



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



580.12 LESS LETHAL WEAPON SYSTEMS 7-18-2023

PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines for the use and deployment of various less lethal weapon systems.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department to deploy and use less lethal weapon systems as instructed in department training in order to maximize the safety of all individuals involved in an incident.

PROCEDURE

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **12-GAUGE SUPER-SOCK® BEANBAG ROUND:** A less lethal 2.4-inch 12-gauge shotgun round firing a ballistic fiber bag filled with 40 grams of lead shot at a velocity of 270-290 feet per second (FPS). CTS Supersock rounds are discharged from a dedicated 12-gauge shotgun that is distinguishable by an orange butt stock and fore grip. This round provides accurate and effective performance when fired from the approved distance of not fewer than five (5) feet. The maximum effective range of this munition is up to 75 feet from the target. The Model 2581 Super-Sock® is in its deployed state immediately upon exiting the barrel. It does not require a minimum range to “unfold” or “stabilize.” The Super-Sock® is an aerodynamic projectile. However, accuracy is relative to the shotgun, barrel length, environmental conditions, and the operator. The Super-Sock® is very accurate. However, effectiveness depends on many variables, such as distance, clothing, stature, and the point where the projectile impacts.
2. **PEPPERBALL (LIVE-X ROUND):** A less lethal frangible .68 caliber sphere containing 2.5 grams of 2.5% PAVA powder (PAVA powder is a synthetic version of capsaicin or “OC,” which is an irritant found in chili peppers). The pepperball is fired from purpose-built pepperball guns that are energized by a compressed air at 280-425 fps and delivers 8.85 -20.65ft/lbs. of kinetic energy on impact in addition to the dispersion of synthetic irritant. Pepperballs can be fired accurately and effectively to a distance of 150 feet.
3. **PEPPERBALL (GLASS BREAKER):** A solid nylon .68 caliber sphere. The Glass Breaker is fired at 280-325 FPS from purpose-built pepperball guns that are energized by compressed air. It delivers 0-30 ft/lbs of kinetic energy on impact. Glass Breakers can be fired accurately and effectively up to a distance of 30 feet. Glass Breaker rounds will be loaded into a yellow magazine.
4. **40MM EXACT IMPACT SPONGE (BLUE TIP):** A less lethal 40mm lightweight plastic and foam projectile fired from a single or multi-round purpose built 40mm grenade launcher with a rifled barrel at 325 FPS. The 30-gram foam projectile delivers 120 ft/lbs. of energy on impact. The 40mm Exact Impact Sponge Round provides accurate and effective performance when fired from the approved distance of not less than five (5) feet and as far as 131 feet from the target.
5. **40MM DIRECT IMPACT OC (ORANGE TIP):** A less lethal 40mm lightweight plastic and crushable foam projectile fired from a single or multi-round purpose-built 40mm grenade launcher with a rifled barrel at 295 FPS. The 39-gram crushable foam projectile delivers 120 ft/lbs of energy upon impact in addition to dispersion of 5 grams of OC irritant. The 40mm Direct Impact OC Round provides accurate and effective performance when fired from the approved distance of not less than five (5) feet and as far as 131 feet from the target.
6. **COMBINED LESS LETHAL:** The use of multiple less lethal force options in combination against a violent and/or resistive subject that would reduce the likelihood of further violence or the use of lethal force and allow officers a safer approach to take the subject into custody.

B. AVAILABILITY

1. Less lethal shotguns shall be secured in a weapon mounting system in police vehicles when not deployed. NOTE: Lethal shotgun ammunition shall not be loaded into dedicated less lethal shotguns.



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2. Flexible baton rounds shall be available to all personnel trained in its use.
3. 40mm launchers, 40mm rounds as well as pepperball launchers and pepperball rounds shall be assigned to patrol teams and issued to individual officers by field supervisors.
4. Glass Breaker rounds shall only be loaded in yellow pepperball magazines. They will only be stored in watch commander vehicles and the Sacramento Police Department SWAT Van.
5. Less lethal weapon systems may be deployed by officers trained in their use.

C. DEPLOYMENT CRITERIA

1. Less lethal weapon systems are not a substitute for deadly force.
2. No officer shall simultaneously hold a lethal firearm and any less lethal weapon system launcher.
3. Each officer shall deploy no more than one less lethal weapon system at a time.
4. Officers shall not deploy a less lethal weapon system unless specific information reasonably indicates the potential for the system's use. The circumstances of each incident shall dictate the reasonableness for the deployment.
5. Pregnant women, young children and elderly people shall not be the intentional target(s) of a less lethal weapon system unless the use of the system is necessary and objectively reasonable under the circumstances.

D. PRE-DEPLOYMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Personnel assigned a less lethal weapon system are responsible for maintaining the system's operational readiness.
2. When not in use, the less lethal weapon systems shall be stored unloaded in their issued case or vehicle locking device. Pepperball launchers shall not be energized with compressed air.
3. Less lethal weapon systems shall be locked in the vehicle during routine field assignments.
4. Pepperball air cylinders shall be maintained above 2500 PSI and shall be checked daily.

