

# Cobb County Police Department

## Policy 5.20a

### USE OF FORCE/LESS-LETHAL MUNITIONS

<b>Effective Date:</b> November 1, 2017	<b>Issued By:</b> Chief M.J. Register
<b>Rescinds:</b> Policy 5.31 (January 12, 2013)	<b>Page 1 of 3</b>
The words "he, his, him," which may appear in this policy, are used generically for clarity and ease of reading. These terms are not meant to imply gender and relate to all employees of the Department.	

Less-lethal munitions are advantageous because they allow distance to be used by the officer to his advantage. However, due to suspect actions or other factors, less-lethal munitions could strike a critical area of subject, and inflict a mortal injury. It is for these reasons that the Department hereby establishes the following policy and procedures for the use of less-lethal munitions.

#### I. POLICY

The Cobb County Police Department authorizes the use of less-lethal munitions to stop aggressive or threatening behavior by a subject, towards the officer or a third party, when other lesser means, such as soft empty hand, hard hand, or OC spray tactics are not feasible or effective.

#### II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Dedicated Less-lethal Gun:** The weapon used to fire less-lethal munitions is a 12 gauge Remington 870 shotgun fitted with an orange stock to distinguish it from similar weapons.
- B. Less-lethal Munitions:** Commonly referred to as "bean bag" rounds, less-lethal munitions are projectiles designed to impact the body and stun in a similar manner as a strike from a baton. Issued less-lethal munitions will be of a make and design approved by the Firearms Training Unit. Officers are not permitted to utilize any personally purchased less-lethal munitions.
- C. Less-lethal Kits:** A case containing only a dedicated less-lethal gun and less-lethal munitions.

#### III. DEPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

##### A. Distribution

Less-lethal kits will be distributed to the precincts, Special Operations personnel, SWAT, selected detective and investigative units, and other units as necessary.

1. Precinct watch commanders will ensure that less-lethal kits and munitions are available in every other beat car, and center cars as appropriate.

2. Personnel who are assigned a patrol car may be individually issued a less-lethal kit. K-9 personnel will not be required to carry a less-lethal kit.

**B. Deployment Procedures**

When an officer deploys less-lethal munitions, the following procedures will be followed.

1. When the officer opens the less-lethal munitions kit he will ensure that the kit only contains the dedicated less-lethal gun and less-lethal munitions. The less-lethal weapon will not be deployed if the kit contains anything other than an unloaded dedicated less-lethal gun and less-lethal munitions.
2. The officer will ensure that the dedicated less-lethal gun is uploaded with Department approved and issued less-lethal munitions only. No lethal munitions will be loaded in any dedicated less-lethal gun, and no less-lethal munitions will be loaded into a standard shotgun, under any circumstances.
3. When confronting a resistive or combative subject, the officer should have a back-up officer serving as a cover officer.
4. Attempt to target the less-lethal primary target zones as identified by the Weapons Training Unit.

**IV. DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO USE OF LESS-LETHAL MUNITIONS**

When an officer discharges less-lethal munitions at a resistive subject and strikes the subject, the following procedures will be followed:

- A. Medical Aid will be requested by the involved officer, or by the first officer on the scene if the involved officer is unable to call for aid.
- B. The involved officer will notify his immediate supervisor of the incident and location. If the involved officer is unable to do so, the first uninvolved officer on the scene will notify the supervisor.
- C. The supervisor, upon being notified, will:
  1. Proceed to the scene.
  2. Ensure that photographs of any injuries are taken and secured as evidence as part of the case file and evidence handling policies.
  3. The supervisor shall ensure that every attempt is made to collect the spent less-lethal munitions (“bean bag”) and shell casing(s). The spent less-

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lethal munitions will be provided to medical personnel if necessary, and submitted as evidence in accordance with evidence handling policies.

4. The involved subject will be transported to a hospital for an evaluation of injuries.
  5. The officer will document the incident on an incident report.
  6. A Use of Force Statistical Report will be completed by the officer and submitted to the Department of Public Safety Training Unit through the precinct or unit chain of command.
- D.** Should less-lethal munitions be discharged at a subject and miss, the above procedures will be followed with the exception of medical aid.

**Note:** This does not relieve the officer of the responsibility to request medical aid should the subject receive injuries from other types of control tactics).