LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

USE OF FORCE DIRECTIVE

UOF Directive No. 12 November 2024

37MM LESS-LETHAL LAUNCHER

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to familiarize officers with the use, nomenclature, and operational procedures for the 37mm Less-Lethal Launcher (37mm LLL) crowd control device. **The 37mm LLL utilizes target-specific non-direct impact munitions and may only be used during crowd control situations**.

PROTOCOL

The usage protocols for the 37mm LLL during crowd control situations are different than that of normal Department intermediate force options. The specific protocols for deployment of the 37mm LLL are guided by the California Penal Code.

The 37mm launchers are classified by the State of California as kinetic energy projectiles (KEPs). Kinetic energy projectiles and chemical agents shall only be deployed during crowd control situations by a peace officer that has received training in their proper use as designated by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. Additionally, they shall not be used solely to due to an imposed curfew, verbal threat, or non-compliance with a Department directive. Only Department-certified officers may deploy a 37mm Launcher.

The 37mm LLL may only be deployed during crowd control situations, with the incident commander's approval, under the following circumstances:

- To defend against a reasonably perceived threat to life or serious bodily injury to any individual, including a peace officer; or,
- To bring a reasonably perceived dangerous and unlawful situation safely and effectively under control; and, only in accordance with the following requirements:

    1) De-escalation techniques or other alternatives to force have been attempted when objectively reasonable, and have failed;

2) Repeated audible announcements have been made stating the intent to use kinetic energy projectiles, when objectively reasonable to do so (in multiple languages and from various locations, if appropriate);
3) Persons have been given an objectively reasonable opportunity to disperse and leave the scene;
4) An objectively reasonable effort has been made to identify persons engaged in violent acts as opposed to those who are not. Kinetic energy projectiles and chemical agents shall not be used indiscriminately on a crowd or group of persons, and shall instead be targeted toward those individuals reasonably believed to have engaged in violent acts;
5) Kinetic energy projectiles and chemical agents shall only be used when objectively reasonable, and only with the frequency, intensity and in a manner that is proportional to the threat;
6) Officers shall attempt to minimize the possible incidental use of kinetic energy projectiles and chemical agents on bystanders, medical personnel, journalists, or other unintended targets;
7) An objectively reasonable effort has been made to extract individuals in distress;
8) Medical assistance is promptly requested and, if properly trained personnel are present, to provide such assistance to injured persons, when it is reasonable and safe to do so; and,
9) Kinetic energy projectiles shall not be aimed at the head, neck, or other vital organs.

PROCEDURES

The 37mm target-specific non-direct impact munitions are utilized by designated **less-lethal operators** using Department crowd control tactics.

The non-direct impact multi-foam baton rounds are skip fired. For tactical and weapon retention purposes, the approved deployment range for the 37mm launchers is 10 to 50 feet from the front of the targeted individual(s). The point of aim is five (5) to 10 feet on the ground in front of the targeted individual(s).

Tactical Considerations

- Optimally two (2) 37mm LLL per skirmish line
- Optimally two (2) target-specific launchers adjacent to each 37mm LLL
- Assess effectiveness between every round fired (can be done during reload)
- 10-50 feet recommended deployment range
- Skip-fired 5-10 feet on the ground in front of the targeted individuals
- Officers should maintain distance from the crowd (at least 10 feet) to allow for proper dispersal of rounds

Ideally, when deployed in front of the skirmish line, 37mm launchers should be positioned on the left and right sides of the skirmish line. While splitting areas of responsibility (center-left, center-right), operators should be supported by a target-specific direct-impact KEP operator (e.g., 40mm Less-Lethal Launcher, FN303) to provide protection for the 37mm operator(s).

Reporting

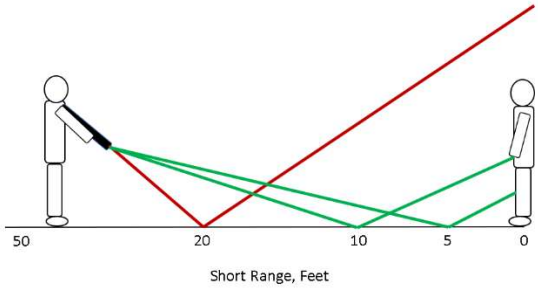
All discharges of a projectile weapon are reportable uses of force and shall be reported in accordance with Department policy whether or not the projectiles/munitions or device make contact with the suspect or subject, including their clothing.

