

GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Title		
Less Lethal Weapons		
Topic	Series	Number
RAR	901	04
Effective Date		
March 28, 2024		
Replaces		
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Related to		
GO-RAR-901.01 (Handling of Service Weapons)		
GO-RAR-901.07 (Use of Force)		

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I. PURPOSE

It is the policy of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to ensure that members use only department-issued less lethal intermediate force weapons. MPD members shall receive training and demonstrate proficiency in the use of all department-issued weapons before carrying them. The purpose of this order is to establish the policy and procedure for issuance, care, and maintenance of less lethal weapons. Members shall ensure that less lethal weapons, and all force options, are used pursuant to [GO-RAR-901.07 \(Use of Force\)](#).

II. PROCEDURES

A. General

1. Pursuant to [GO-RAR-901.07](#), members shall ensure that de-escalation techniques are used whenever feasible, that force is only used when necessary, and that the amount of force used is proportionate to the situation that the member encounters. When using force, members shall continuously reassess the perceived threat in order to select the reasonable use of force response, or one that is proportional to the threat faced by him, her, or others.
2. Less-lethal weapons issued for use during mass demonstrations are covered in [GO-HSC-801.01 \(Crowd Management and Civil Unrest\)](#).
3. Patrol shields used to bring an active resister engaged in uncooperative and non-compliant behavior under control are covered in [GO-PER-110.11](#)

(Uniforms, Equipment, and Appearance Standards).

B. ASP Baton

1. The ASP baton is an expandable, cylindrical baton used as a leverage tool or defensive weapon. The ASP baton shall be issued to all sworn members who qualify on a department-approved training course conducted by a qualified weapons instructor.
2. Only the department-issued ASP baton may be used in any enforcement action. The ASP baton shall be carried by all uniformed members while on patrol duty.
3. **Authorized Use and Deploying the ASP Baton**
 - a. Members may have to rely on the ASP baton to subdue a subject actively assaulting the member, themselves, or others. Members shall use the ASP baton according to department training.
 - b. If a member strikes an individual in the head, spine, neck, heart, sternum, or groin, justification for the use of deadly force must exist pursuant to [GO-RAR-901.07](#). Members shall be aware that, should these areas be purposely struck with the ASP baton, the injury may result in death.
 - c. Unless not feasible, members shall issue a warning that the ASP baton is going to be used against the subject and permit a reasonable period of time to allow compliance with the warning.

4. Post Deployment

After deploying the ASP baton, the member's first responsibilities shall be to ensure that the scene is safe, conduct a visual and verbal check of the subject (to include checking vital signs when appropriate) to determine the need for medical care, render first aid if applicable, secure the scene's integrity, and notify a supervisor.

C. Police Mountain Bike

1. While police mountain bikes are primarily used as transportation, members may have to use the mountain bike as a protective, defensive instruments, to control a crowd, or bring an active resister engaged in uncooperative and non-compliant behavior under control. Members shall use mountain bikes according to department training.
2. Police mountain bikes offer an additional defensive barrier between the member and perceived threat. Mountain bikes may also serve as an impact weapon in certain circumstances. Mountain bikes will not provide adequate protection to members from firearms or edged weapons.
3. Only department mountain bikes shall be used in any enforcement action.

Mountain bikes shall only be assigned to full-duty mountain bike-certified members who have been trained in their use.

4. Authorized Use and Deploying the Police Mountain Bike
 - a. Members may have to rely on the police mountain bike to subdue a subject actively and aggressively assaulting (e.g., striking, kicking) the member, themselves, or others. Lower-level actions by the subject (e.g., spitting, pushing) do not allow for the use of the police mountain bike as an impact weapon. Police mountain bikes may be deployed as a protective barrier and as an impact weapon in certain circumstances.
 - b. Members shall use the mountain bike according to department training.

5. Post Deployment

- a. The deployment of a mountain bike as an additional layer of defense, in and of itself, is not a use of force. However, if a mountain bike is deployed offensively or in a manner that results in injury or complaint of pain or injury, the incident shall be reported and investigated pursuant to [GO-RAR-901.07](#).
- b. After deploying the police mountain bike offensively or in a manner that results in injury or complaint of pain or injury, the member's first responsibilities shall be to ensure that the scene is safe, conduct a visual and verbal check of the subject, to include checking vital signs when appropriate, to determine the need for medical care, render first aid if applicable, secure the scene's integrity, and notify a supervisor.