E. USE OF LESS LETHAL WEAPONS

1. Use of a less lethal weapon system shall be pursuant to department policies, in a manner that is consistent with department training, and current law.
2. Use of a less lethal weapon system shall be consistent with the manufacturer's guidelines and the approved department training plan.
3. When practical target zones shall be consistent with the manufacturer's guidelines and the approved department training. The head, neck, spine, heart or any other vital organs and groin should be avoided as target areas unless threat and circumstances justify their use.
4. When utilizing combined less lethal systems officers should be aware that nothing in this general order will relieve them of their responsibility to ensure that their application of force is consistent with existing law.
5. Situations for use of the less lethal weapon systems may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Self-destructive, dangerous and/or combative individuals.
 - b. During assemblies, protests, or demonstrations, deployment shall be in accordance with Penal Code Section 13652.
 - c. Subjects that appear to be, physically unresponsive to a peace officer's commands when reasonably believed to be armed and/or dangerous. This allows officers a safer approach to provide medical aid, to take the subject into custody, and/or gain a tactical advantage.
 - d. Potentially vicious animals.
 - e. Training exercises or approved demonstrations.
6. When practical, prior to firing a less lethal weapon system, the discharging officer shall:
 - a. Loudly announce that a specified less lethal weapon system is going to be used.
 - b. Instruct the Communications Center to broadcast that a specified less lethal weapon system is to be used. The purpose of this notification is to alert all personnel that a less lethal weapon is being used.
7. Ammunition specifically designed for training only shall not be fired at a human being.



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8. Glass Breaker Pepperball rounds are only to be used with watch commander approval. They are intended to be used on vehicles or residences for the purpose of breaking glass. However, these rounds may also be used to malfunction video cameras, break light bulbs, or other purposes.
9. Glass Breaker rounds shall not be used on people or animals.

F. USE OF FORCE DURING AN ASSEMBLY, PROTEST, OR DEMONSTRATION

Peace officers using kinetic energy projectiles or chemical agents during an assembly, protest or demonstration shall ensure that such force is used pursuant to RM 532.11 (First Amendment Assembly Manual).

G. TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. If possible, when a less lethal weapon system is to be utilized, a sufficient number of officers should be assembled to assist with the physical custody of the targeted subject. The number of additional officers and their responsibilities shall be dictated by the dynamics of the incident.
2. Unless extraordinary circumstances exist, consideration should be given to the following responsibilities:
 - a. Protection officer(s) – a sufficient number of officers prepared to deliver appropriate force cover options given the immediate circumstances.
 - b. Custody officer(s) – a sufficient number of officers who are responsible for handcuffing and restraining the subject(s).
3. Under exigent circumstances, nothing in this order shall prohibit an officer from deploying and discharging a less lethal weapon without requesting authorization or having the presence of additional officers.

H. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. After a less lethal weapon system has been discharged and the subject has been restrained, officers shall:
 - a. Ensure that any injuries sustained are appropriately treated as outlined in:
 - (1) General Order 522.02 - Emergency Care for Individuals Under Police Care or Control
 - (2) Reference Manual 580.07 - Chemical Agents Manual (section C: First Aid)
 - (3) General Order 580.10 - Use of the Conducted Energy Device (CED) (section G: Responsibilities After Use)
 - b. Immediately notify the sergeant supervising the district in which the discharge occurred. The officer shall also notify their immediate supervisor as soon as is practical.
 - c. Comply with the reporting requirements as outlined in the following policies:
 - (1) General Order 580.02 – Use of Force
 - (2) General Order 240.03 – Civil Liability
2. Supervisors shall:
 - a. Respond to the scene of the incident.
 - b. Ensure photographs are taken of the impact site(s), injuries, discharged projectile and any other evidence of significance.
 - c. Comply with the use of force reporting requirements pursuant to General Order 580.02 – Use of Force policy.
 - d. Complete a City of Sacramento Incident/Loss Report form (RM-3 Red Border) when an injury or property damage has occurred.
 - e. Notify the watch commander of the incident and circumstances.
 - f. Ensure that all evidence, projectiles and expended cartridges are booked into the Evidence and Property Section. Expended pepperballs generally should not be booked.
 - g. Ensure that all appropriate reports are completed before the end of watch.
 - h. Replace any expended projectiles.

I. ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE

1. Any accidental discharge of a less lethal weapon system shall be immediately reported to the sergeant supervising the district in which the discharge occurred. The officer shall also notify their immediate supervisor as soon as is practical.
2. The circumstances of the accidental discharge shall be documented in a general offense report with the appropriate classification.



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3. If a malfunction of the less lethal weapon system is suspected, the system and ammunition shall be given to the watch commander who will facilitate the inspection of the equipment by the department armorer.
4. The watch commander shall initiate a division investigation into the accidental discharge and forward the finding in memorandum format through the chain of command to the affected employee's Office Chief.