

Incident Summary

Officer A was off-duty at a private gymnasium to provide weapons manipulation training to a client. Officer A was in the process of unloading his .45 caliber semiautomatic pistol when it discharged. The discharge was an open breach detonation, which occurs when the primer of the cartridge is struck, but the slide has not moved fully into proper firing position, leaving the breach or ejection port partially open.

Although the training session did not involve the use of his pistol, Officer A stated that he was unloading his pistol prior to the beginning of the training session because he did not want to have a loaded pistol left unattended in a public business. He removed his pistol and holster from his hip, knelt on both knees and, using the workout mat covered concrete floor of the gymnasium as his background, removed the pistol from its holster and began the unloading process.

Officer A conducted a chamber check of the pistol; removed and secured the magazine from the pistol; disengaged the thumb safety; cupped his hand over the ejection port; rotated the pistol away from his body; and attempted to lock the slide to the rear. As he did so, the pistol's slide moved slightly forward, and the partially chambered cartridge detonated, causing injury to Officer A's left hand.

The investigation determined the cartridge discharged because it did not eject properly, and the ejector struck the primer as the slide went forward. The cartridge did not eject because Officer A's hand was covering the ejection port, preventing the cartridge from ejecting. The nose of the bullet became wedged inside the ejection port area of the pistol producing metal transfer marks on the ejection port area. The wedged bullet also created gouge marks on the nose of the bullet. The edge of the cartridge case contacted the frame of the pistol producing metal transfer marks on the frame. The primer contacted the ejector with enough force to detonate the primer. Since the cartridge was outside the chamber and was unsupported, the casing split open causing the bullet and the primer to separate from the cartridge case. The investigation also noted that since the bullet did not travel through the barrel of the pistol, there were no rifling grooves on the bullet. The detonation also caused deposits of partially burned gun powder in the open chamber and in the magazine well.

Officer A suffered minor injuries and was treated and cleared to return to full duty.

Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners' Findings

The BOPC reviews each Categorical Use of Force incident based upon the totality of the circumstances, namely all of the facts, evidence, statements and all other pertinent material relating to the particular incident. In most cases, the BOPC makes specific findings in three areas: Tactics of the involved officer(s); Drawing/Exhibiting of a firearm by any involved officer(s); and the Use of Force by any involved officer(s). In this incident, there was no Drawing/Exhibiting of a firearm, and no Use of Force by the officer involved. All incidents are evaluated to identify areas where involved officers can

benefit from a tactical debriefing to improve their response to future tactical situations. This is an effort to ensure that all officers will benefit from the critical analysis that is applied to each incident as it is reviewed by various levels within the Department and by the BOPC. Based on the BOPC's review of the instant case, the BOPC made the following findings.

A. Tactics

The BOPC found Officer A's actions to warrant a Tactical Debrief.

B. Unintentional Discharge

The BOPC found Officer A's unintentional discharge to be negligent, warranting administrative disapproval.

Basis for Findings

A. Tactics

- Because Officer A was not involved in a tactical event at the time of this incident, there were no identified tactical concerns. However, Department guidelines require that personnel who are substantially involved in Categorical Use of Force incidents attend a Tactical Debrief.

Officer A's tactics were not a factor in this incident; therefore, they were not reviewed or evaluated. However, Officer A was directed to attend a Tactical Debrief that included discussions with designated topics.

In conclusion, the BOPC found Officer A's actions to warrant a Tactical Debrief.

B. Unintentional Discharge

- **Officer A** – (.45 caliber semiautomatic pistol)

In this instance, while attempting to unload his .45 caliber semiautomatic pistol, Officer A failed to appropriately lock the slide to the rear, causing the pistol's slide to move forward. The ejector struck the partially chambered cartridge, which detonated, resulting in an unintentional discharge. Officer A's actions caused the unintentional discharge (UD) of the firearm.

The BOPC evaluated the circumstances relevant to Officer A's unintentional discharge and determined that his actions were negligent in nature, warranting administrative disapproval.