



Shelburne Police Department

SUBJECT: PepperBall

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REFERENCE: Supersedes all previous

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

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REEVALUATION DATE: as needed

Approved: *Joshua J. Flore*

Date of Approval: August 7, 2025

PURPOSE:

To provide sworn members of the Shelburne Police Department with guidelines in the use of the PepperBall system.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Shelburne Police Department that the use of the PepperBall system on a person be in compliance with this protocol and the Shelburne Police Department's Use of Force Policy.

I. DEFINITION:

PepperBall Projectiles are plastic spheres that are filled with Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) powder. A high-pressure launcher delivers the projectiles with enough force to burst the projectile on impact, releasing the OC powder.

II. Effects of PepperBall:

PepperBall Projectiles subdue suspects with a combination of kinetic impact and OC powder. The sting of the impact causes a psychological impression of being shot. This is combined with the strong irritation of the OC powder to the suspect's nose and lungs. When inhaled, the OC powder within the PepperBall Projectile leads to coughing, shortness of breath, and in some instances vomiting. Some individuals experience eye irritation as well.

Response to inhaling the OC powder in a PepperBall Projectile varies among individuals. In most cases the symptoms last between five and ten minutes. The PepperBall launching system can deliver the projectiles with enough kinetic energy to produce temporary abrasions, bruises, and/or welts.

III. Training

- A.** Only officers trained by a certified Pepperball instructor will be authorized to deploy the device.
- B.** Officers will receive training in the proper deployment and use of the Pepperball launcher prior to being authorized to carry them on duty.
- C.** Officers will be trained in and demonstrate proper proficiency and knowledge of applicable law and Department Use of Force Policy on yearly basis.

IV. Deployment Guidelines

- A.** Although classified as a Less-Lethal device, the potential exists for the projectiles to inflict injury when they strike the face, eyes, neck and groin. Therefore, personnel deploying the PepperBall System should be trained to avoid intentionally striking those areas unless a life-threatening situation exists.
- B.** The use of the PepperBall falls within Active Resistance and Assaultive on the department's Use of Force Continuum.
- C.** Once trained officers may sign out a PepperBall launcher on a shift by shift basis. The PepperBall Launcher will be secured in the cruiser. The system should be function checked prior to each shift.

V. Medical Aid

Officers shall render appropriate medical aid, when tactically feasible, after the use of PepperBall.

- A.** Washing and bandaging minor cuts or abrasions resulting from the application of physical force.
- B.** Application of ice or cold packs for swelling.
- C.** Request rescue and trained medical personnel for treatment and transport of more seriously injured persons.

VI. Documentation of Injuries

- A.** Note location, extent, and appearance of the injury for reporting purposes.
- B.** Photograph the injury as soon as possible if possible.
- C.** Obtain witness names and statements from medical personnel and others at the scene.
- D.** Obtain all medical records possible if the subject is treated by emergency medical personnel or at the hospital.
- E.** Note carefully any statements made by the suspect.

VII. Documentation of Deployment

- A.** Each deployment of the PepperBall System whether the suspect has been hit, a saturation effect has been used or the launcher is directed toward or seen by the suspect a use of force form must be completed. The use of force form must be as outlined in General Order #17-Use of Force.