
PEPPERBALL LAUNCHERS, PROJECTILES, AND BLAST

311.1 POLICY

It is the policy of the Grand Rapids Police Department to utilize the non-lethal PepperBall launcher systems and PepperBall BLAST as an authorized police tools to control a non-compliant, violent, or armed subject in order to protect officers and others from harm. It may also be utilized in crowd management and crowd control to disperse, displace, or direct non-compliant crowds.

311.2 DEFINITIONS

Non-Lethal: Chemical agent delivery system that uses HIGH-PRESSURE AIR (large capacity hoppers), and CO2 (limited capacity magazines) to deliver PAVA powder PROJECTILES.

- Combines chemical agent exposure with kinetic impact.
- Effective on individuals as well as large groups of people for riot and crowd control.

PepperBall Launcher: PepperBall Launchers are intermediary force tools with yellow markings that deploy projectiles with compressed air of multiple types. PepperBall should be deployed to areas of the subject's body that are considered unlikely to cause death or serious physical injury.

PepperBall Projectiles: PepperBall projectiles are a .68 caliber projectile of varying functionality manufactured and approved by PepperBall in different forms, including but not limited to chemical irritants, glass breaking functionality, inert and marking.

Target Areas: Approved PepperBall target areas include the torso and limbs. PepperBall should not intentionally be targeted at the head, neck, throat, groin, and spine unless deadly force is authorized.

PepperBall Blast: PepperBall BLAST is a reliable close-range response to an attack or other use of force. The Blast delivers a payload equal to 3X projectiles' worth of powder and leaves a cloud of powder between the officer and the subject allowing the officer time to get a better reactionary distance or call for assistance. The BLAST-GB has a durable, high-hardness tungsten carbide hammer tip to safely break through auto and other glass.

311.3 PROCEDURE

- A. PepperBall launchers in most cases should be delivered in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and guidelines however, each situation must be evaluated on the totality of the circumstances at the time of deployment. Officers are not restricted solely to use according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- B. PepperBall products are a non-lethal use of force option and fall between verbal commands and less than lethal options.
- C. Only officers trained in the use of PepperBall launchers are authorized to deploy them.
- D. Only City approved PepperBall launchers are authorized for use.
- E. Only a designated PepperBall launcher will be used to deploy the PepperBall projectiles.
- F. Only officers who are trained may load or refill the PepperBall launchers with the projectiles and compressed air.
- G. Prior to firing the launcher, an officer should, if practicable, inform other officers on scene and dispatch that PepperBall launchers are available and ready for deployment.
- H. Prior to firing the launcher, an officer should give verbal warning, if feasible, to the subject unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of officers or when it is not practicable due to the circumstances.
- I. Lethal cover options should be considered, prior to the deployment of PepperBall systems.
- J. A narrative report will be completed by the deploying officer in all PepperBall system deployments.
- K. Only officers trained as a PepperBall instructor or armorer may alter or adjust the pressure (PSI) of the launcher and its air tank.

311.4 DEPLOYMENT AREAS

- A. PepperBall projectiles will be delivered to the suspect target areas based on the circumstances involved in the incident. The threat level of the suspect, the proximity of officers to the suspect, the position of the suspect related to the availability of potential target areas, the physical layout of the incident scene, and officer safety issues present are all factors to consider when selecting a target area.
- B. Intentional impacts to the head, neck, throat, groin, and spine area are considered deadly force, and will be avoided unless the use of deadly force is justified.

- C. The PepperBall system may be used to effectively control animals with kinetic impacts and chemical irritant projectiles when necessary.
- D. PepperBall projectiles can be used to saturate an area around a subject in an effort to gain compliance.
- E. The officer should adjust targeting for wind conditions by adjusting his/her position and/or by using test rounds to determine wind direction.
- F. Upon the discharge of any PepperBall projectile, the on-duty supervisor should be notified as soon as practicable.
- G. The use of the glass-shattering projectile should not be used on any person unless the situation calls for the use of deadly force.
- H. The PepperBall launcher system is authorized for the use during a crowd control situation. Prior to firing the launcher, an officer should give verbal warnings, if feasible, to the subject(s).
- I. The PepperBall BLAST should be aimed at center mass with the PAVA powder saturating the upper chest and mucus areas of the head.
- J. PepperBall BLAST can also be utilized effectively through small openings to fill a room, vehicle, or other enclosed area with a cloud of LIVE-X PAVA powder. Pointing the BLAST toward the ceiling will cause this powder to stay airborne, causing maximum physiological and psychological effects to the subject(s), and encouraging submission.
- K. Photographs of the scene and affected person shall be taken after each deployment if possible.

311.5 TREATMENT AND DECONTAMINATION

- A. All subjects who are struck by a PepperBall projectile or PepperBall BLAST should be evaluated for injuries and if deemed necessary or requested, be seen by emergency medical services. Any subject struck by a PepperBall projectile or PepperBall BLAST has the right to refuse medical treatment. Photographs of the subject's injuries will be taken whenever possible. A medical release form should be requested if the subject is evaluated at a medical facility.
- B. The affected subject(s) should be removed to an area of fresh air.
- C. Shake any pepper powder off the subjects clothing. Cool, clean water can be used to wash powder off exposed skin.

311.6 STORAGE/MAINTENANCE

- A. PepperBall launchers have several delicate parts that can wear out easily if the system is not cared for properly.

- B. The following steps should be followed in the order listed to maintain the life of the launcher:
- i. Safety on.
 - ii. Turn pressure off.
 - iii. Remove magazine from the stock.
 - iv. Remove the projectile from the chamber.
 - v. Place projectile back in the magazine.
- C. PepperBall launchers will only be stored in designated locations and within assigned squad cars.
- D. Only trained PepperBall armorers are allowed to lubricate and clean the PepperBall launchers.

