



U.S. Department of the Interior  
 National Park Service  
 United States Park Police

# General Order 3605



## Less-Lethal Weapons

### Notes

This General Order replaces GO 3605 – Defensive Equipment.

### Referenced DOI Policies

- 446 DM 20 – Use of Force
- 446 DM 22 – Electronic Control Devices

### Referenced USPP Policies

- G.O. 3211 – Evidence/Found Property
- G.O. 3600 – Response to Resistance and Use of Force Standards
- G.O. 3604 – Documenting Use of Force Incidents
- GM – Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure
- GM – Evidence and Found Property
- GM – Use of Force Investigations



### Referenced NPS Directives

N/A

### Referenced USPP Forms

N/A

Authorized by

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 Chief of Police

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## Authority

The Chief of Police is authorized to manage the United States Park Police by [145 DM 10 – United States Park Police](#) and to issue policies in the form of General Orders pursuant to [245 DM 2 – Trial Boards, United States Park Police](#), as delegated by [Director’s Order #9: Law Enforcement Program](#), and in alignment with [NPS Management Policies \(2006\), Section 8.3](#).

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## I. Policy

The law enforcement officers (LEOs) of the United States Park Police may, when objectively reasonable, consider the use of less-lethal weapons and techniques to protect themselves or others from immediate physical harm, restrain or subdue an individual who is actively resisting or evading arrest, or bring an unlawful situation safely under control.

## II. Purpose

This General Order establishes directives, procedures, and guidance for the issuance, accountability, and use of less-lethal weapons as well as post-incident procedures in accordance with 446 DM 20 – Use of Force, 446 DM 22 – Electronic Control Devices, and G.O. 3600 – Response to Resistance and Use of Force Standards.

## III. Definitions

- A. **Baton:** An expandable straight or side handle style weapon used as a leverage tool for control tactics or to block or strike. A baton is considered deployed when swung in the direction of, or with the intent to contact, a person.
- B. **Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW):** A less-lethal weapon primarily designed to disrupt a subject's central nervous system by means of deploying electrical energy sufficient to cause neuromuscular incapacitation (NMI).
  - 1. **Deployment of a CEW:** Firing a CEW's launchable probes in the direction of a person or contacting a person with the CEW.
  - 2. **Application of a CEW:** Energizing the CEW's probes in an effort to achieve neuromuscular incapacitation (NMI) or to overcome active resistance.
- C. **CS (O-Chlorobenzylidene Malonitrile):** A chemical agent that causes irritation to the eyes, mouth, throat, lungs, and skin.
- D. **Exigent Circumstances:** For the purposes of this General Order, circumstances that would cause an objectively reasonable LEO to believe

that a particular action is necessary to prevent physical harm to an individual, the destruction of relevant evidence, the escape of a suspect, or some other consequence that might lead to an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death.

- E. **Less-Lethal Force:** Any use of force that does not create a substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury and is not intended to cause death or serious bodily injury.
- F. **Less-Lethal Launcher:** A less-lethal weapon system designed to launch a less-lethal munition.
- G. **Less-Lethal Munitions:** Weapons fired from a less-lethal launcher that are designed to incapacitate, distract, disorient, or any combination thereof by use of chemical agent and/or direct impact.
- H. **Less-Lethal Weapon:** An instrument or device designed or intended to be used in a manner not likely to create a substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, conducted energy weapons, impact weapons, natural irritants, and chemical agents. These are also commonly referred to as “intermediate force” or “less-than-lethal” weapons or devices.
- I. **Neuromuscular Incapacitation (NMI):** The motor-nerve stimulation of the skeletal muscles that occurs when electrical pulses temporarily interfere with the command and control systems of the body.
- J. **Oleoresin Capsicum (OC):** A natural inflammatory agent derived from the pepper plant that, when aerosolized, causes an almost immediate swelling of the eyes and breathing passages and intense burning sensation of the eyes, throat, and affected areas of the skin.
- K. **Serious Bodily Injury:** As defined by 446 DM 20 – A serious bodily injury is any bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, unconsciousness, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

- L. Use of Force: The intentional application by law enforcement of any weapon, instrument, device, or physical power in order to control, restrain, or overcome the resistance, or gain compliance or custody of another.

