



GENERAL ORDER

LESS LETHAL FORCE WEAPONS

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policy for less lethal force weapon selection, purchasing, training, qualification, maintenance, and record keeping.

I. Definition

- A. Less lethal force weapons are designed to deliver less lethal ammunition for the purpose of incapacitating, immobilizing, or stunning a human being through the infliction of any less than lethal impairment of physical condition, function, or senses, including physical pain or discomfort. Less lethal force weapons authorized for on-duty use are as follows:
 - 1. Launcher (Impact Weapon)
 - 2. Conducted Electrical Weapon
 - 3. Shotgun (Impact Weapon)

II. Intent

- A. The Sacramento Sheriff's Department recognizes that officers are the first responders to critical incidents. Situations may require immediate action by officers before specialized units can arrive. It is therefore necessary to provide officers with the option of utilizing a variety of less lethal force weapons.
- B. It is not the intent of this General Order to compel the use of less lethal force weapons when, in the judgement of the individual officer, deadly force may be required.

III. Authorized Users

- A. Less lethal force weapons are authorized and restricted to officers, approved by their Division Commander, who have:
 - 1. Completed a departmentally approved user course specifically related to the individual weapon utilized.

2. Agreed to maintain training and qualifications requirements in accordance with Department General/Operations Orders.

IV. Authorized Weapons and Ammunition

- A. All less lethal weapons carried on-duty shall be of a type approved and issued by the Department; this includes launchers, conducted electrical weapons, and shotguns. The Rangemaster shall retain the master list of approved weapons, ammunition, approved modifications, and required training for all less lethal weapons. The Rangemaster may amend the list with the approval of Executive Staff.

V. Purchasing

- A. Officers will carry and use only those less lethal weapons authorized and purchased by the department.
- B. Conducted Electrical Weapons will be purchased through the Range, as well as the appropriate holsters, cartridges, batteries, and associated equipment.
- C. Launchers are classified as firearms and must be purchased through the Range.
- D. Shotguns are classified as firearms and must be purchased through the Range.
- E. To ensure consistency relative to issuance procedures and proper inventory control, all departmentally owned firearms will be assigned to the Professional Standards Division's Range Unit and issued for carry and use per the guidelines in General Order 2/09. Additionally, all firearm purchases will be made by the Range Unit through the normal budget process.

VI. Training

- A. Selected officers who wish to deploy a launcher, conducted electrical weapon, or a less lethal shotgun must satisfactorily complete a departmentally approved user course.
- B. All officers assigned to Field Services are required to attend, and satisfactorily complete, a departmentally approved user course for long range less lethal impact weapons.

VII. Deployment

- A. Officers shall consider deploying a less lethal weapon when it will enhance the safety of the officer or public, enhance a tactical advantage, or when directed by a supervisor.
- B. When or if the tactical situation permits, the officer should warn of the impending use of a less lethal weapon in an attempt to gain voluntary compliance.
- C. The officer deploying a less lethal weapon will have another officer armed with a firearm to cover them and use lethal force if necessary.
- D. All officers assigned to Field Services shall carry a long range less lethal impact weapon (shotguns and launchers) during their duty shift.
- E. If officers choose to double-up, only one long range less lethal impact weapon is required to be in their vehicle.
- F. Conducted Electrical Weapons are not a substitute for long range less lethal impact weapons.

VIII. Cautions

- A. Officers should exercise caution and make every attempt to avoid the "non-strike" areas for impact weapons. For maximum effectiveness, impact weapons should be aimed at the person's chest or back area.
- B. Officers should carefully evaluate the circumstances before using impact weapons on individuals who may be more susceptible to injury. Criteria to consider include:
 - 1. Women who are known to be pregnant
 - 2. Elderly persons
 - 3. Children
 - 4. Individuals with known health problems

IX. Supervisory Notifications

An officer who deploys a less lethal weapon shall notify a supervisor as soon as it is practical.

