

# Model Policy

<i>Effective Date</i> <b>April 2002</b>		<i>Number</i>
<i>Subject</i> <b>Less-Than-Lethal Weapons: Impact Projectiles</b>		
<i>Reference</i>		<i>Special Instructions</i>
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## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide police officers with direction on when and how to use less-than-lethal impact projectiles.

## II. POLICY

The availability of less-than-lethal weapons can assist officers in de-escalation of potentially violent confrontations and provide additional alternatives to the use of deadly force. Impact projectiles are an important component of this agency's less-than-lethal force equipment. Officers are authorized to employ impact projectiles in accordance with provisions of this policy and this department's overall policy on use of force.

## III. DEFINITIONS

*Less-than-Lethal Weapons:* Devices used by police officers to stop, control, and restrain individuals while causing less harm than deadly force to the individual as well as the officer and any nearby persons. Examples of less-than-lethal weapons include pepper spray, pepper balls, water guns, nets, batons, Tasers®, and bean bag and rubber projectiles.

*Less-than-Lethal Force Philosophy:* Planning and application of force that meets operational objectives with less potential for causing death or serious physical injury than conventional police tactics.

*Impact Projectiles:* Often referred to generically as "bean bags and rubber bullets." It is designed to incapacitate a subject with a minimal potential for causing death or serious physical injury when compared to conventional projectiles when used in accordance with agency policy and training guidelines.

## IV. PROCEDURES

### A. Guidelines for Use of Impact Projectiles

1. Impact projectiles may be used as one of many weapons if consistent with the use-of-force continuum.
2. All uses of impact projectiles shall be consistent with this agency's policy on use of force and principles of the use-of-force continuum. Use of an impact projectile falls below that of deadly force on the force continuum.
3. Impact projectiles are primarily designed for use against subjects who appear to pose a threat of death or serious bodily injury to themselves or others.
4. There is a broad range of scenarios in which use of an impact projectile may be justified. Major factors to consider when deciding whether such use is justified include the following:
  - a. Seriousness of any crime committed by the individual
  - b. Whether the individual is armed and, if so, the potential lethality/threat
  - c. Propensity of the individual to be violent
  - d. The urgency of the situation and potential impact of actions that may be committed by the suspect
  - e. The ability of officers to use an impact projectile against the suspect in accordance with policy and training
  - f. The potential for collateral damage to officers, other persons, or property should the impact projectile incapacitate the suspect (e.g., the suspect is or is allegedly holding a triggering device connected to explosives or other destructive devices).
5. Consideration may be given to the use of impact projectiles (bean bag projectiles) against

those who are posing a threat of death or serious bodily injury to themselves or others.

6. Deployment of an impact projectile should be at the direction of a line supervisor or another senior officer unless it is reasonably likely that failure to take immediate action would result in injury, death, or serious property damage.
7. Only officers who have met this agency's training requirements for use of the impact projectile are permitted to carry or deploy impact projectiles.

#### B. Deployment and Follow Up

1. Specific deployment weapons shall be designated for deployment of impact projectiles and shall be definitively marked by paint or other conspicuous distinguishing features as authorized by this department. These shotguns shall not be used for any other purpose, shall be loaded only with less-than-lethal impact projectiles, and shall be kept only by authorized personnel in a manner designated by the department.
2. Where possible, officers should inform other police personnel in the immediate vicinity that impact rounds will be deployed in order that the shot will not precipitate the use of firearms by other officers.
3. Suspects who are struck with a projectile should be restrained as necessary and transported to a medical facility for examination.
4. Use of impact projectiles is a use of force and is subject to the same reporting and investigative policy requirements as other types of force incidents.
  - a. A use of force investigation shall be conducted in any situation involving the discharge of an impact projectile.
  - b. The depth of any investigation shall be determined by designated departmental authorities based on the extent of suspect injuries and a review of the circumstances surrounding the incident.

#### C. Training

1. Impact projectiles shall be directed at suspect target areas based on the circumstances at hand, established safety priorities, the exigency of the situation, and the level of force that is authorized.
2. Officers authorized to deploy impact projectiles shall receive designated training and certification as required by this department and shall re-qualify with the weapon as designated by this agency.
3. Officers shall receive agency-authorized training specifically designed to simulate actual deployment situations and conditions to enhance officers' discretion and judgment in using impact projectiles in accordance with this policy.

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Every effort has been made by the IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center staff and advisory board to ensure that this model policy incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. However, law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that no "model" policy can meet all the needs of any given law enforcement agency. Each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of federal court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions and collective bargaining agreements that must be considered. In addition, the formulation of specific agency policies must take into account local political and community perspectives and customs, prerogatives and demands; often divergent law enforcement strategies and philosophies; and the impact of varied agency resource capabilities, among other factors.