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Air Launchers, Gas Guns, and Grenades		



Cross Reference: 2.01, 2.02, 2.04

I. Introduction

- A. Air launchers are used to deploy projectiles that may contain chemical irritants that are not designed to be lethal or cause serious injury.**
- B.** Gas guns are used to deploy projectiles, distraction devices, and chemical irritants that are not designed to be lethal but have the potential to cause injury or death.
- C. Grenades are used to deploy chemical irritants and are not designed to be lethal but have the potential to cause injury or death.**
- D.** Chemical irritants in the form of aerosol canisters and spray devices worn on the gun belt are excluded from the provisions of this directive.

II. Definitions

A. Air launcher

A single barrel weapon system that delivers a projectile via compressed air or CO2 not designed to be lethal or cause serious injury. The primary purpose of the system is to impact one individual with a single discharge. Air launchers do not meet the definition of a "firearm" outlined in Ohio Revised Code 2923.11 and Columbus City Code 2323.11.

B. Air launcher projectiles

- 1. Projectiles used in an air launcher may be .68 caliber ball rounds or .72 caliber spin-stabilized rounds, also known as a VXR. Projectiles come in the following forms:**

a. Inert

A powder payload with no chemical irritant. This is primarily used for kinetic impact, but it may be used for other applications.

b. PAVA

An OC-based chemical irritant powder payload, proprietary to PepperBall®.

c. Marking

A liquid payload with no chemical irritant used to identify subjects for arrest. Primarily used in kinetic impact and directed exposure applications.

C. Area saturation

When multiple projectiles are deployed from air launchers with the intent to significantly affect all persons in a specific area with a large volume of chemical irritant powder. This technique may only be used as outlined in Section III,L.

D. Bean bag round

Also referred to as a flexible baton round, a round **that** contains a cloth bag filled with silica sand and is fired from a gas gun. It is designed for direct impact on a targeted subject.

E. Directed exposure

When a projectile deployed from an air launcher is intentionally targeted to impact the ground or other inanimate object near a specific subject, with the intent of the chemical irritant powder or marking liquid from the projectile making contact only with the specific subject.

F. Flashbang

A non-bursting detonation device that emits light and sound when deployed.

G. Gas gun

A 37mm or 40mm single-barrel or rotary-style firearm used to deploy projectiles, distraction devices, and chemical irritants.

H. Gas round

Any of a variety of rounds fired from a gas gun that release chemical irritants or projectiles containing chemical irritants.

I. Kinetic impact

When the deployment of a projectile is intended to come into physical contact with the body of a specifically targeted subject, and energy is transferred from the projectile into the subject.

J. Less-lethal weapons and ordnance

This includes gas guns, grenades, bean bag rounds, and multiple baton rounds, which have the potential to cause death, though they are not designed to be lethal.

K. Multiple baton round

A high velocity round containing wood projectiles fired from a gas gun. It is designed to be skip-fired (ricocheted off a hard surface) toward a targeted subject or to be used as a distraction device (deployed through and breaking a window). Operational exceptions may be made in a critical situation in which the use of deadly force is justified.

L. Rubber ball blast grenade

A combination irritant and diversion device that delivers three stimuli for psychological and physiological effect: light, sound, and chemical irritant.

M. Sponge round

A plastic body with a foam nose, which is spin-stabilized via the incorporated rifling collar and the 40mm launcher's rifled barrel, fired from a gas gun.

N. Warning/Signaling munitions

A plastic body, which produces 170 decibels of sound, emits 5 million candelas of light, and deflagrates (explodes) at a distance of 50 meters (approximately 164 feet) with an OC irritant payload, fired from a gas gun.

III. Policy Statements

A. Authorized sworn personnel shall only carry and use those ***air launchers***, gas guns, and grenades that have been approved by the Chief of Police.

B. Sworn personnel shall carry only those chemical irritants that have been authorized by the Chief of Police. CS gas, commonly referred to as tear gas, is prohibited for use to disperse crowds. CS gas may be deployed by SWAT personnel during barricade situations.

C. Only sworn personnel who have satisfactorily completed ***the appropriate*** annual specialty training are permitted to possess, deploy, or order the deployment of these munitions in the field.

D. The Division's use of force policy shall guide the use of ***air launchers***, gas guns, and grenades.

1. Any discharge of a gas gun or detonation of a grenade (excluding flashbangs and multiple baton rounds used as a diversion) shall be a Level 7 use of force.

2. ***Any discharge of an air launcher shall be a Level 3 use of force.***

E. The use of a chemical irritant deployed by a 37mm or 40mm gas gun, or a chemical irritant grenade being thrown or rolled, requires the approval of a lieutenant or higher authority.

1. ***A SWAT lieutenant may designate a lower-ranking SWAT officer to give such an order, except in crowd control situations.***

2. ***A sergeant acting as a zone lieutenant should not give such approval.***

F. Supervisors shall issue ***an*** order to use ***an air launcher***, a gas gun, or a grenade only when reasonable based upon the totality of the circumstances, which should include an evaluation of the need to use the device(s) weighed against the danger they pose to the suspect or others.