#### IV. General Provisions

- A. LEOs shall comply with G.O. 3600 and related policies and written guidance in the use of all less-lethal weapons and shall follow the procedures in G.O. 3604 – Documenting Use of Force Incidents to meet all reporting requirements.
- B. Only government issued less-lethal weapons are authorized to be carried or worn while on duty in addition to the authorized duty weapon.
- C. All uniformed LEOs reasonably expected to be in contact with the public or involved in law enforcement activities shall carry OC spray, a baton, and a CEW (if issued and authorized to carry a CEW) on their person.  
  
Note: LEOs involved in helicopter operations within the aircraft (e.g., SWAT, Aviation Unit) are excepted from this requirement.
- D. Non-uniformed LEOs reasonably expected to be in contact with the public or involved in law enforcement activities may carry at least one less-lethal weapon (OC spray, baton, or CEW) on their person as determined by their unit commander. Unit commanders or supervisors may determine that LEOs conducting undercover operations or otherwise authorized to wear plainclothes while on duty may not be required to carry any less-lethal weapons in the commander's or supervisor's discretion.
- E. LEOs shall be responsible for the proper care of their assigned less-lethal weapons while carried and while stored, and they shall ensure that they are securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.
- F. The directives in Section V. Procedures apply to all less-lethal weapons. Additional procedures for specific weapons can be found in the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Batons
- Appendix B: Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray
- Appendix C: Less-Lethal Launchers and Munitions
- Appendix D: Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs)
- Appendix E: CS (O-Chlorobenzylidene Malonitrile)

## V. Procedures

- A. Use of a less-lethal weapon is considered a use of force, and therefore must be in compliance with G.O. 3600, to include but not be limited to the issuance of feasible warnings, considerations in using force, and other requirements as listed in G.O. 3600.
- B. Each use of a less-lethal weapon must be objectively reasonable and LEOs must be able to articulate the facts and circumstances that warranted each application of force.
- C. Following application of a less-lethal weapon and when safe to do so, LEOs shall perform each of the following actions.
  1. Gain compliance and apply effective control.
  2. Ensure that the scene is safe and secure.
  3. Determine the need to render first aid consistent with training, if applicable, for any subject(s) who are injured or complain of an injury.
  4. Notify their supervisor and the Shift Commander's Office or Field Office equivalent.
  5. Request emergency medical services respond to the scene for those individuals that require or request medical treatment other than first aid and/or transportation to a medical treatment facility.

Note: LEOs are reminded of the importance of respecting human dignity and privacy, taking steps to avoid embarrassment, and

preserving confidentiality regarding the subject's medical treatment.

- D. If feasible, responding supervisors shall ensure photographs are taken of any injuries, impact site(s), or any other evidence related to the deployment of a less-lethal weapon.
- E. If the use of a less-lethal weapon results in an injury, the less-lethal weapon shall be collected and preserved as evidence in accordance with GM – Use of Force Investigations and G.O. 3211 – Evidence/Found Property.
- F. LEOs shall inspect each carried less-lethal weapon before the start of each shift to ensure that they are functional and in good working order.
- G. All less-lethal weapons are the property of the federal government of the United States. LEOs are accountable for their less-lethal weapons and must report any loss of, damage to, or malfunction of a less-lethal weapon to a supervisor as soon as practical as required by [Director's Order #44: Personal Property Management](#) and the [Personal Property Management Handbook # 44](#).
- H. When a LEO reports the loss, damage, or malfunction of any less-lethal weapon other than an expired OC spray, the following actions must be taken.
  - 1. Supervisors shall notify the Shift Commander and make arrangements for the LEO to secure and receive a replacement weapon as soon as practical.
  - 2. Supervisors shall document the circumstances of the lost, damaged, or malfunctioning weapon in the Records Management System (RMS).

## VI. Training

- A. Prior to being authorized to carry less-lethal weapons, LEOs shall receive training and demonstrate proficiency with the specific weapon and on

USPP use of force policies and applicable state and federal case and statutory laws.

