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“Department Training Bulletins shall be used to advise members of current police techniques and procedures and shall constitute official policy.”

Safety in Reality Based Training

Introduction

Reality Based Training uses realistic training scenarios similar to those an officer encounters on duty. It incorporates all force options outlined in the Oakland Police Department's General Order K-3, *Use of Force*, and teaches an officer how to and tests his/her ability to select the appropriate force for a situation under stress conditions.

As part of Reality Based Training, the Department uses Marking Cartridges. This Training Bulletin provides instruction for using Marking Cartridges in Academy, SWAT, Canine, In-Service, Patrol Rifle, and other Specialized Unit training exercises.

Equipment

Marking Cartridges

FX Marking Cartridges are lead primer, gun-powder encased, dye-filled capsules that resemble bullets. The dye in these capsules is 55% water and 5% ethylene glycol; the rest is a soap compound. Marking Cartridges are loaded into magazines and inserted into a regular duty firearm converted to fire the capsules or into a specifically designed firearm which fires marking cartridges only.

A dye-filled round travels approximately 400 feet per second and has an average accuracy of 6 inches at 25 yards. The dye-filled round has a maximum range of 145 yards. Because of its speed, a round can cause a welt on exposed skin. Should it strike exposed skin close to a bone, the skin can break open.

The ability of a dye-filled round to cause pain provides realism to the training and leads to the association of pain with tactical, unsafe decisions.

The firearms used in Reality Based Training are, in most cases, the same firearms officers carry on duty. Because firearms are used, a potential for danger exists, and officers follow strict safety protocols at all times.



Simunition FX Marking Cartridges

Simunitions is the brand name of the Non-Lethal FX Marking Cartridge used in the Department's Reality Based Training programs.

Simunitions also sells lethal ammunition and, in fact, has only two products that are non lethal, FX Marking Cartridges and Secruiblack, which do not shoot any projectiles. All other ammunition sold by Simunitions is lethal ammunition and strictly prohibited from use in Reality Based Training.

Conversion Kits and Marking Cartridge Specific Weapons

Pistols

The Department uses Glock 17TFXD pistols specifically designed to fire Simunition FX Marking Cartridges.

These weapons are identical to the Department issued Glock model 22, except for the blue colored lower receiver and blue colored magazine floor plate. These firearms do not accept a 9mm, 40 or 45 caliber live round. These weapons fit into the duty issued Safariland 070 and 070-5 holster.

Revolvers

Revolvers are fitted with inhibitor rings, which prohibit the loading of live ammunition into the revolvers' cylinders

Submachine Guns

Simunition conversion kits are used for MPS submachine guns and are recognizable only by the barrel extension located on the front of the weapon muzzle.

AR15 Carbines

AR 15 carbine rifles converted for Marking Cartridges have the upper receiver replaced by a Marking Cartridge bolt assembly and barrel, which is colored blue. These converted weapons accept a regular magazine but do not fire a live .223 caliber or 5.56 mm round. The magazine used for the converted carbine is a clear-plastic, box-fed magazine, which accepts FX Marking Cartridges only.

Shotguns

Shotguns are converted by the insertion of a barrel inhibitor, which restricts the chambering of a live round of shotgun ammunition. FX Marking Cartridges are inserted into a plastic hull, which acts as a shotgun shell. The hull is white and is distinguishable from a live shotgun shell.



Safety Equipment

In order to minimize injury, all officers with Marking Cartridges shall wear protective/safety equipment. The following list of safety equipment is mandatory for personnel near or training with Marking Cartridges:

Eye and Face Protection

Personnel shall wear:

- Eye protection rated ANSI Z 87.1.
- Face/head protection that prevents the Marking Cartridge from striking the front and side of the head and ears.

Throat Protection

Officers wear a throat protector to protect the throat and neck from injury.

Groin Protection

All personnel at a training site involved in training with Marking Cartridges shall wear a groin protector. This requirement applies to males, females, observers, role-players, and instructors.

Recommended Protection

It is recommended that officers undergoing Reality Based Training consider the use of the following:

- Gloves
- Long sleeve shirts to protect the arms
- Body armor for added protection and realism
- Long pants

Because the noise from the FX Marking Cartridge is not loud enough to damage hearing, hearing protection is not necessary.



Safety Protocols

In order to safely conduct Reality Based Training using Marking Cartridges, officers perform the duties detailed below. Although specified officers have defined responsibilities, any student participating in Reality Based Training may call a cease action during a training session should he or she witness any safety issue that requires immediate attention.

Training Safety Officer (TSO)

The Training Safety Officer (TSO) is responsible for the overall safety of a Reality Based Training exercise. He/she shall:

- Inspect all weapons, ammunition, protective equipment, safe and un-safe zones, and staging areas.
- Conduct safety loops (defined below) with the Officer In Charge; (OIC) and declare when a training scenario begins and ends.

