

**REED COLLEGE  
COMMUNITY SAFETY  
DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTIVE**

**GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGEMENT REGARDING DOYLE OWL CROWDS**

Source: The New (Olde) Reed Almanac, Use of Force Directive. Departmental Directive issued by the Community Safety Director.

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**Principle**

Community Safety Officers (CSOs) will assume that individuals engaging with the Doyle Owl, and any associated crowd, are acting according to the Honor Principle and complying with all relevant college policies and applicable local, state, and federal laws; provided the CSO does not have a reasonable concern that individuals are creating an unsafe situation that will result in the imminent injury of an individual present or the destruction of property.

**Background**

Taken from the New (Olde) Reed Almanac to provide context:

“Doyle Owl: *Strigidus cementus*. Unofficial mascot of Reed College (the official mascot being the griffin (q.v.). While the griffin is a mythical beast, the Doyle Owl is concretely real, although most of the tales of the owl are myths. The original owl was a local piece of garden sculpture, which was carried off as a prank by students living in House F (later renamed Doyle). Since then, there have been many incarnations of the Doyle Owl; the present avatar is owl number 23, plus or minus 11. Almost all of them are made of concrete and weigh over 100 pounds (although there was at least one anti-owl, made of papier-mâché). Contrary to prevalent myth, the Owl was never one of the animals adorning the roof of Old Dorm Block; those are and always have been beavers....

The most notable side effect of exposure to the owl is, of course, owl fever—a disease so virulent that it can turn even the most demure Reedies into a howling mob who will stop at nothing to secure their feathered prize. Alumni, faculty, students, staff—all are caught in the inescapable sway of the owl. The question of why a nondescript garden statue from Eastmoreland still inspires such passion remains unanswered.”

**Overview**

Owl Crowds are a feature of Reed tradition that CSOs are expected to monitor for the safety of those involved. Due to the inherently chaotic nature of these gatherings, CSOs may find themselves at a loss for determining what response to this event is an

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appropriate one. CSOs will only engage with students involved in the Owl Crowd to prevent imminent injury to those present, or to prevent the imminent destruction of property, and will only use the minimum amount of force necessary as outlined by Community Safety's Use of Force Directive to prevent injury.

**CSO Engagement Overview**

CSOs should exercise caution and apply officer safety strategies when approaching any group, particularly one where one or more individuals appear(s) to be intoxicated. While maintaining a good rapport and low-key approach is important, CSOs should not place themselves at unnecessary risk. If the Owl has appeared unexpectedly, immediately notify the CS Manager On-Call by phone, and other CSOs on-duty by radio.

**General Engagement Principles**

- CSOs will observe crowds struggling for possession of the Owl from a reasonable distance but will not directly intervene unless they reasonably believe that injury

or destruction of property is imminent

- CSOs may respond to requests for assistance from participants at any time
- CSOs should be prepared for minor injuries and have ready access to a medical

kit while monitoring crowds associated with a struggle for the Owl

- CSOs shall remain neutral in terms of possession of the Owl and should avoid any actions that could be perceived as assisting or disadvantaging anyone struggling

for possession of the Owl

- Doyle Owl Nest Safety Zone: The presence of motor vehicles in close proximity to crowds struggling for the Owl creates an increased risk of injury and property damage. Due to these risks, once the Owl struggle has begun, CSOs shall barricade off (stanchions and tape) an area or "Doyle Owl's Nest Safety Zone." The Safety Zone is to prevent vehicles from posing increased risk to participants by operating near the active struggle and to reduce the risk of property damage. Additionally, whether inside or outside the Safety Zone, CSOs should be aware of cars driving around the Safety Zone in an unsafe manner, including driving off hard surfaces, driving with open doors, driving with students or others not properly seated and restrained, etc. Once the Owl reaches vehicles located at the edge of the Safety Zone, CSOs will continue to monitor safety and risk, only intervening if they reasonably believe that injury or destruction of property is imminent. The size and configuration of the Safety

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Zone will depend on several variables, including timing and location of the event, advanced notification and other factors. Additionally, as the owl is potentially moved, the Safety Zone may need to move, as well.

