

## 90-009 Less Lethal Weapon Systems

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Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

### FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services

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#### LESS LETHAL WEAPON SYSTEMS

##### 37 mm Projectile Weapons

The ARWEN (five shot capacity) and the Penn Arms SL6 (six shot capacity) and SL-1 (single shot capacity) are less lethal shoulder weapons which are designed to launch 37mm projectiles. These weapons are to be carried in specially designed hard cases. Prior to the beginning of the shift, authorized personnel who are taking one of these weapons out on patrol shall inspect the weapon. Whether the weapon is loaded at the time of this inspection depends on the manufacturer's recommendations of the weapon involved. Once inspected, the weapon will normally be carried in the trunk of a patrol vehicle.

##### 12 Gauge StunBag Weapons

The StunBag is a less lethal "bean bag" round that is designed to be launched from a conventional 12 gauge shotgun. Only distinctively marked StunBag shotguns shall be used for the delivery of these rounds. These shotguns are to be carried in specially designated and marked hard cases. Prior to the beginning of the shift, authorized personnel who are taking a StunBag shotgun out on patrol shall inspect the weapon as they would any other shotgun (check firing pin, etc.). Once the weapon passes inspection, authorized personnel shall load the shotgun with StunBag ammunition **ONLY**. *Under no circumstances shall these weapons be loaded with duty ammunition.* The StunBag shotgun will then be placed into its distinctively marked case and carried in the patrol vehicle's trunk. At the end of shift, the StunBag shotgun will be unloaded. The StunBag shotgun shall be returned to the station's or unit's designated storage location. StunBag shotguns shall not be left in the trunk of patrol vehicles at the end of shift.

##### Pepperball Systems

The Pepperball system is a less lethal weapon designed to launch frangible plastic projectiles which contain Oleoresin Capsicum (O.C.) in a powder form. These weapons are to be carried in specially designed hard cases.

Prior to the beginning of the shift, authorized personnel who are taking one of these weapons out on patrol shall inspect the weapon's ability to pass air through the barrel, air pressure, and safety switch. Once inspected, the weapon will normally be carried in the trunk of a patrol vehicle. At the end of shift, any projectile in the barrel of the Pepperball system shall be removed and placed in the hopper. The system shall then be returned to the station's or unit's designated storage location. Pepperball systems shall not be left in the trunk

of patrol vehicles at the end of shift.

There are two tactical applications for this weapon:

- It may be used to deploy O.C. powder only, on an individual or crowd, by impacting projectiles against a solid object; and
- It may be used to launch projectiles directly on an individual.

Pepperball systems shall not be altered or modified in any way. Only approved projectiles shall be fired in this weapon. All repairs to the weapon shall be made by a Department armorer.

### **40mm Projectile Weapons**

The 40mm launchers currently approved are less-lethal shoulder weapons which are designed to launch 40mm projectiles. These weapons are to be carried in protective cases. Prior to the beginning of the shift, authorized personnel who are taking one of these weapons out on patrol shall inspect the weapon. Whether the weapon is loaded at the time of this inspection depends on the manufacturer's recommendations of the weapon involved. Once inspected, the weapon will normally be carried in the trunk of a patrol vehicle. Care should be taken to protect the launcher and projectiles from damage at all times, especially projectiles containing Oleoresin Capsicum powder.

### **Deployment of Less Lethal Weapons**

Although classified as less lethal weapons, the ARWEN, SL-6, SL-1, and StunBag Shotgun are still firearms. When using these weapons, the potential exists to inflict serious or even fatal injuries. Therefore, the user should avoid striking anyone in the head when confronted with less than life threatening situations.

The Pepperball System is not considered a firearm. However, launching projectiles at a suspect's head shall be avoided unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

ARWEN supplies both a Low Energy and a Standard Energy round. The Low Energy round is designed for distances less than 60 feet and the High Energy Round is designed for distances greater than 60 feet. Deputy personnel shall not be limited in the use of the Low or High Energy rounds based merely on the distance to the suspect. Personnel deploying the ARWEN system must be prepared to justify the use of either the Low or Standard Energy round based on individual circumstances.

Guidelines for the use of these weapons fall under the "Situational Use of Force Options Chart." The use of these weapons is appropriate in circumstances involving "Assaultive/High Risk" suspects. The Pepperball system can also be used when a suspect's actions fall under "Resistive" on the "Situational Use of Force Options Chart." In this case the projectiles must be used to distribute O.C. powder by launching them against hard objects in the area of the suspect. Deputies must not intentionally launch projectiles directly on "Resistive" suspects. All Department personnel utilizing these weapons must do so only when fully justified by circumstances and shall be governed by MPP 3-10/100.00, Use of Force Review and Reporting Procedures.

Additionally, the following guidelines shall apply:

- Only qualified Department personnel shall use these weapons. Qualified personnel are those sworn

individuals who have received and successfully passed Department training in the use of the weapon deployed;

- If a StunBag qualified person is assigned to a general law enforcement or traffic unit, and a StunBag weapon is available, the StunBag shotgun shall be deployed in the unit;
  - Deputy personnel encountering a situation which may require the use of one of these weapons, when feasible, will immediately notify the field sergeant. These weapons can be deployed before the arrival of the field sergeant if the situation dictates such deployment. The field sergeant shall respond to the situation and assess the circumstances. The sergeant shall make all notifications and reports as required by the Department's Use of Force Policy;
  - Notification of the use of these weapons shall fall within the guidelines of 3-10/100.00 of the Manual of Policy and Procedures, Use of Force Reporting and Review Procedures. Furthermore, utilization of the weapon requires completion of the "Supervisor's Deployment Report, Less Lethal Weapons," SH-R-432, which is available through Central Supply.
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