



TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS

 Proudly Policing Since 1841	SUBJECT PepperBall® Launcher Protocols		 Nationally Accredited 1986
	CHIEF OF POLICE <i>Signature on File</i>		
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AUTHORITY/RELATED REFERENCES

FS Chapter 776, Justifiable Use of Force
Special Order 1, Emergency Management Procedures
General Order 11, Communicable Disease Control
General Order 26, High-Risk Incidents
General Order 60, Response to Resistance
General Order 61, Weapons, Firearms and Less-lethal Firearms
General Order 86, Special Response Team

ACCREDITATION REFERENCES

CALEA Chapter 4
CFA Chapter 4

KEY WORD INDEX

General Deployment and Application Protocols	Procedure IV
General Protocols	Procedure I
Medical Aid Protocols	Procedure V
PepperBall® Operator Responsibilities	Procedure III
Training Requirements	Procedure II

POLICY

Department-issued PepperBall® Launchers provide officers with a less-lethal force option for addressing unruly crowd situations and other events requiring a tactical law enforcement response. Officers shall adhere to established protocols in the utilization of PepperBall® Launchers.

DEFINITIONS

Application/Applied: When a PepperBall® Launcher is discharged.

Deployment: When a PepperBall® Launcher is presented on an incident scene as a force option.

Less-lethal Force: Any force other than deadly force which is neither likely to cause, nor intended to cause, death or serious injury.

PAVA Powder: Pelargonic Acid Vanillylamide or Nonivamide, is a synthetic organic compound that mimics the active component found in chili peppers, capsaicin.

PepperBall® Launcher: A less-lethal force weapon which utilizes high-pressure air to deliver PepperBall® projectiles.

PepperBall® Operator: An officer assigned a PepperBall® Launcher.

Proficiency: The demonstration of proper and safe weapon operation, to include its care, maintenance, disassembly and assembly (as warranted), capabilities and limitations.

Qualify: Obtainment of a passing score on a Department-approved PepperBall® Launcher course of fire.

PROCEDURES

I. GENERAL PROTOCOLS

- A. Only Department-issued PepperBall® Launchers are authorized for use by officers.
- B. The Special Response Team (SRT) Commander, or appointed designee, is responsible for the issuance of PepperBall® Launchers, and launchers shall be assigned only to SRT members, with the exception of one PepperBall® Launcher being assigned to TAC.
- C. The protocols in General Order 60 (Response to Resistance) are applicable to a PepperBall® Launcher application, to include the following:
 - 1. Employing response to resistance options of control/force,
 - 2. Providing medical aid,
 - 3. Reporting of injuries, and
 - 4. Completing a response to resistance report.

II. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- A. Before being authorized to carry and utilize a PepperBall® Launcher, the officer shall successfully complete Department-approved PepperBall® Launcher training, qualify and demonstrate proficiency with the weapon.
- B. The SRT Commander or appointed designee is responsible for ensuring each Patrol Bureau supervisor receives Department-approved PepperBall® Launcher orientation training.

III. PEPPERBALL® OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. As mandated in General Order 61 (Weapons, Firearms and Less-lethal Firearms) PepperBall® Operators are responsible for the protocols listed below.
 - 1. Maintaining their assigned PepperBall® Launcher in proper working order and in a state of operational readiness.
 - 2. When off-duty, storing their assigned PepperBall® Launcher by whatever measures are reasonable and prudent to render it in a safe condition and in a secured area (e.g., placed out of reach of children).
 - 3. Not making changes, alterations or modifications to a PepperBall® Launcher except as authorized by the SRT PepperBall® Armorer.
- B. PepperBall® Operators shall qualify and demonstrate proficiency with the weapon on a semi-annual basis.
- C. PepperBall® Operators are responsible for reporting a malfunctioning PepperBall® Launcher to their immediate SRT supervisor for repair or replacement.

IV. GENERAL DEPLOYMENT AND APPLICATION PROTOCOLS

- A. The application of the PepperBall® Launcher is not intended to be – and should not be – applied as:
 - 1. A reactive immediate-use defensive weapon, or
 - 2. An employed force option in a deadly force situation, absent exigent circumstances (i.e., when an officer believes it is objectively

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

reasonable to use deadly force to defend their life or the life of another person from an imminent threat of serious injury or death).

- B. The PepperBall® Launcher may be deployed and applied in response to:
 - 1. Unruly crowd management situations in order to control crowd movement, defend an area or to disperse persons in defiance of lawful orders or committing criminal offenses, and
 - 2. For other events requiring a tactical law enforcement response.
- C. Tactical considerations for officers and field supervisors in situations listed in subsection B above include, but are not necessarily limited to:
 - 1. Containing the movements and actions of the suspect(s),
 - 2. Evacuating all potential victims from the area,
 - 3. Establishing an arrest team (or teams) of available officers, to include:
 - a. Determining the number of officers on each arrest team based upon available resources and the size and potential threat presented by the suspect(s),
 - b. Assigning arrest team roles for each team to address:
 - 1) Separating weapons from suspects,
 - 2) Securing the suspects, and
 - 3) Having at least one deadly force cover officer, and
 - c. Positioning each arrest team in a manner to quickly secure the suspect(s) while avoiding contamination from the PAVA powder of the PepperBall® projectiles.
- D. The application decision is the responsibility of the PepperBall® Operator and/or the on-scene field supervisor based upon their training and the on-going evaluation of the situation.
- E. If not already aware of the situation, the Watch Commander shall be notified of a PepperBall® Launcher application by the on-scene field supervisor.

- F. Depending upon the circumstances of a crowd control situation, the following written directives could be applicable:
 - 1. Special Order 1 (Emergency Management Procedures) including CIRC 2.4 (Crowd Control),
 - 2. General Order 26 (High-Risk Incidents), and
 - 3. General Order 86 (Special Response Team).
- G. The above protocols do not prohibit a PepperBall® Operator from deploying and applying a PepperBall® Launcher in other situations where it is objectively reasonable to do so to overcome resistance in order to accomplish lawful objectives.

V. MEDICAL AID PROTOCOLS

The following medical aid protocols augment those in General Order 60 and are applicable concerning exposure to the PAVA powder of a PepperBall® projectile:

- A. Securing the suspect to minimize the risk of injury to the person, officers or bystanders,
- B. As soon as practical, offering the person relief by exposing them to fresh air and rinsing their face and other exposed areas with water,
- C. Asking the person if they have a history of medical problems associated with breathing or high blood pressure and monitoring them for any signs of a medical emergency,
- D. If a medical emergency exists, summoning emergency medical services (EMS) and providing emergency care until relieved by EMS,
- E. Assisting with the decontamination of, and providing information about the PAVA powder to, any citizen unintentionally exposed to PAVA during the PepperBall® Launcher application,
- F. Making proper personnel notifications concerning PAVA powder contamination when the person is delivered to a medical or detention facility, and
- G. Adhering to the protocols of General Order 11 (Communicable Disease Control) whenever a police vehicle is contaminated with body fluids

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

from the mucus membranes of a person who was contaminated with PAVA powder from a PepperBall® Launcher application.

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