- G.** Division personnel shall give a verbal warning that the use of a less-lethal weapon and/or projectile is imminent when practical.
- H. Sworn personnel shall consider training and the following when determining whether to use an air launcher:**
- 1. Subject's age**
 - 2. Subject's weight**
 - 3. Subject's obvious physical disabilities**
- I. Sworn personnel should not attempt kinetic impact with projectiles on small children, infirm or elderly individuals, or obviously pregnant females.**
- J. Sworn personnel shall not target the head, neck, or spine with a projectile.**
- K. Sworn personnel shall not use any of the munitions listed in this policy to disperse a congregation of individuals unless otherwise authorized as outlined in Section III,L.**
- 1. Sworn personnel encountering a group of people, some of whom are engaged in unlawful conduct, shall be guided by the "Use of Force" directive when determining whether to use air launchers or gas guns. Only projectiles which are designed for direct impact on a targeted subject shall be used.**
 - 2. If an air launcher or gas gun is used, it shall be directed at the person(s) participating in the violent conduct and not at the group in general, taking into consideration the person's proximity to non-violent individuals and atmospheric conditions.**
- L. Sworn personnel may use crowd control munitions when a crowd has entered or is attempting to enter a controlled access highway or when it has forced entry or is attempting to force entry into a controlled access building or critical infrastructure.**
- 1. Sworn personnel should make at least three dispersal notifications prior to utilizing crowd control munitions unless exigent circumstances exist.**
 - 2. Dispersal notifications should be made in a manner in which the participants in the crowd should reasonably be able to hear and understand.**
- M.** Deployment of **air launchers**, gas guns, or grenades shall be reported as outlined in this policy. The supervisor who ordered the deployment should not complete the investigation, but he or she should be included in the chain of command review on policy compliance.
- N.** Following a use of force with **an air launcher, a gas gun, or a grenade**, if a subject experiences **an injury** or is in medical distress, sworn personnel shall render aid as appropriate and as follows:

1. Notify Communications personnel;
 2. Summon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and ensure that the dispatcher acknowledges the request; and
 3. Render medical aid consistent with training and available equipment as soon as it is safe to do so.
- O. Sworn personnel deploying a chemical irritant shall make a reasonable effort to decontaminate exposed persons once the situation is under control. Decontamination may include exposure to fresh air, flushing the eyes with fresh water, or seeking medical attention.**
- P. Sworn personnel shall properly store an air launcher when not in use. Once an air launcher is issued, sworn personnel shall not leave the air launcher unattended or unsecured.**
- Q. Unless otherwise specified, all 40mm gas guns and related munitions shall be securely stored in the lieutenant's office. The items shall be stored in a soft carrying case and transferred to a lieutenant's vehicle when needed for deployment, training, or inspection. The items shall be returned at the completion of the event/incident.**
- R. Ordnance Unit personnel shall be responsible for the storage of rubber blast ball grenades. These devices shall only be issued when approved by a lieutenant for a specific event or incident.**

IV. Procedures

A. Use of Air Launchers

1. Sworn Personnel Issued an Air Launcher

- a. Log the number of projectiles issued at the beginning of an operation.**
- b. Account for each projectile used during an operation.**
- c. Log the number of projectiles returned at the end of an operation.**
- d. Contact the Ordnance Unit for any needed maintenance or repair.**

B. Use of Gas Guns and Grenades

1. Zone Lieutenant
 - a. Ensure that the zone has at least one gas gun available for use at all times.
 - b. Determine whether to use a gas gun or grenade immediately or call for SWAT.
 - c. Issue the order to use the gas gun or grenade. Such an order may be given via electronic or radio communications.
2. SWAT or Drug Interdiction Section Lieutenant
 - a. Determine when a gas gun or grenade is to be used.

- b. Issue the order to deploy the weapon.
 - (1) The order may be given via electronic or radio communications.
 - (2) Designate a lower-ranking SWAT or **Investigative Tactical** officer to give the order when necessary, except in crowd control situations.
3. Personnel Assigned to Possess or Use a Gas Gun or Grenade
 - a. Maintain the gas gun or grenade in good working order.
 - b. Contact the Ordnance Unit for any needed maintenance or repair.
 - c. Use a gas gun or grenade only on the order of a lieutenant, higher-ranking personnel, or the SWAT or **Investigative Tactical** Section Lieutenant's designee.

Note: Sergeants deploying beanbag rounds are not required to obtain prior approval.

- d. Do not fire a gas gun or detonate a grenade without the assistance of a cover officer with a firearm.
4. Ordnance Unit Personnel
Resupply personnel with gas guns, grenades, and less-lethal ordnance at the direction of a lieutenant or higher-ranking supervisor.

C. Reporting and Investigation of Deployment

1. Investigating Personnel
 - a. **For any deployment of air launchers, gas guns, and grenades**, comply with the "Use of Force" directive and forward a copy of the administrative investigation to the Legal Advisor.
 - b. **For deployment of gas guns, ensure compliance with the "Discharged Firearms" directive.**
2. Internal Affairs Bureau
 - a. Maintain required records of uses of force.
 - b. When the involved personnel are ordered by a supervisor to fire **an air launcher, fire a gas gun**, or detonate a grenade, categorize the incident as an ordered use of force for purposes of the Employee Action Review System.
3. Personnel Detonating Explosive Devices That Must be Logged as Required by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
 - a. Be aware of the reporting requirement for devices such as the Defense Technology Corporation of America Distraction Device®.
 - b. Report the use of force as required by the "Use of Force" directive.
 - c. Complete a Distraction Device Deployment report, form U-11.102, and forward it directly to the 1st Shift Ordnance Unit.
4. 1st Shift Ordnance Unit
Maintain a log of all explosive devices as required by ATF.