The TSO has final say in all safety matters.

Officer-in-Charge (OIC)

The Officer-in-Charge (OIC) conducts the training. The OIC

- Checks the training area to ensure that it is safe for the particular type of training conducted.
- Briefs the students and role-players and positions all personnel in locations beneficial to meeting training objectives.
- Conducts safety loops in conjunction with the TSO.
- Checks the students to ensure that all protective equipment is properly worn and weapons are in place before the start of the scenario.
- Asks the TSO for permission to begin and end each scenario.

At the conclusion of each scenario, the OIC shall ensure:

- All training equipment is accounted for, and
- Each person is present before officers remove their protective equipment

The OIC shall ask the TSO to formally declare the site safe to remove face protection for the training de-briefing.



Role-Player

The Role-Player is an integral part of Reality Based Training. The Role-Player is briefed by the OIC and must adhere strictly to the role he or she is assigned.

The Role-Player is not to ad-lib unless he/she is given specific instructions by the OIC and then only in a manner which assists in achieving training objectives.

The OIC is responsible for providing the Role-Player with any props or Marking Cartridge weapons required for the scene.

Additional Personnel

The OIC is responsible for determining the roles and placing of any additional personnel attending Reality Based Training.

Additional personnel are required to wear distinguishing clothing, such as high visibility safety vests so they are not mistaken for role players.

Additional personnel might include a camera operator, command staff and visitors, and/or evaluators and additional instructors.

Students

Unless the student has a reported injury, he/she must participate in Reality Based Training. Students who have objections to the training and refuse to participate are to report to the In-Service Training Sergeant. Should the In-Service Sergeant not be available, the student reports to the Recruit Training Sergeant. Should the Recruit Training Sergeant not be available, the student reports to the Training Lieutenant.

If the Training Division cannot resolve a matter, it is forwarded up the student's chain of command, where a finding is made regarding the student's failure to participate in training.

Training Areas

During Reality Based Training with Marking Cartridges, officers take special precaution not to introduce live weapons into a training area.

Although Marking Cartridges, in themselves, have not caused death, officers have lost their lives because mistakes in safety protocol occurred and live weapons with live ammunition were mistakenly brought into a supposedly safe area.

The results were tragic incidents in which officers were killed by fellow officers shooting them with live ammunition.

When using Marking Cartridges during Reality Based Training, staff shall identify three distinct areas and activate the appropriate safety protocols in each area to provide safe training.



Unsafe Area

An Unsafe Area is all unchecked areas not associated with the training and staging locations. These are areas where the students typically are free to move about with a live weapon. An Unsafe Area should not be easily accessible to the Staging and Safe Areas.

Staging Area

The Staging area is the area where the students, instructors, role-players and all other personnel meet and receive the TSO and OIC brief.

No live ammunition or weapons are allowed in the Staging Area.

Before entering the Staging Area, all personnel shall pass three safety checks:

- 1) Self Search: The student checks himself/herself for prohibited items.
- 2) Buddy Search: Students search each other after checking themselves.
- 3) TSO Search: TSO searches OIC and the OIC searches the TSO, who then searches all personnel entering the staging area.

Once inside the Staging Area, any personnel who leave must be re-searched by the TSO before re-entry is allowed.

Safe Area

The Safe Area is the area where the training takes place. As in the Staging Area, **no live weapons or ammunition is allowed.**

Within the Safe Area, students are armed only with non-lethal ammunition and converted Marking Cartridge weapons systems as well as inert O.C. and non-injury impact weapons.

Wooden batons, asps, and knives are prohibited.

Tasers are allowed as long as the air cartridge is removed.

Inert Taser air cartridges are allowed only after being inspected by the TSO.

A Safe Area is selected using the following criteria:

- **Controlled Accessibility:** Access in and out of the Safe Area must be safeguarded in order to prevent unprotected or armed personnel from accidentally entering.
- **Containment:** Marking Cartridges used must impact within the safe area should the shooter miss an intended target.



Safety Loops

Safety Loop Procedure with TSO and OIC

The OIC and TSO shall perform safety inspections of the training area, students, role-players, and additional personnel. The OIC performs the first inspection and is followed by the TSO, who double checks the inspection done by the OIC. This manner of double checking is referred to as a Safety Loop.

The following steps describe the Safety Loop followed by the OIC and TSO.

1. In the Staging Area, the OIC inspects the students and ensures that students are suited up and have all safety equipment in place except for their face protection. The OIC presents the students to the TSO for inspection.
2. While the TSO inspects the students, the OIC goes to the Safe Area and inspects role-players and any personnel in the Safe Area to ensure they have all safety equipment in place
3. The OIC returns to the students and asks the TSO permission to go "HOT."
4. The TSO goes to the Safety Area and inspects all personal in the Safety Area, ensuring that they have all their safety equipment in place.