- B. This training shall be conducted by a qualified instructor.
- C. For weapons that require recurring training/certification, LEOs shall be current on their training/certification requirements.
- D. LEOs who fail to demonstrate proficiency with less-lethal weapons shall have their ability to carry the weapon suspended until such a time as they can demonstrate the required proficiency.

## VII. Change Log

On April 28, 2026, the following was added to Section IV.C. “Note: LEOs involved in helicopter operations within the aircraft (e.g., SWAT, Aviation Unit) are excepted from this requirement.”

## Appendix A: Batons

A. All uniformed LEOs shall carry their USPP-issued baton while in contact with the public or involved in law enforcement activities.

B. Target Areas

Batons should be used in a manner consistent with training to result in achieving the intended goal while not causing unreasonable harm, by contacting pressure points, nerve centers, and any other area where the bones are close to the skin, especially the limbs.

C. Body Areas to be Avoided

The following are considered potentially fatal impact spots and shall not be intentionally targeted with a baton unless deadly force is justified, consistent with GO 3600, and such targeting is necessary to neutralize the imminent danger.

1. Head
2. Neck
3. Spine
4. The lower back and kidneys
5. Groin
6. The sternum area (e.g., solar or celiac plexus)

## Appendix B: Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray

- A. OC spray shall be carried in the USPP-issued holder.
- B. LEOs authorized to carry and use OC spray shall inspect the expiration date listed on the OC spray canister to ensure that it is current at the beginning of every shift.
  - 1. LEOs are prohibited from carrying and using any expired OC spray canisters.
  - 2. LEOs with an expired OC spray canister(s) shall immediately remove the canister(s) from service and obtain a new replacement canister from the USPP Property Management Office.

### C. Additional Post-Deployment Procedures

Following deployment of OC spray and after initiating the post-deployment procedures outlined in Section V., LEOs shall take the following actions and initiate appropriate decontamination procedures consistent with training for any individual(s) that have been exposed to OC spray.

- 1. Initial Response and Subject Care
  - a. When an individual has been sprayed with an OC agent, they must be monitored and reassured that the effects are temporary.
  - b. Instruct the person to remain calm, relax, and breathe normally.
  - c. The individual should not be allowed to lie on their side or stomach, as this position could cause asphyxiation.
  - d. An individual who has been exposed to an OC agent must be transported in an upright, seated position to facilitate breathing.

2. Decontamination Procedures
  - a. Move the individual to an area with uncontaminated air and position them facing into the wind, if possible.
  - b. If available, cool water provides the most rapid relief from the effects of the OC agent and the person should be permitted to rinse the agent from their face and flush their eyes; if the person is necessarily handcuffed, the LEO should offer to rinse the agent from their face and flush their eyes.
  - c. If the individual is wearing contact lenses, the person should be permitted to remove the lenses, and the LEO should offer to assist them in removing the lenses.
  - d. The affected area should not be rubbed, as this will increase irritation and spread the agent.
  - e. The use of warm or hot water must be avoided, as it may open skin pores and intensify the effects.
  - f. Washing the affected skin areas with soap and water will expedite recovery by removing the resin.
  - g. Any skin still wet from the OC agent must be air- or pat-dried prior to transport to prevent contamination of the transporting LEO(s).
3. Post-Incident and Medical Actions
  - a. LEOs are required to offer assistance to any bystander who advises they are suffering from the effects of the OC agent when it is reasonably safe to do so.
  - b. If a LEO deploys an OC agent on a person who subsequently experiences injury, a medical emergency, or death, the OC container shall be treated as evidence and relinquished to the appropriate investigator, ID technician, or supervisor.

- c. All symptoms are expected to subside within fifteen (15) to forty-five (45) minutes with no aftereffects. If subjects do not recover within the expected time frame of forty-five (45) minutes, or if they complain of any continued or worsening effects of OC spray, LEOs shall request emergency medical services respond to the scene for appropriate medical treatment and/or transportation to a medical treatment facility.
- D. LEOs exposed to OC spray – to include the LEO who deployed the OC spray – who experience an adverse reaction shall receive medical treatment and thereafter submit a report in the Safety Management Information System (SMIS).

