



October 18,2021

Director Andrew Myerberg
Office of Police Accountability
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Director Myerberg,

Please see the below Management Recommendation response

Case Numbers:

2020OPA-0419 / 2021COMP-0005
2020OPA-0495 / 2021COMP-0017

Topic:

Use of Force – Blast Balls

Summary of the Management Action:

The complainant alleged SPD officers deployed blast balls at a peaceful crowd.

Original Recommendation:

Modify the blast balls policy to prohibit the following:

1. Deploying blast balls directly into crowds unless individuals in those crowds pose a direct threat of harm to officers. A direct threat cannot be established simply because a crowd is not complying with an order to disperse.
2. Deploying blast balls directly at a person's body or in a manner that creates a likelihood that a person could be struck unless to prevent imminent serious bodily harm or death.
3. Deploying blast balls overhand unless to prevent imminent serious bodily harm or death.

Action Taken:

Seattle Police Department revised both the Crowd Management, Intervention and Control Policy 14.90 and the Use of Force – Weapons and Tools Policy 8.300 in April of 2021. Specifically, in regards to Less Lethal Tools (blast balls) the following:

- Officers may use Blast Balls only when such force is objectively reasonable, necessary and proportional to protect against a specific imminent threat of harm to officers or identifiable others or to respond to specific acts of violence or destruction of property [8.300-POL-9(3)]
- When feasible, Officer will direct blast balls toward an open space near the person(s) engaged in the threats of harm or actions of violence or property destruction.
 - Officers will avoid directing blast balls towards persons who are not posing a risk to public safety or property.
 - Absent a threat of serious imminent physical harm, officers will avoid deploying a blast ball in a manner that would have significant likelihood of striking a person directly. [8.300-POL-9(4)]



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- The preferred method of blast ball deployment is low deployment (“bowling style”). Officers may use a high deployment (“overhand throw”) when the need for a farther deployment or the need to get around an obstruction outweighs the risk created by the separating sub-munition. Officers must document their deployment method and the reasoning for using such in their use of force report. Such deployments will be highly scrutinized. [8.300-POL-9(4)]

SPD Considers this Management Action:

Fully Implemented

Please contact me if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'ADZ'.

Adrian Z. Diaz
Chief of Police