- D. Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray

1. OC spray is a naturally inflammatory agent derived from the pepper plant that, when sprayed, causes an almost immediate swelling of the eyes and breathing passages and intense burning sensation of the eyes, throat, and sprayed areas of the skin. OC spray shall be issued to all sworn members who qualify on a department-approved training course conducted by a qualified weapons instructor.
2. Only department-issued OC spray may be used in any enforcement action.
3. Members shall periodically check their OC dispensers. If the member suspects that the dispenser is not working properly, he or she shall ask their supervisor to test the dispenser. Supervisors are authorized to test the dispenser by firing a short one-second burst in an appropriate area outside. Defective or expended OC dispensers shall be submitted to the range for replacement.

4. Authorized Use
 - a. Members may have to deploy OC spray to subdue an active resister engaged in uncooperative and non-compliant behavior. Members shall use OC spray according to department training.
 - b. The dosage when using the spray is two (one-second) bursts. Members shall not use the dispenser at any distance less than three feet from the subject unless absolutely necessary.
 - c. Effective range is approximately 12 feet and aimed at the subject's face. OC spray is most effective when it comes in contact with the skin of the face and eyes, which causes an intense burning sensation, resulting in profuse tearing and temporary loss of vision.
 5. Deploying OC Spray
 - a. When using OC spray, members shall issue a warning that OC spray is going to be used against the subject and permit a reasonable period of time to allow compliance, when feasible.
 - b. Absent exigent circumstances, members **shall not** use OC spray on juveniles aged 12 and under or elderly persons aged 65 and older.
 - c. Members shall use extreme caution when approaching or handling a subject who has been unaffected by OC spray.
 6. Post Deployment
 - a. When OC spray is used, the member's first responsibilities shall be to ensure that the scene is safe, conduct a visual and verbal check of the subject, to include checking vital signs when appropriate, to determine the need for medical care, render first aid if applicable, secure the scene's integrity, and notify a supervisor.
 - b. Subjects shall be given an opportunity for washing and flushing the affected areas with cold water within 20 minutes of being sprayed, or as soon as practicable. Members shall advise subjects not to use creams, ointments, or bandages on affected areas, and that continual rubbing of the skin against affected clothing will cause irritation and reddening of the skin areas.
 - c. Subjects who complain of continued effects of OC after having flushed the affected areas shall be transported to a hospital for medical treatment.
- E. Electronic Control Device (ECD)
1. The ECD is a device designed primarily to discharge electrical charges into a subject that will cause involuntary muscle contractions and

override the subject's voluntary motor responses [e.g., conducted energy devices (CEDs), energy conducting devices (ECDs), electronic control weapons (ECWs), and TASER® Smart Weapons]. ECDs shall only be issued to full-duty status sworn members who qualify on a department-approved training course conducted by a qualified TASER® instructor.

2. Only department-issued ECDs may be used in any enforcement action. ECDs, along with issued cartridges and a manufacturer-approved battery power source, shall be issued to qualified members by the MPD armorer. Members shall not alter, modify, or repair the ECD in any way.
3. Members working police-related outside employment or department-sanctioned overtime (e.g., reimbursable details or nightlife deployments) **shall** carry their ECD. Members who are carrying an ECD for either police-related outside employment or department-sanctioned overtime **may** take their ECD home on the shift prior to their assignment (members will not be entitled to any additional compensation for retrieving, carrying, or returning their ECD). Members who opt to do so **shall** notify the on-duty watch commander that they are taking their ECD home so that its status can be documented on the watch commander's report.
4. Members shall ensure that ECDs are stored securely when they are off-duty. Members **shall not** take ECDs home (except in the case of police-related outside employment or department-sanctioned overtime as provided in this order).
5. Device Readiness
 - a. Members shall conduct a pre-shift five-second spark test to ensure that the device is functioning properly. In the event that an ECD is damaged or in need of repair, members shall complete a PD Form 43 (Report of Damage to or Loss of Uniform or Equipment) and submit the form to the ECD liaison official.
 - b. Members shall carry the ECD pursuant to [GO-PER-110.11](#). ECDs shall be loaded with two cartridges. Members shall carry issued spare cartridges in the assigned carrier, either attached to the ECD holster or the external vest separately.
6. Authorized Use
 - a. Members shall only use ECDs against subjects when it is tactically safe to do so (i.e., there is adequate cover and time to deploy the weapon), and, absent exigent circumstances, at least one other member is present at the scene.
 - b. Members shall only use ECDs when a subject is actively assaulting the member, themselves, or others. The only exception to this requirement is when an armed subject refuses to disarm and the

potential to actively assault the member, themselves, or others is ongoing.