## Appendix C: Less-Lethal Launchers and Munitions

- A. Only LEOs who have successfully completed all required training and have approval from their Division Commander are authorized to carry and use less-lethal launchers.
- B. LEOs shall treat less-lethal launchers with the same care and caution as weapons loaded with conventional munitions (e.g., pistols, shotguns).
- C. LEOs who deploy less-lethal munitions shall document both the number and type of munitions (e.g., chemical agent, impact only, or combined) they use as required by G.O. 3604.
- D. LEOs utilizing any less-lethal launcher system shall ensure that the proper munition is used based on the tactical needs of the situation.
- E. When practicable, LEOs shall communicate to other LEOs and the subject that they are about to discharge a less-lethal launcher prior to its use, or clearly and audibly announce the same to LEOs in the immediate area unless exigent circumstances prevent this from occurring.
- F. Prohibited Uses
  - 1. LEOs shall not intentionally target sensitive areas (e.g., head, neck, genitalia) unless deadly force is justified, and such targeting is necessary to neutralize the imminent danger.
  - 2. Unless articulable exigent circumstances exist that might lead to an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death, less-lethal launchers should not be used when the LEO believes the use of a less-lethal launcher may result in secondary injuries, including but not limited to the following situations:
    - a. The subject may fall from a significant height.
    - b. The subject is operating a moving vehicle or machinery.
    - c. The subject is in or near a body of water which presents a risk of drowning.

- d. The subject is believed to be at an increased risk for secondary injuries (e.g., the very young, the very old, the infirm, or the pregnant).
- e. The subject is handcuffed or otherwise secured.
- f. On or in an open wound if the LEO has knowledge of the open wound.

## Appendix D: Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW) Procedures

### A. Storage of CEW

1. LEOs shall ensure that CEWs and cartridges are safeguarded at all times and take appropriate action to ensure that they are kept out of the reach of children and other unauthorized persons and to impede theft.
2. When the CEW and cartridges are not being carried on their person or within their immediate control, LEOs shall secure their CEWs and cartridges in locked containers that prevent access by unauthorized persons.
3. CEWs shall not be stored in a vehicle except temporarily when secure storage in a building is unavailable.
4. Manufacturer recommendations for long-term storage of the CEW shall be followed.

### B. Carrying the CEW

1. The CEW may be carried on either the duty belt or the external vest carrier on the support side of the body, i.e., the side opposite the firearm.
2. Both a weak-side straight draw (drawing with the non-dominant hand) and a cross-draw (drawing with the dominant hand across the body) are acceptable methods of drawing the CEW.

### C. Pre-CEW Deployment

1. LEOs shall conduct a functionality test (also known as a “spark test”) and a visual and physical inspection of the issued CEW, holster, and cartridges at the beginning of each shift, and thereafter following any deployment, to ensure the weapon is functioning properly.
2. Any CEW that fails a functionality test shall be taken out of service and reported to a supervisor immediately.

3. The strength of the power source shall be checked at the beginning of each shift. The power source shall be replenished when it is below 20% power.
4. The CEW shall be carried with an inserted cartridge, power source in place, and with the safety on.
5. LEOs shall be issued at least one (1) spare cartridge as a back-up in case of cartridge failure, the need for reapplication, or in case the first cartridge's leads break during engagement. Spare cartridges shall be stored and carried in a manner consistent with training, and the cartridges replaced consistent with the manufacturer's expiration requirements.
6. Only battery-powered sources recommended by the manufacturer shall be used in the CEW.

D. Deployment

1. When feasible and necessary, LEOs shall warn the intended subject and other people nearby that a CEW is going to be deployed, unless doing so would place any person at risk. Warnings will be in the form of verbalization and display or visual stimulus (e.g., aiming the laser, electrical arcing). See G.O. 3604 for display reporting requirements.
2. Upon deploying the CEW, a LEO shall energize the probes to achieve neuromuscular incapacitation (NMI) or to overcome active resistance. Each application of the CEW must be justified by continuous active resistance and objectively reasonable.
3. In determining the need for additional applications of CEW cycles, LEOs should be aware that a subject experiencing NMI may be unable to immediately respond to verbal commands.
4. Multiple applications of a CEW cannot be justified solely on the grounds that a subject fails to comply with a command, absent other indications that the subject poses an immediate threat to

LEOs or others. Each application of a CEW must meet the use of force standards articulated in G.O. 3600.