Medical Aid

Any person known to have been struck by a non-direct impact munition shall be transported to a Department-approved facility for medical treatment prior to booking, unless the person who was struck is not taken into custody, or refuses medical treatment. The person should be carefully monitored for signs of distress. If a medical emergency exists, officers shall render medical aid as required and request a rescue ambulance to respond to their location.

Deployment

The command to deploy the 37mm launchers is "**Less lethal up**," at which time ALL less lethal operators will move in front of the skirmish line. No secondary command to fire is given.



Following the command to deploy ("Less lethal up"), each 37mm launcher operator is responsible for determining whether deployment is consistent with the guidelines set forth in this Directive. If the officer does not deploy the launcher, the officer should remain in front of the skirmish line at the low ready conducting an ongoing assessment of the crowd.

All operators will continue assessing the crowd, whether the operators are on the move or static. Upon assessment of the crowd, a supervisor may deem it prudent to halt the deployment of the 37mm LLL. The supervisor will give the command of, "**Less lethal recover**." Upon this command, less-lethal operators will stop and assess from a standing position and await the movement of the skirmish line to envelope them. If deployed from a static skirmish line, on the command of, "**Less lethal recover**," the less-lethal operator will immediately recover on their own behind the skirmish line. Once behind the skirmish line, launchers should be carried at the indoor low-ready position to prevent pointing them at skirmish line personnel.

Equipment

All officers deployed to crowd control incidents are expected to wear their Department-issued helmet with face shield. Less-lethal operators shall deploy with face shields in the up position and are recommended to utilize secondary eye protection (clear glasses are preferred). **Firing the 37mm launcher with the face shield down may result in an improper sight picture.**

Officers are responsible to account for every round they are issued (fired, dropped, etc.) with a pre- and post-deployment munition count. The 37mm launcher must be equipped with the Department-issued sling.

Definitions

37mm LLL: The 37mm LLL is made by Defense Technology (DEF-TEC). It has a 14-inch barrel capable of dispensing single-shot cartridges containing baton rounds, stinger balls, gas, smoke, etc., single shot, breach loaded with fixed front and rear sights. Only the multi-foam baton munitions are approved for patrol personnel.

37mm LLL Munitions: The 37mm LLL Multi-Foam Baton incorporates an 8.0-inch aluminum cartridge that contains (5) foam projectiles, which utilize black powder as a propellant. Only approved 37mm LLL munitions are to be used in the 37mm LLL. Officers shall inspect the munition and the holder to ensure that the approved desired munition is selected. Only the multi-foam baton munitions are approved for use by the Department.

Target Areas: The target area is five (5) feet to 10 feet, skip-fired, in front of the targeted individual(s).

Nomenclature:

Loading/Unloading

Prior to loading or unloading, the launcher should be tucked high underneath the armpit of the primary arm. This allows the officer controlled access to the barrel while keeping focus downrange to assess the crowd and terrain.

When deployed in front of a skirmish line, all manipulations should be conducted with the officer's support hand. Open the barrel by lifting the breach latch, ensuring the barrel opens completely to a 90-degree angle. Place a new cartridge into the barrel. Close the barrel by gripping the foregrip with support hand and pushing the barrel upwards, ensuring the breach latch locks back into place.

Points to Remember

- Requires incident commander approval.
- Sighted, shoulder fired weapon system
- **Ten feet** minimum deployment range, to allow dispersal of projectiles
- **Skip-fired** five feet to ten feet in front of the targeted individuals
- Fired in double action only
- Minimum of (2) per skirmish line
- **Should wear eye protection, with face-shield in the up position**

Care and Cleaning

It is extremely important to clean and oil the 37mm Launcher after every deployment event. The black powder propellant can cause issues with the firing pin and barrel if allowed to accumulate and clog the areas. As soon as possible after use:

- Clean barrel with hot soapy water, brush and rag,
- Wipe dry and lightly oil, and,
- Apply a few drops of oil to the action.

Troubleshooting

In the event a munition fails to fire after the trigger is pressed, officers should press the trigger again and attempt to fire one more time. If the round fails to fire after the second attempt, unload the cartridge and insert a new one.

Important Reminder

Deviation from these basic concepts sometimes occurs due to the fluid and rapidly evolving nature of law enforcement encounters and the environment in which they occur. Deviations may range from minor, typically procedural or technical, to substantial deviations from Department tactical training. Any deviations are to be explained by the involved officer(s), and justification for substantial deviation from Department tactical training shall be articulated and must meet the objectively reasonable standard of the Department's Use of Force Policy.

DOMINIC H. CHOI
Chief of Police

DISTRIBUTION "A"