- c. Unless exigent circumstances exist, members **shall not** use ECDs on:

ECD Prohibitions	
(1) Subjects in handcuffs	(2) Visibly pregnant subjects
(3) Subjects holding a firearm	(4) Subjects in physical control of a vehicle in motion
(5) Subjects known or believed to be suffering from a heart condition	(6) Juveniles aged 12 and under or elderly persons aged 65 and older
(7) Subjects in the vicinity of a tactically deployed MPD canine	(8) Subjects near deep enough water to cause drowning in the event the subject falls
(9) Subjects surrounded by flammable, volatile, or explosive materials	(10) Subjects who may fall resulting in death or serious bodily injury

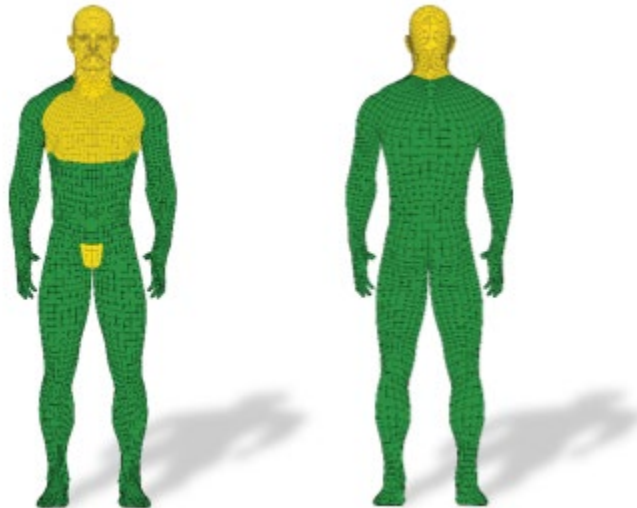
- d. Fleeing shall not be the sole justification for deploying an ECD. The use of an ECD against a fleeing suspect is limited to instances where the suspect is reasonably suspected to be armed, have committed a crime of violence, or where failure to quickly apprehend the suspect poses risk of immediate danger to members or others.
- e. Members may use ECDs on animals that are an immediate threat to the member, another person, or another animal, or that need to be captured for public safety purposes.

7. Deployment

- a. Members may ARC their ECDs (i.e., activate the ECD without discharging the probes) or use laser painting (i.e., removing the ECD from its holster, pointing it at a subject, and activating the ECD’s laser dot to show that the device is aimed at the subject) as a warning to an actively resisting subject who is engaged in dangerous and assaultive behavior toward themselves, members, or others. Arcing and laser painting are not considered uses of force. Upon arcing or laser painting on a subject, members shall document the facts and circumstances that led to the use of their ECD. In cases where a report was not otherwise required, members shall prepare an incident report outlining the facts and circumstances that led to the use of their ECD and classify the incident as “ECD Use”.
- b. Members shall not use ECDs in drive stun mode (i.e., ECD placed in direct contact with the subject causing the electric energy to enter the subject directly), unless supplementing the probes to complete the incapacitation circuit or as a countermeasure to gain separation between themselves and the subject so that they can

consider ECD probe deployment or another force option. Drive stun mode is possible whether or not the cartridge has been expended or removed from the ECD.

- c. When feasible, members shall identify themselves as police officers and issue a verbal warning (i.e., "TASER! TASER!") before deploying the ECD or using drive stun mode.
- d. Members shall aim at the subject, fire, and cycle the ECD in a manner consistent with department training.
 - (1) If the subject is facing the member (i.e., front shot), members shall aim for lower center mass, below the subject's chest or heart area. If the subject is facing away from the member (i.e., back shot), members shall aim below the neck area. Target zones are the green areas depicted below.
 - (2) Members shall make every effort to avoid aiming at a subject's head, face, heart, chest, and genitals (i.e., yellow areas depicted below).



- (3) Members shall use an ECD for one standard cycle (i.e., five seconds) and then evaluate the situation to determine if subsequent cycles are necessary. Members must be able to articulate the facts and circumstances that require each cycle deployment. Subsequent cycles must be independently justifiable.
 - (4) Members shall not use ECDs for more than three standard cycles or fifteen seconds and only shorten a standard cycle under exigent circumstances.
- e. **In determining the need for additional energy cycles, members shall be aware that an energized subject may not be**

able to respond to commands during or immediately following exposure.