E. Prohibited Uses

1. LEOs shall not intentionally target sensitive areas (e.g., head, neck, genitalia) unless deadly force is justified, and such targeting is necessary to neutralize the imminent danger.
2. Unless articulable exigent circumstances exist that might lead to an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death, CEWs should not be used when the LEO believes the use of a CEW may result in secondary injuries, including but not limited to the following situations:
  - a. The subject may fall from a significant height.
  - b. The subject is operating a moving vehicle or machinery.
  - c. The subject is in or near a body of water which presents a risk of drowning.
  - d. The subject is believed to be contaminated by or otherwise near flammable or explosive materials.
  - e. The subject is believed to be at an increased risk for secondary injuries (e.g., the very young, the very old, the infirm, or the pregnant).
  - f. The subject is handcuffed or otherwise secured.
3. CEWS shall never be used for the following:
  - a. To rouse unconscious, impaired, or intoxicated individuals.
  - b. As a prod or escort device.
  - c. For horseplay, experimentation, or in an unprofessional manner.
  - d. To punish, coerce, torture, or retaliate against an individual.

- e. To elicit statements.
  - f. In any other manner not prescribed by law, regulation, or DOI policy.
- F. Post-deployment Procedures
- 1. Medical Care of Subjects
    - a. Subjects that have received a CEW application must be monitored while in custody even if they have received medical care.
    - b. Notification of the CEW application must accompany the subject until the subject is released from USPP custody, including notifying an outside law enforcement agency (to include jails or other detention facilities) receiving the subject into custody.
    - c. Subjects shall be taken to an emergency care facility in the following situations:
      - i. Where the probe penetrated sensitive tissue areas (such as the groin, eye, female breast, face, or neck).
      - ii. The subject is believed to be at heightened risk for injury (e.g., pregnancy, excited delirium, elderly or very young, under the influence of drugs, known relevant medical conditions, etc.)
      - iii. The subject has been exposed to three (3) or more CEW cycles, or more than fifteen (15) seconds total of CEW deployment. Medical professionals conducting the examination must be made aware of the total exposure to the CEW.
      - iv. As determined by the LEO who deployed the CEW, or that LEO's supervisor, or medical professionals in the field.

2. Probe Removal
  - a. Normally, LEOs may remove the probes from subjects once they have been restrained, according to probe removal training guidelines.
  - b. Probes shall be considered a sharp-object biohazard and be photographed, preserved, and retained as evidence pursuant to the procedures in GM – Evidence.
  - c. While removing probes, LEOs shall follow universal precautions to avoid transfer of body fluids. See GM – Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure and Infection Control Plan.
  - d. Probes should be inspected to ensure that they are intact following removal from a subject.
3. Evidence Collection
  - a. Once the subject has been controlled, and the need for medical care has been evaluated, LEOs will collect all evidence resulting from CEW deployment. Whenever feasible, the following items will be secured as evidence:
    - i. CEW probes
    - ii. CEW cartridges
    - iii. CEW wires
  - b. When feasible, photographs or body worn camera recordings should be taken of a subject who has been subjected to the deployment of the CEW. The photographs or recordings should include the area struck by the probe or drive stun and any area alleged by the subject to be injured. When taken, the photographs or recordings shall be attached to the report in the RMS and booked into evidence. LEOs should exercise care and good judgment related to subject's privacy interest before capturing

images and limit the taking of photographs or recordings to only those areas needed to document the incident.

G. CEW Data, Reporting, and Review

1. All CEW deployments, except for training purposes, shall be promptly documented and reported to supervisors. This includes unintentional and negligent discharges.
2. After a CEW has been deployed, LEOs shall present the CEW to a certified CEW program manager for a data download.
3. CEW download shall be completed as soon as practical but must occur within three (3) working days. If the CEW's data cannot be downloaded within three (3) working days, it shall be removed from service until its data can be downloaded.
4. The Employee Development Office (EDO) shall review the downloaded CEW data on a quarterly basis for all CEWs in use, as well as after every deployment generating a use of force report.

