



Alexandria Police Department



Directive 7.2

OC SPRAY

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7.2.01 POLICY/PURPOSE

The Department shall issue Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray to provide selected employees (Police Officers, Special Police Officers, Hack Inspectors, and limited enforcement personnel) with additional use-of-force options for gaining compliance of resistant or aggressive individuals in arrest and other enforcement situations. It is the policy of the Department that employees use OC spray when warranted, but only in accordance with the guidelines and procedures set forth here and, in the Department's, use-of-force policy contained in Police Directive 10.32.

The purpose of this Directive is to establish procedures and provide guidelines for the carrying and use of OC spray and by employees of this Department.

7.2.02 DEFINITIONS

Limited-Enforcement Personnel - Employees who have been granted restricted authority under city and/or state code to enforce certain laws or ordinances. Parking Enforcement Officers, Tag Enforcement Officers and Animal Control Officers fall within this category and may enforce only those laws or ordinances specified within their job

descriptions. **Limited enforcement personnel are authorized to carry OC spray for defensive use only. All provisions of this directive apply to any such use.**

Oleoresin Capsicum – Otherwise known as OC spray or pepper spray, it is an organically based non-lethal weapon designed to temporarily incapacitate humans or animals. Subjects are generally incapacitated for approximately twenty minutes, with total recovery within forty-five minutes. Classified as an inflammatory agent, it causes swelling of mucous membranes, closing of the eyes, uncontrollable coughing, gagging, gasping for breath, and sensation of intense burning of the skin and mucous membranes inside the nose and mouth.

7.2.03 TRAINING AND USE

- A.** Authorized personnel must have been issued a copy, and have received training on, this directive and Police Directive 10.32 Use of Force. They must have successfully completed the Department's recognized course of instruction for the use of OC Spray and demonstrated a proficiency in its use. Documentation of such issuance and training will be kept in the appropriate files in the Property and Evidence Section, and Personnel and Training Division, respectively. **[4.3.4]**
- B.** All authorized Field Operations Bureau uniformed personnel, below the rank of lieutenant, will carry the standard OC spray canister (SabreRed #52H2O1010, stream, 1.6oz). All other authorized personnel will have the choice of carrying either the above standard issue canister, or the smaller plainclothes version canister (SabreRed #52H2ONY-BK, stream, 69oz.).
- C.** In-service training for employees carrying OC spray will occur at least biennially. **[4.3.3]**
- D.** OC spray is an option available for authorized employees to control the escalation of violent behavior of persons subject to arrest or dangerous animals. It is not intended to replace the firearm, expandable baton, PR-24 Baton, or other accepted control techniques. OC spray may be used to effect or maintain a lawful arrest under the following conditions:
1. The employee's physical presence and/or verbal commands are ineffective and the use of more substantial measures (physical control holds, impact weapons) are imminent.
 2. The person to be arrested is not in the employee's physical control and poses a physical threat to themselves, the employee, or others.

3. When considering use of OC spray the employee should consider the level of force being confronted, the proximity of the subject to the employee and whether the use is justified.
 4. OC spray will not be used to remove people who lock or barricade themselves in vehicles without the approval of a sergeant or higher rank. OC spray will not be used to remove people who lock or barricade themselves in buildings (residences, businesses, or outbuildings), nor for crowd control during incidents of civil unrest, without the approval of a lieutenant or higher rank. Commanders and supervisors will ensure that innocent people are not unnecessarily exposed to OC spray in these circumstances.
 5. OC spray will not be used against a handcuffed person unless the person in handcuffs is actively attempting to escape or is using or threatening the use of physical force against the officer or a third party.
- E. When OC spray is used, it SHALL NOT *intentionally* be deployed into the eyes, nose, or mouth, but at the brow (pain-compliance), to minimize risk of injury.
- F. Any person who is directly exposed to OC spray resulting from police employee action will be examined by a paramedic from the Fire Department. The effects of OC spray are generally immediate and temporary, and usually dissipate within 45 minutes. Further medical attention will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the attending paramedic. **[4.1.5]**
- F. Any person who demands additional medical attention after being released by the attending paramedic will be taken to a hospital for examination. The person will be advised prior to taking them to the hospital that this transportation is a courtesy, that payment for any treatment rendered is their own responsibility, and that they may file a claim with the city's risk manager if they choose to do so.
- G. To ensure that all authorized employees have current OC spray, the Property and Evidence Section will reissue OC spray *upon the expiration date printed on the OC canister*. This is not intended to prohibit authorized personnel from being issued OC spray as needed because of use or damage.
- H. Under the following conditions, OC spray may be used to induce an arrestee to relinquish illegal drugs that have been placed in their mouth.
1. When an officer has seen the subject place material, which the officer has reason to believe is drugs, in the subject's mouth, or
 2. The officer has reason to believe the subject is hiding drugs in their mouth, or
 3. The subject refuses the officer's verbal order to spit out or otherwise produce the drugs.

- I. If feasible, OC spray may be used against an animal exhibiting aggressive or threatening behavior towards an officer or a third party, before a higher level of force is used. The officer should advise the owner of the animal, if present, that if he or she cannot or will not control the animal and if it continues to threaten the officer or a third party, it will be sprayed. The owner should also be advised that if he or she is in close proximity to the animal when sprayed, he or she could be subject to the effects of the OC as well. If the OC spray is not effective on the animal, the officer may have to act in accordance with Police Directive 10.32 Use of Force.

7.2.04. REPORTING THE USE OF OC SPRAY

A. Employee Responsibilities

As soon as possible, but within one hour of being involved in any use of OC spray, an employee will verbally notify an on-duty supervisor. [4.2.1,c]

B. Supervisor Responsibilities

The employee's immediate supervisor or an on-duty supervisor will respond to the scene and investigate all incidents involving the use of OC Spray in accordance with Police Directive 10.32.08 (B).

C. Commander Responsibilities

All commanders will ensure that the incident was thoroughly investigated *in accordance with Police Directive 10.32.08 (B)*, and that a recommendation for appropriate remedial action, if necessary, is documented. The package will then be forwarded to the *Chief of Police through OEAPR*. [4.2.2]

7.2.05 CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- A. OC spray canisters should not be stored in vehicles for extended periods of time since aerosol canisters may burst if exposed to temperatures in excess of 120 degrees for prolonged periods.
- B. Canisters exposed to temperatures below 32 degrees for extended periods may produce a slower than normal discharge.
- C. Canisters should be shaken frequently to ensure that contents do not become separated.

- D. Employees should give the highest consideration to storing their OC spray canister in a secure manner when off-duty.
- E. After any use, the OC spray canister will be weighed to see if enough content remains to be field capable. The standard issue (SabreRed #52H2O1010, stream, 1.6 oz.) weighs 69 grams when shipped and will weigh 29 grams when empty. Whenever the standard canister weighs less than 45 grams, it should be replaced. The smaller plainclothes version (SabreRed #52H2ONY-BK, stream, .69oz.) contains only five (5) one second bursts. It should be replaced after any field use.
- G. Any expended canisters must be turned in to the Property and Evidence Section prior to any re-issue of the same type canister.
- H. Upon receipt by Property, previously issued OC Spray canisters will be retained for re-issue based on the following guidelines:
 - Standard (SabreRed #52H2O1010) retain and re-issue if more than 60 grams.
 - Plainclothes (SabreRed #52H2ONY-BK) retain and re-issue if more than 40 grams.
- I. All turned in canisters will be re-issued, prior to any new canisters being taken out of inventory.

By Authority Of:

**Michael L. Brown
Chief of Police**