- f. Members shall consider and exercise other force options when the ECD is not having its intended effect or when continued use may endanger the subject. If the subject does not respond to ECD deployment in the anticipated manner based on training and experience, members shall consider transitioning to alternate use of force options.
 - g. Members shall only activate one ECD against a subject at any given time (i.e., multiple members shall not deploy their ECDs on a subject simultaneously).
 - h. To minimize the number of cycles needed to overcome resistance and bring the subject under control, members shall secure the subject as soon as practical (i.e., while the subject is under the effect of the ECD or immediately thereafter). Absent exigent circumstances, a member other than the deploying member shall handcuff the subject. Members may handcuff the subject during the five-second deployment cycle without feeling the effects of the ECD as long as they do not touch the probes or place any part of their body between the probes.
8. Post ECD Deployment
- a. Members shall request medical assistance in accordance with [GO-PCA-502.07 \(Medical Treatment and Hospitalization of Prisoners\)](#) for **all** ECD deployments, whether or not there is an actual, perceived, or alleged injury.
 - b. Members shall **immediately** request medical assistance for subjects who are exhibiting signs of excited delirium during or after ECD exposure. Excited delirium is a state of extreme mental and physiological excitement, characterized by behaviors and symptoms such as extreme agitation, elevated body temperature (i.e., hyperthermia), watering eyes (i.e., epiphoria), hostility, exceptional strength, and endurance without fatigue. **Members shall state to the dispatcher that the subject appears to be suffering from excited delirium.**
 - c. Members shall conduct a visual and verbal check of the subject, to include checking vital signs when appropriate, to determine the need for medical care, render first aid as soon as the scene is safe, and, if possible, prevent the subject from removing probes that have penetrated his or her skin.
 - d. ECD probes are extremely sharp. Members shall not remove probes that have penetrated the subject's skin. Only DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DCFEMS) or other trained medical

personnel shall remove probes that have penetrated the subject’s skin absent exigent circumstances.

- (1) In exigent circumstances (e.g., to prevent the subject from further injuring him or herself or when immediate transport from the scene is necessary), trained members may remove probes prior to the arrival of DCFEMS.
 - (2) Members who remove probes shall treat probes that have penetrated the skin as potential biohazards and use universal precautions when removing and collecting probes (e.g., gloves) and ensure the removed probes and cartridges are collected as evidence and turned over to the official who responds to the scene.
 - (3) In cases where a subject is transported from the scene prior to DCFEMS evaluation, members shall immediately transport the subject to a medical facility for evaluation.
- e. Regardless of whether or not medical treatment was necessary, a subject returning to a district cellblock shall be monitored in the same manner as a medically “At Risk” prisoner as outlined in [GO-PCA-502.07](#). In doing so, members shall ensure that the subject is placed in an isolated holding cell and observe the subject no less than every 10 minutes.
 - f. Replacement cartridges are available at the MPD armorer, Tactical Training Center, or at the Command Information Center (CIC). Members requesting replacement cartridges shall provide the armorer or CIC with the approved report documenting ECD deployment in the narrative.
 - g. Members shall dock the ECD battery to download event data on evidence.com for the investigating official.
9. The element ECD liaison officials shall oversee the ECD program for the district or element. The EDC liaison official shall:

Element ECD Liaison Responsibilities
a. Ensure that members assigned an ECD dock the battery every 30 days to recharge, download data, and obtain software and firmware updates;
b. Conduct monthly inspections of all ECDs;
c. Prepare a monthly status report for the MPA ECD program manager;
d. Deliver damaged or defective ECDs to the Tactical Training Center for repair;
e. In the event of ECDs that are damaged or in need of repair, download the ECD data, remove the ECD from inventory and ensure the proper and safe transport to the Tactical Training Center for evaluation. If ECD damage or deficiency can be attributed to a member, the official shall investigate to determine accountability, ensuring that incident summary (IS) numbers are obtained, and all required forms are completed.