H. CEW Training

1. OWD shall develop training requirements that reflect the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) CEW basic training curricula or the manufacturer's basic training curricula. Training curricula must include:
  - a. Operational procedures
  - b. Medical components of CEW use
  - c. Minimum standards for a qualification course of fire
  - d. Use of force policy
  - e. Differences in function (e.g., duration of cycle, optimal probe spread, etc.) if more than one model is used
2. CEW recertification shall occur at least annually and consist of:
  - a. Weapon functionality and weapon retention

- b. CEW drawing proficiency
  - c. Current policy including any changes
  - d. Technology updates
  - e. Medical updates
  - f. Reviews of court rulings
  - g. Training based on realistic, high-risk, and judgement-based scenarios
3. Except for LEOs in instructor-level training, where exposure to CEWs may be required for certification, LEOs shall not receive exposure to CEW application as part of any training curriculum.
  4. Supervisors and training instructors shall regularly review CEW deployments, both intentional and unintentional, and regularly revise training curricula to address deficiencies.
- I. CEW Lifecycle Management
1. CEW shall be acquired and controlled by USPP with strict accountability.
    - a. CEWs shall be accounted for as property in the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS).
    - b. CEWs shall be subject to annual inventory requirements.
    - c. Obsolete CEWs shall be permanently disabled and disposed of consistent with USPP and/or NPS property management guidelines.
  2. CEWs are issued to individual LEOs and shall not be shared.
  3. Like other electronic items, CEWs are perishable items requiring recurring replacement. Replacement shall be based on the manufacturer’s recommendation.

## Appendix E: CS (O-Chlorobenzylidene Malonitrile)

- A. The Chief of Police (or their designee, when such delegation is made in writing) is the only USPP official who can authorize the use of CS.
- B. Only members of the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) and members of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Unit may deploy CS and only once authorized. Deploying CS is a use of force, regardless of any confirmed exposure or injury, and its deployment shall be documented in accordance with GO 3604.
- C. Unless exigent circumstances exist, CS shall only be deployed after:
  - 1. Warnings have been issued to all present LEOs and other emergency responders that CS is about to be deployed.
  - 2. All LEOs in the area are equipped with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) or have had a chance to move to a safe distance away from the area of deployment.
- D. LEOs exposed to CS who have an adverse reaction shall submit a report in the Safety Management Information System (SMIS).
- E. CS dispensers shall be worn in the following manner:
  - 1. Large dispenser: carried head down in the issued case, which is attached to the uniform belt.
  - 2. Small dispenser:
    - a. Clipped to the inside pocket of the blouse or carried in its case and attached to the uniform belt.
    - b. Worn in an inconspicuous manner and readily available for use when worn with civilian clothes.
- F. LEOs shall make every reasonable attempt to avoid using CS in the following manners:
  - 1. Discharge of CS directly into the eyes.

2. Discharge of large quantities of CS at a person not responding to normal applications.
  3. Discharge of CS in a confined space, such as a small room or closed automobile.
  4. Discharge of CS in the immediate vicinity of an infant since an infant's respiratory system is especially sensitive to irritating vapors.
- G. LEOs shall immediately report deployment of CS in any of the manners described in Section F to their supervisor, and the LEO must articulate all relevant facts regarding the deployment in that manner.
- H. LEOs shall offer assistance to any bystanders who are experiencing the effects of the CS when it is feasible and safe to do so. To the extent possible, an individual exposed to CS shall be treated in the following manner:
1. Flush the contaminated area for 3 to 4 minutes with plain cold water.
  2. Keep the contaminated area exposed to fresh air.
  3. Do not apply oil, grease, or similar agents that could trap the irritant and cause skin blisters.
  4. If pain continues after the above procedures are followed, LEOs shall seek medical attention for the affected bystander.
- I. LEOs shall ensure that an assigned CS dispenser is replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or upon depletion or damage.
- J. LEOs are strictly prohibited from carrying or transporting CS on commercial aircraft.