





Critical Decision-Making Model (CDM)

- 1. Collect Information** – What do I know, and what do I need to know as I respond? Use available resources to gain information, as well as your training and experience. This step is an ongoing process throughout any incident.
- 2. Assess Situation, Threats, and Risks** – Evaluate gathered information, particularly for threats or risks. Begin to develop a working strategy. Do I need to take immediate action? Do I need additional resources or a supervisor? Assess the subject’s means, ability, opportunity, and intent.
- 3. Consider Police Powers and Agency Policy** – What legal authority and powers do I have to take action? To use force, if necessary? Is this a police matter?
- 4. Identify Options and Determine Best Course of Action** – What am I trying to achieve? Should I act now or wait? Think of your options and tactics, including tactical repositioning, or slowing down the response. Take decisive action, if necessary. Remember proportionality.
- 5. Act, Review, and Re-Assess** – Take action. Is there anything more I need to do or consider? Did I achieve the desired outcome?

The CDM is a circular process, not linear. If the situation is not resolved, start at step 1 again and “re-spin” the model. The CDM provides an organized way of making decisions about how to act in any situation, including those that may require the use of force.