets and training dummies.</li> <li>◦ Haptic feedback vest that allows trainees to feel physical sensations when hit by force during a training scenario</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- **Ensure training effectiveness**

- **Track and assess training effectiveness during and after training, using:**
  - Hand tracking
  - Physical character interactions
  - Repeatable scenarios
  - Rich after-action reviews with multiple viewpoints and metrics

## Conclusion

De-escalation is a crucial skill for law enforcement officers who operate in high-stress circumstances. To adequately prepare officers for real-world scenarios, agencies must supercharge their scenario-based exercises with next-generation technologies such as virtual reality technology.

By simulating a range of scenarios that officers may encounter in the field, InVeris SURVIVR Virtual Reality Training System enables officers to learn and refine de-escalation techniques in a realistic and immersive setting.

## References

<sup>1</sup>University Named Regional De-Escalation Training Center for Law Enforcement Professionals. **University of New Haven**.

<https://www.newhaven.edu/news/blog/2022/regional-de-escalation-training-center.php>

<sup>2</sup>Examining the Impact of Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) De-escalation Training for the Louisville Metro Police Department: Initial Findings. **IACP**.

[https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/Research%20Center/LMPD\\_ICAT%20Evaluation%20Initial%20Findings%20Report\\_FINAL%2009212020.pdf](https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/Research%20Center/LMPD_ICAT%20Evaluation%20Initial%20Findings%20Report_FINAL%2009212020.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>The PERF Critical Issues Report. **Police Executive Research Forum**.

[https://www.policeforum.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=816:criticalissuesdec4&catid=20:site-content](https://www.policeforum.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=816:criticalissuesdec4&catid=20:site-content)

<sup>4</sup> Ways to extend law enforcement training dollars. **PowerDMS**.

<https://www.powerdms.com/policy-learning-center/4-ways-to-extend-law-enforcement-training-dollars>

## About InVeris Training Solutions

InVeris Training Solutions is the world leader in integrated live fire and virtual weapons training systems for defense forces, law enforcement agencies, and commercial shooting range owners around the world.

InVeris Training Solutions (formerly Meggitt Training Systems) combines an agile approach with unmatched expertise in training technology to design and deliver cutting-edge training solutions that keep military, law enforcement, and commercial range customers safe, prepared, and ready to serve

<sup>5</sup>Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act of 2022.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/4003>

<sup>6</sup>Senators introduce bipartisan legislation to provide funding for law enforcement de-escalation and crisis intervention training. **NACo**.

<https://www.naco.org/blog/senators-introduce-bipartisan-legislation-provide-funding-law-enforcement-de-escalation-and>

<sup>7</sup>Grant Provides Funding for Criminal Justice De-Escalation Training Center. **Sam Houston State University**.

<https://www.shsu.edu/today@sam/T@S/article/2023/grant-provides-funding-for-criminal-justice-de-escalation-training-center>

<sup>8</sup>De-Escalation: The Cornerstone of Law Enforcement. **The Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC)**.

<https://porac.org/article/de-escalation-the-cornerstone-of-law-enforcement/>

<sup>9</sup>Global Virtual Training And Simulation Market Size By Component (Hardware, Software), By Application (Flight Simulation, Battlefield Simulation and Defense), By Geographic Scope And Forecast. **Verified Market Research**.

<https://www.verifiedmarketresearch.com/product/virtual-training-and-simulation-market/>