- Example: if the owl is in the middle of the GCC Quad, the Safety Zone may extend to the drivable paths bordering the area and could include the south path bordering ODB

- Example: if the owl is in the grass circle in the middle of the Eliot traffic circle, the Safety Zone may prohibit vehicles from the entire circle.

- ❑ CSOs should avoid placing themselves at risk and are not expected to take any action that seems likely to lead to injury of the CSO

**Specific Engagement Practices**

- ❑ Greet the group and introduce yourself by name as appropriate and possible

- ❑ State the reason for addressing the group, including any specific observation(s) that led to the engagement (e.g., I noticed that the 300 lb. concrete Owl is perched precariously at the top of a hill with a group of unsuspecting prospective students below, who do not appear to be aware of its presence)

- ❑ Try to verbally negotiate a safer course of action

- ❑ If student(s) cannot be persuaded to resolve an unsafe situation, or if an unsafe situation arises too quickly to be prevented (e.g. a fist fight breaks out suddenly), a CSO may need to intervene proactively and in accordance with the CS Use of Force Directive\*

- ❑ Once an unsafe situation has been resolved, ask for the Reed I.D.s of all students involved, if a student does not have their I.D. verify their student status through

Dispatch

- ❑ Ask each student what role they played in the unsafe situation, and document this for your report

**\*Excerpt from the CS Use of Force Directive:**

“...Use of force by Community Safety should be reserved for situations when other options

aren't reasonable to effectively mitigate the threat of injury or death. CSOs shall use only the amount of force which reasonably appears necessary, given the facts and circumstances perceived by the CSO at the time of the event, to effectively bring an incident under control in any situation listed below:

1) When there is imminent threat of injury or death to the CSO

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2) When there is imminent threat of injury or death to another person “Reasonableness” of the force used must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene at the time of the incident. No CSO has the authority to depart from this directive.

**Standard of Reasonableness**

Any application of force by a member of the Community Safety Department must be judged by a standard of “reasonableness.” When evaluating whether a CSO has used reasonable force, a number of factors should be taken into consideration. Those factors should include, but are not limited to the following:

- The conduct of the person presenting a threat (as reasonably perceived by the CSO at the time)
- CSO/person factors (age, size, relative strength, skill level, injury/exhaustion, and number of Officers vs. persons)
  - Influence of drugs/alcohol (if known)
  - Psychiatric and/or medical conditions (if known)
  - Proximity of weapons
  - Availability of other options (what resources are reasonably available to the CSO under the circumstances)
- Immanence of the threat (Intent, means, opportunity)
- Training and experience of the CSO
- Potential for injury to bystanders, CSOs, and subjects
- Other exigent circumstances.

It is recognized that CSOs are expected to make split-second decisions and the amount of time available to evaluate and respond to changing circumstances may impact a CSO’s decision.

Each CSO is expected to respond with only the degree of force which reasonably appears appropriate and necessary under the circumstances, at the time, to successfully mitigate the threat to the officer or others.”

End of Excerpt

Should a CSO be required to use force to prevent injury in connection with the Owl Crowd they will be expected to fill out the Use of Force Report Form, write a report in

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ARMS, and take photographs documenting any visible injuries that may have resulted to the officer or the individuals, per the Use of Force Directive.

**Potential Destruction of Property Without Risk of Injury**

In situations where there is no imminent risk of injury, but the destruction of property appears likely or imminent, oral requests and instructions may be given in an attempt to prevent damage, but the use of physical force is generally not appropriate solely to prevent damage to property that is not also likely to cause injury.

In the event that students or others (i.e., dodgy alums) do not comply with instructions intended to prevent damage to property, CSOs should attempt to document the identity of those involved for follow up at a later time and include this information in an incident report.