If all pass inspection, the TSO instructs the role-players to load the Simunition weapons and to stand-by for the scenario to begin.

5. The TSO returns to the student's location.
6. Upon seeing the return of the TSO, the OIC instructs the students to put on their helmets, inspects the helmets to ensure that they are properly fastened, and checks that throat and groin protectors are in place.
7. The TSO checks the helmets, and when satisfied, calls the range HOT.

The TSO makes this declaration known to the role-players also.

8. The TSO issues the weapons and has the students load and holster. The TSO advises the OIC that he/she may begin training.

The OIC begins the training.

NOTE: Based on the OIC lesson plan, weapons may be passed out prior to this step. In the event that students have already been issued weapons, weapons must remain in the holster and unloaded until the TSO commands students to load their weapons.



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9. As the students leave the Staging Area, the TSO and/or OIC maintains visual contact with the students to ensure that no live weapons are introduced into the Safe Area.

NOTE: Once students are inside the Safe Area, they may be sequestered in a waiting area while the OIC or TSO makes adjustments to the scene or gives additional information to the role-players. Students also can be sequestered to be trained individually.

10. Once the training scenario has ended, the OIC shall declare a cease fire and direct all students and role-players and any additional persons in the Safe Area to come to the sound of the OIC's voice.

Once there, the OIC shall:

- Count the number of facilitators, role-players, students, and observers to ensure all are present
- Count the number of weapons and ensures that all weapons, including the role players, are accounted for
- Once all participants are present and weapons accounted for, the OIC asks the TSO for permission to go COLD
- The TSO counts bodies and weapons and, once all are accounted for, declares the range COLD. Participants may now remove facemasks.

The OIC conducts a brief of the scenario and, if he/she chooses, continues training by repeating the aforementioned Safety Protocols.

Safety Loop Procedure When TSO is also the OIC

In the event the lack of personnel requires the TSO to also be the OIC, the TSO/OIC will conduct a safety loop in the following manner:

1. In the Staging Area, the TSO/OIC ensures that students are suited up except for their face protection.
2. The TSO/OIC leaves the students and goes to the Safe Area and inspects role-players and any personnel in the Safe Area and instructs the role-players to load their Simunitions weapons and stand by.
3. The TSO/OIC returns to the student's location. The TSO/OIC instructs the students to put on their helmets and inspects the helmets to ensure they are properly fastened and throat and groin protectors are in place. When satisfied, the TSO/OIC calls the range HOT, making this declaration known to all participants, including the role-players.



4. The TSO/OIC issues the weapons, has the students load and holster the weapons, and begins training.

NOTE: Based on the lesson plan, weapons may be passed out prior to this step. In the event that the students have already had weapons issued to them, weapons must remain in the holster and unloaded until the command from the TSO/OIC is given to load the weapons.

5. As the students leave the Staging Area, the TSO/OIC keeps visual contact with the students to ensure that no live weapons are introduced into the Safe Area.

NOTE: Once students are inside the Safe Area, they may be sequestered in a waiting area while the TSO/OIC makes adjustments to the scene or gives additional information to the role-players. The students can also be sequestered separately so that they are trained individually one at a time.

6. Once the training scenario has ended, the TSO/OIC declares a ceasefire and requests that all students, role-players, and any additional persons in the Safe Area come to the sound of the TSO/OIC's voice. Once there, the TSO/OIC performs the following steps:

- Counts the number of role-players and students to ensure all are present
- Counts the number of weapons to ensure that all weapons are accounted for, including the weapons of role players

7. The TSO/OIC declares the range COLD; it is safe to remove facemasks.

Rendering the Weapon Safe

At the conclusion of training, the TSO ensures all Simunition weapons are rendered safe using the standard three-step safety process taught in the Oakland Police Academy and In-Service Training. All magazines are accounted for and ammunition is unloaded at the direction and supervision of the TSO.

Certified Trainers

All TSOs and OICs must pass an OPD Safety Certification Course put on by the Training Division.

A Simunitions certified instructor who has received an OPD safety certification teaches the certification course.

The Safety Certification earned by a TSO or OIC is current for three years. The officer must participate as a TSO in at least three training sessions a year in order to maintain proficiency and stay current with Reality Based Training scenarios.



Safety Certification Course

The curriculum for the Safety Certification includes the following training:

- OIC and TSO certification
- Safety loop instruction
- Methods of instruction
- Simunitions product training (conversion kits, ammo, safety equipment etc.)
- Lesson plan development and Reality Based Training scenario design

Once an officer has received safety certification, he/she may act as an OIC in his/her field of expertise or as a TSO for any Department Reality Based Training session.

All Department training involving the use of Simunition equipment must be approved by the In-Service Firearms Training Unit and include a lesson plan detailing the course of training.