X. Reporting requirements

An officer who discharges a less lethal weapon, regardless of whether such discharge results in any injury, shall complete the following:

- A. Crime report (if applicable) or
- B. Incident report (if applicable)
- C. Casualty report for any person struck by projectiles from the less lethal weapon
- D. Take (or request CSI to take) photographs of injuries or lack of injury
- E. Book any expended casings or projectiles into evidence

XI. Supervisor Responsibility

When notified of a less lethal weapon deployment, a supervisor shall:

- A. Respond to the scene of the deployment
- B. Ensure compliance with medical attention, custody and reporting requirements\
- C. Complete a Weapons Discharge Report per General Order 2/16 (Weapons Discharge Report Incidents)

XII. Custody Requirement

- A. An officer who discharges a less lethal weapon at any individual who may be lawfully arrested or taken into custody shall not release the individual prior to booking or acceptance into a care facility.
- B. A supervisor may authorize an exception to this requirement for good cause.

XIII. Medical Attention Requirement

- A. An officer who discharges and strikes an individual with an impact weapon shall ensure that qualified medical personnel assess, examine, and treat the individual prior to release or booking by the officer.
- B. Qualified medical personnel include: fire department personnel, hospital medical staff, and jail medical staff.
- C. In determining whether to provide the medical assessment in the field, the jail, or at a hospital, officers shall consider:

1. The area(s) on the individual which were struck and the likelihood of serious injury
2. Severity of an obvious, or apparent, injury to the individual
3. Complaints of pain by the individual
4. Whether the individual is more susceptible to injury. Individuals who are more susceptible to injury are:
 - a. Women who are known to be pregnant
 - b. Elderly persons
 - c. Children
 - d. Individuals with known health problems

XIV. Qualifications

A. Launchers and Shotguns (Impact Weapons)

1. All authorized officers shall demonstrate proficiency with each individually authorized weapon at least once a year. The Rangemaster shall establish the qualification standards and qualifying periods each calendar year.
2. Qualifications shall be conducted at the Kenneth Royal Firearms Training Facility.

B. Conducted Electrical Weapons

1. Qualifications and a review of this General Order shall occur at least once a year. The Rangemaster shall establish the qualification standards and qualifying periods each calendar year.
2. Qualifications shall be conducted at the Kenneth Royal Firearms Training Facility.

XV. Weapon Issuance, Maintenance, and Storage

A. Launchers and Shotguns (Impact Weapons)

1. Since these weapons are classified as "firearms," they must be maintained by certified armorers through the Range.

2. Long range less lethal impact weapons will be issued to Divisions outside of Field Services. These weapons shall be stored in locations which can be locked and secured, yet accessed by officers should they need to access and deploy the weapon for an event.
 3. Officers trained and certified in the use of impact weapons shall keep the weapon secured in the patrol vehicle, equipment room/armory, or an assigned locker until deployed.
- B. Conducted Electrical Weapons
1. The Range will be responsible for the ordering, inventorying and maintenance of conducted electrical weapons, cartridges and associated equipment.
 2. Faulty or defective conducted electrical weapons are to be returned to the applicable manufacturer by Range Staff.

XVI. Record Keeping for Less Lethal Force Weapons

- A. It is the officer's responsibility to complete the Weapons Qualification Form certifying the officer has successfully completed the designated course of fire for that specific qualification period on all less lethal force weapons individually authorized and approved for on duty use. Range staff will verify all completed forms.
- B. The officer will be provided a copy of this form for his/her records.
- C. The Range shall maintain documentation of each qualification.

Related Orders: G/O 2/01 – Authorized Firearms and Ammunition
G/O 2/02 - Firearms Training & Qualifications
G/O 2/03 - Firearms Training & Qualifications Special Weapon Training
G/O 2/09 - Purchase, Issuance of Departmentally Owned Firearms
G/O 2/11 - Use of Force Policy
G/O 2/14 - Conducted Electrical Weapon

References: Penal Code 12600 - Peace Officers May Possess Less Lethal Weapons