F. 40mm Extended Impact Weapon

1. The 40mm extended impact weapon is a device capable of firing a 40mm sponge projectile (marking or non-marking) at a high velocity to temporarily incapacitate an aggressive, non-compliant subject. The 40mm extended impact weapon shall only be issued to full-duty status sworn members who qualify on a department-approved training course conducted by a qualified weapons instructor.
2. Only the department-issued 40mm extended impact weapons and ammunition may be used in any enforcement action. Members shall not alter, modify, or repair 40mm extended impact weapons in any way. Members shall not perform maintenance on 40mm extended impact weapons other than changing the batteries for the weapon sights.
3. Members shall treat 40mm extended impact weapons with the same care and caution as weapons loaded with conventional munitions (e.g., pistols, shotguns).
4. Members to whom a 40mm extended impact weapon has been assigned shall carry the device and its associated rounds in the designated carrying case in the passenger seat of his or her **locked** MPD vehicle. When not in use, 40mm extended impact weapons shall be stored in the district's designated storage area, in the designated soft cases issued to each district or element.
5. Whenever feasible, roll call officials shall ensure that at least two 40mm extended impact weapons are present on each shift. Roll call officials shall note the 40mm extended impact-equipped members on the roll call and deployment statistical sheets and notify the CIC of the number of members at the beginning of every shift. Equipped members shall indicate they are equipped with the 40mm extended impact weapon when coming into service and logging in on the mobile data computer.
6. Members shall conduct a brief pre-shift inspection accordance with department training to ensure that the device is functioning properly.
7. Authorized Use
 - a. The 40mm extended impact weapon shall only be used:
 - (1) Against subjects who are armed with weapons and actively assaulting themselves, the member, or others;
 - (2) Where other less lethal force options have been exhausted in order to subdue armed or unarmed subjects who, despite all other efforts, are still actively assaulting themselves, the member, or others; or

- (3) When armed subjects refuse to disarm and the potential to actively assault the member, themselves, or others is ongoing.
- b. Members shall not use 40mm extended impact weapons against a subject unless it is tactically safe to do so (i.e., there is adequate cover and time to deploy the weapon), and, absent exigent circumstances, at least one other member is present at the scene.
- c. When confronted by an animal that is an active threat to a member, person, another animal, or that needs to be captured for public safety purposes, members shall consider deploying a 40mm extended impact weapon in lieu of deadly force.
- d. Unless already assigned to a priority assignment, members equipped with the 40mm extended impact weapon shall respond to the following events, regardless of their assigned PSA:

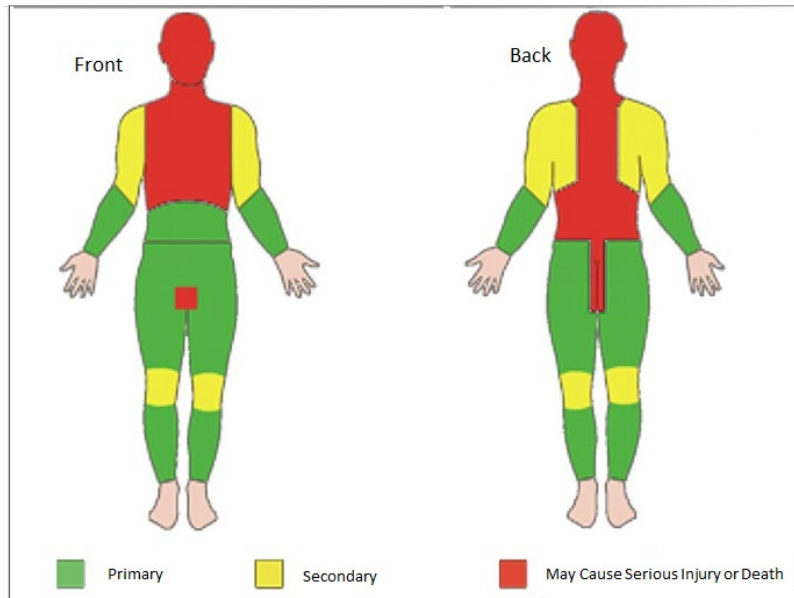
Mandatory 40mm Extended Impact Weapon Response	
(1) "Man/Woman With A Knife" or other weapon radio runs	
(2) Armed individuals in the midst of a mental health crisis	
(3) Any priority assignment involving an armed suspect	

- e. Members shall not use 40mm extended impact weapons on subjects in handcuffs or who are otherwise restrained.
- f. Unless exigent circumstances exist, members **shall not** use 40mm extended weapons on:

40mm Extended Impact Weapon Prohibitions	
(1) Subjects in physical control of a vehicle in motion	(2) Visibly pregnant subjects
(3) Subjects appearing to be closer than 6 feet and further than 120 feet	(4) Juveniles aged 12 and under or elderly persons aged 65 and older
(5) Subjects holding a firearm when the member lacks the tactical safety conditions enumerated in this order	(6) Animals not posing an immediate threat to safety of a person or other animal (i.e., animal is a nuisance but not a safety threat)
(7) Subjects who may fall resulting in death or serious bodily injury	

