



LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT USE OF FORCE-TACTICS DIRECTIVE

Directive No. 17.1

October 2021

40mm LESS-LETHAL LAUNCHER

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to familiarize officers with the use, nomenclature, and operational procedures of the 40mm Less-Lethal Launcher (40mm LLL).



PROTOCOL

The Department's guiding principle when using force shall be reverence for human life. Officers shall attempt to control an incident by using time, distance, communication, and available resources in an effort to de-escalate the situation, whenever it is safe, feasible and reasonable to do so. When warranted, Department personnel may use objectively reasonable force to carry out their duties.

Officers who use unreasonable force degrade the confidence of the community we serve, expose the Department and fellow officers to physical hazards, violate the law and rights of individuals upon whom unreasonable force or unnecessary deadly force is used, and subject the Department and themselves to potential civil and criminal liability. Conversely, officers who fail to use force when warranted may endanger themselves, the community, and fellow officers.

Officers may only use a level of force that they reasonably believe is proportional to the seriousness of the suspected offense or the reasonably perceived level of actual or threatened resistance.

An officer may use the 40mm LLL as a reasonable force option to control a suspect **when the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officer or others.**

Less-Lethal force options shall not be used on a suspect or subject who is passively resisting or **merely failing to comply** with commands. Verbal threats of violence **or mere non-compliance** do not alone justify the use of less-lethal force. An officer's decision to draw, exhibit, or use the 40mm LLL should be based on the tactical situation and/or the suspect's actions. In addition, generally, an officer shall give a verbal warning prior to using such force when feasible.

The 40mm LLL shall not be used to target the head, neck, face, eyes, or spine unless lethal force is authorized.

The 40mm Less-Lethal Launcher may be used in crowd control situations against a single subject/suspect as a target-specific less-lethal option.

Officers shall inspect the ammunition and the holder to ensure only 40mm eXact iMpact ammunition is utilized.



PROCEDURES

The minimum recommended deployment range for the 40mm LLL is five feet, while the effective deployment range is up to 110 feet. Officers should always consider weapon retention principles when deploying the 40mm LLL to prevent a subject/suspect from gaining control of the launcher. When officers realize the need for a 40mm LLL, they should broadcast, “Code Sam-40.”

If tactically and environmentally feasible, the 40mm LLL officer should deploy the launcher from a position of cover with a designated cover officer. The 40mm LLL officer alerts other officers when he/she is ready to fire by shouting or broadcasting, “40mm Ready!” The primary officer gives the clear to fire signal by shouting or broadcasting, “40mm, Standby!” This alerts the officers at the scene that the firing of the 40mm LLL is about to occur.

When firing the 40mm LLL, officers should assess the effectiveness of each round fired. The effectiveness of the 40mm eXact iMpact round is based on the energy at impact. Therefore, the round may have little or no effect on a subject/suspect who:

- Has a large body mass;
- Is wearing heavy clothing/body armor;
- Is under the influence of drugs; or,
- Is in an altered state and cannot feel the impact of the sponge round.

If shots to the navel area or beltline do not appear to be effective, then a leg, arm, or hand may be a viable alternative target.

Tactical Considerations

- Size of suspect versus size of officer
- Clothing
- Altered mental state (may not be effective)
- Any known history of mental illness
- Age and/or physical condition of the suspect
- Suspect’s access to weapons
- Suspect’s ability to retreat or escape
- Bystanders’ involvement
- Availability of back-up officers (Can suspect be distracted until other units arrive?)
- Background/Foreground (What is behind/in front of the suspect?)
- Officers should maintain distance from the suspect

If control is not achieved and/or it appears that the 40mm eXact iMPact round is not effective, even after changing target areas, the officers must assess the viability of an alternate force option. Additionally, officers should continue to assess the suspect's actions and the effectiveness of each force option used.

Officers who encounter an armed self-mutilating or suicidal individual shall not use a 40mm LLL against that person, unless the officers reasonably believe the use of the 40mm LLL would not place the officers in a position which could escalate the situation to the use of lethal force. If officers choose to use a 40mm LLL in these situations, they should utilize distance and cover to avoid placing themselves in a vulnerable position.

Generally, officers should not deploy the 40mm LLL at a fleeing suspect. Officers should pursue and attempt to contain the suspect, while continually assessing the situation and considering the most appropriate tactical plan. Additionally, officers should avoid deploying the 40mm LLL on individuals who:

- Are on an elevated or unstable surface which could cause a fall that could result in a significant impact injury;
- Are operating or riding any mode of transportation; or,
- Are known to be pregnant, under 12 years of age, elderly, or visibly frail.

The 40mm LLL is not a substitute for deadly force. When conducting a building search for a suspect who may be armed, standard firearms must be deployed. Having a 40mm LLL along with other force options during the search will provide officers with different options should the situation change.

