

SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Carmen Best

DATE: 05/31/2020

FROM: Assistant Chief Tom Mahaffey, Patrol Operations
Captain Matt Allen, West Precinct

SUBJECT: Policy 8.300 – POL (5) and POL 11(13) – 40 mm Launcher and Policy 8.300 – POL 5

For the following reasons, Patrol seeks a time-limited authorization to permit the use of CS canisters consistent with Policy 8.300 – POL 5 (OC Spray). Additionally, Patrol seeks an exemption from Policy 8.300 – POL 11 (13) to permit officers who are trained, certified, and issued a 40-mm launcher to deploy with their issued equipment and use in a manner otherwise consistent with policy during upcoming anticipated crowd management events.

During a protest event last evening, numerous individuals disrupted an otherwise peaceful planned event in response to the tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis Police Officer. These individuals, who appeared to be unaffiliated with the peaceful march, assaulted officers, set fire to police and citizen vehicles, smashed windows of and looted numerous businesses throughout the downtown core, and otherwise caused extensive mayhem and property damage. Consistent with department policies that govern the use of force during crowd management events, SPD officers attempted to disperse the crowd using less-lethal munitions on hand, including blast balls and OC spray. As a result of the magnitude of last night's event, both Patrol and SWAT are both now largely depleted of these less-lethal munitions.

Due to these equipment shortages, should it become necessary under the circumstances, **Patrol proposes to utilize CS canisters to disperse crowds in a manner otherwise consistent with Policy 8.300-POL 5, governing the use of OC spray.** Because this policy does not specifically address CS canisters, authorization is required.

A risk of using CS canisters is the potential for individuals in the crowd to pick up the burning canisters and throw them back at police, deeper into a crowd, or into buildings or vehicles. In such situations, where an individual appears intent on procuring a deployed canister, a 40-mm launcher provides a less-lethal option for targeted intervention. Currently under policy, only SWAT is authorized to use 40-mm launchers during crowd management events. Based on the geographic spread of last night's events, the potential that SWAT will not be in the area or otherwise occupied, and given the potential imminence of needing to intercede in scenarios such as that described above, Patrol requests an exemption from Policy 8.300 – POL 11(13) to permit officers who are trained, certified, and issued a 40-mm launcher to utilize it during crowd management events in a manner otherwise consistent with policy.

Patrol asks that the authorization and exemption stated here remain in place for 14 days or until Patrol determines that it has sufficient standard issue less-lethal devices on hand to manage events such as took place last evening, if earlier.

Approved: Carmen Best

Carmen Best
Chief of Police