- 8. Deployment
 - a. When feasible, members shall identify themselves as police officers and issue a verbal warning (i.e., "IMPACT! IMPACT!") prior to firing. Pointing a 40mm extended impact weapon is not considered a use of force.
 - b. Members shall aim and fire 40mm extended impact weapons in a manner consistent with department training, making every effort

to avoid aiming at a subject's head, face, neck, heart, chest, and genitals. The 40mm extended impact weapon target zones are depicted in the following graphic.



- c. Members shall evaluate the situation to determine if subsequent 40mm extended impact weapon shots are necessary. Members must be able to articulate the facts and circumstances that require each shot. Subsequent shots must be independently justifiable.
- d. Once the subject is temporarily incapacitated, members shall be prepared to immediately place the subject in handcuffs.

9. Post Deployment

1. When the 40mm extended impact weapon is deployed, the member's first responsibilities shall be to ensure that the scene is safe, conduct a visual and verbal check of the subject (to include checking vital signs when appropriate) to determine the need for medical care, render first aid if applicable, secure the scene's integrity, and notify a supervisor.
2. Members shall request medical assistance in accordance with [GO-PCA-502.07](#) for **all** 40mm extended impact weapon deployments, whether or not there is an actual, perceived, or alleged injury. When medical personnel respond to the scene, members shall issue them a 40mm extended impact weapon information card that communicates essential information to medical personnel, such as the weight and velocity of the projectile.

G. Notifications and Documentation

1. Members shall immediately notify an official following all events involving force, allegations of excessive force (even when the member has not

used force on the subject), and negligent discharges of ECDs, 40mm extended impact weapons, and firearms. Upon notification, supervisors shall immediately respond to the scene, notify the watch commander through the CIC, and be guided by the procedures set forth in [GO-RAR-901.07](#).

2. Supervisors shall notify the CIC to page the on-call Internal Affairs Division (IAD) agent of all incidents involving serious uses of force.
3. Members shall ensure that all incidents involving use of force are reported and investigated according to the procedures set forth in [GO-RAR-901.07](#).

H. Mandated Training

1. The Metropolitan Police Academy (MPA) commanding official shall ensure that all sworn members complete general use of force training pursuant to [GO-RAR-901.07](#) and less lethal weapons training pursuant to this order.
2. The MPA commanding official shall ensure that all sworn members complete initial training on the use of the ASP baton before they are certified to carry and deploy the weapon and refresher training including requalification within 24 months.
3. The MPA commanding official shall ensure that all mountain bike-equipped members complete mountain bike initial training before they are certified to ride or deploy the mountain bike.
4. The MPA commanding official shall ensure that all sworn members complete initial training on the use of OC spray before they are certified to carry or deploy OC spray.
5. The MPA commanding official shall ensure that all ECD-equipped members complete initial training and qualification prior to being issued an ECD and refresher training including requalification within 12 months.
6. The Homeland Security Bureau shall ensure that all 40mm extended impact weapon-equipped members complete initial training and qualification prior to being issued a 40mm extended impact weapon and refresher training including requalification during Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) recertification.

III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meanings designated.

	Term	Definition
1.	Deadly force	Use of force likely or intended to create a substantial risk of serious bodily injury or death.
2.	Less lethal weapon	Weapon deployed with the intent or purpose of nullifying a threat without causing death (e.g., ECD, OC spray, ASP baton).
3.	Reasonable	Fair, proper, or moderate under the circumstances. Determining whether a member has behaved reasonably is an objective

		standard whereby the court will consider the circumstances, not the intent of the actor.
4.	Serious bodily injury	Extreme physical pain, illness, or impairment of physical condition including physical injury that involves: a substantial risk of death; protracted and obvious disfigurement; protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member or organ; or protracted loss of consciousness.
5.	Serious use of force	Actions by members including: a. Firearms discharges (except negligent discharges determined to be misconduct by IAD); b. Head strikes with a hard object. c. Those resulting in death or a serious bodily injury; d. Use of asphyxiating restraints or neck restraints; and e. MPD canine bites (except bites determined to be misconduct by IAD).
6.	Use of force	Any physical coercion used to affect, influence or persuade an individual to comply with an order from a member.



Pamela A. Smith
Chief of Police