Requirement to Intercede When Excessive Force is Observed

An officer shall intercede when present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is necessary, as determined by an objectively reasonable officer under the circumstances, taking into account the possibility that other officers may have additional information regarding the threat posed by a subject.

Use of Force Warning

An officer shall, when feasible, give a verbal warning prior to using the 40mm LLL to control an individual. The warning is not required when an officer is attacked and must respond to the suspect's actions. Additionally, if a tactical plan requires the element of surprise to stabilize the situation, a warning is not required. Examples of this would be a hostage situation or a subject threatening suicide. However, officers are reminded that the surprise/tactical element must still be needed at the actual time the 40mm LLL is fired.

The verbal warning should include a command and a warning of potential consequences of the use of force. The command should be similar to "drop the weapon" or "stop what you are doing" followed by a warning similar to "or we may use the 40mm, and that may cause you injury."

The use or non-use of the warning shall be documented. The Non-Categorical Use of Force Report, Form 01.67.05, Use of Force Summary heading shall include:

- The name of the officer giving the warning; and,
- An explanation and appropriate justification for not using the warning.

Statements that the “element of surprise was needed” or “for officer safety reasons” will not justify non-use of the warning. The explanation for non-use must:

- Clearly articulate why the element of surprise was needed;
- Explain in detail any officer safety considerations; and,
- List all pertinent reasons that justify why the warning was not provided.

The use of the warning, or the reasons for non-use, will be factors considered in the determination whether the use of force was objectively reasonable.

Tactical Discharges

Tactical discharges (disabling lights, breaking out windows, etc.) are allowed, but are not recommended, as they may cause secondary, unintended impacts. Before a tactical discharge is used to break a window, officers should consider that an individual may be behind the window and subject to impact by the 40mm round.

Tactical discharges **may** be an effective option in **limited** circumstances. Officers must assess the situation after each tactical discharge, and if the launcher is not producing the desired effect, discontinue its use. Officers must be prepared to give the rationale behind their decision to fire the 40mm LLL as a tactical discharge. The reporting procedure for a tactical discharge is the same as a discharge that does not strike a person (Employee’s Report, Form 15.07.00).

In the event the 40mm LLL is used for a tactical discharge, it should be communicated to all officers at scene prior to its use, for their situational awareness.

Reporting

The use of a 40mm LLL for any reason other than an approved training exercise shall be documented according to established Department procedures on the Non-Categorical Use of Force Report; however, when a 40mm LLL is fired and the round does not strike a person, a use of force report is not necessary and an Employee’s Report, Form 15.07.00, should be completed to document the incident. Supervisors shall obtain photographs of all visible and complained of injuries, even when evidence of injury is not present.

Requirement to Report Potential Excessive Force

An officer who is present and observes another officer using force that the present and observing officer believes to be beyond that which is necessary, as determined by an objectively reasonable officer under the circumstances based upon the totality of information actually known to the officer, shall report such force to a superior officer.

Medical Treatment

Any person struck with a 40mm eXact iMpact round shall be transported to a Department-approved facility for medical treatment prior to booking. The person should be carefully monitored for signs of distress. If a medical emergency exists, officers shall request a rescue ambulance to respond to their location.

DEFINITIONS

40mm Less-Lethal Launcher: A tactical single-shot launcher configured with a green stock and pistol grip, a rifled barrel, picatinny rail mounting system and Department-approved optics. The color green is used to signify that the 40mm launcher is for the 40mm eXact iMpact round only.

Code Sam-40: The radio code used to broadcast a request for a 40mm LLL.

40mm eXact iMpact Round: The 40mm round is a point-of-aim, point-of-impact, direct fire round consisting of a plastic body and a sponge nose that is spin stabilized via the incorporated rifling collar and the 40mm launcher's rifled barrel. It can be identified by its silver metal case and blue plastic nose. These sponge rounds are designed to be non-penetrating, and upon striking a target, distribute energy over a broad surface area. The sponge round utilizes smokeless powder as the propellant and has velocities that are extremely consistent.

Tactical Discharge: The purposeful discharge at an object to assist officers in a tactical situation, such as to disable lighting or break windows.

Target Areas: The primary target area is the navel area or beltline, but officers may target the suspect's arms, hands or legs when practicable. If the hand is the selected target, consider its location and what it is holding. Officers shall not target the head, neck, spine, chest, groin, or kidneys.

Points to Remember

- 5 feet is the minimum deployment range
- Deployment range is from 5 to 110 feet
- Assessment between rounds is critical
- **Do not target the head, neck, spine, chest, groin, or kidneys**
- Reportable use of force if a round strikes a person
- Have a backup plan in the event the 40mm round is ineffective
- 40mm LLL should not be deployed unless lethal force is available for cover
- Form 15.07.00 required when the Launcher is fired and the round does not strike a person, and for tactical discharge

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.

AMENDMENTS

This version replaces Use of Force-Tactics Directive No. 17, 40mm Less-Lethal Launcher, July 2018.



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

DISTRIBUTION "A"