

WOONSOCKET POLICE DEPARTMENT

THOMAS F. OATES, III
CHIEF OF POLICE



TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	310.02	7/19/2022	7/19/2022
SUBJECT		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
O.C. Spray		11/28/2016	
ACCREDITATION		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA Standards: 1.3.4, 1.3.5, 1.3.10, 1.3.11, 1.3.12 RIPAC Standards: 2.9, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 2.18, 2.19, 2.21		9/3/2020, 6/13/2022, 6/13/2024	
INDEX		DISTRIBUTION	
Chapter		All Personnel	

OLEORESIN CAPSICUM (OC) SPRAY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to minimize injury to department members and arrestees using Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) as an approved chemical substance.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Woonsocket Police Department to equip and train appropriate persons in the use of OC spray as a less-lethal weapon. When an officer determines that a subject(s) will not comply with verbal commands to submit to an arrest or indicates aggressive intent by other means, they are authorized to use Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray against the person(s), consistent with their training.

III. DEFINITIONS

Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray: A less lethal aerosol spray containing a solution of OC, a derivative of hot peppers, which affects the mucous membrane, eyes, and respiratory system.

Authorized Department Members: This may include full-time, sworn officers, or as authorized by the Chief of Police or designee.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. PARAMETERS

1. Where lethal force is not authorized, officers should assess the incident to determine which less-lethal force option will best de-escalate the incident and bring it under control in a safe manner.
2. Department members shall only use that force that is objectively reasonable to accomplish lawful objectives per *General Order 300.01 Response to Resistance*. [*RI 2.9*](#)
3. Police officers are authorized to use department-approved Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray to accomplish lawful objectives, as follows:
 - a. To protect themselves or another from physical harm;
 - b. To restrain or subdue a resistant individual; and
 - c. To bring an unlawful situation safely and effectively under control.
4. OC spray will not be employed by officers:
 - a. When such use will result in direct exposure to innocent bystanders or other police officers, except when the safety of the officer is in jeopardy;
 - b. If the aerosol spray could be ignited by a flame or electrical charge;
 - c. If the officer has not received certified approved training.

B. TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. OC Spray
 - a. Sabre Red is the only OC spray authorized to be carried by members of the Woonsocket Police Department. [*RI 2.12\(a\)*](#)
 - b. Department members are authorized to carry OC only after receiving instruction and successful completion of course requirements including policy review.
 - c. Before being issued, a certified instructor shall inspect and approve all department OC. [*RI 2.12\(c\)*](#)
 - 1) OC spray will be replaced at the time of expiration or complete discharge.
 - 2) The replacement will be facilitated through the Training Officer.
 - d. During training, a certified instructor will perform a documented inspection of all OC canisters. [*RI 2.12\(e\)*](#) Defective or unsafe canisters shall be taken out of service and replaced. [*RI 2.12\(d\)*](#)
 - e. When not worn on the duty belt, OC shall be kept in a safe, secure location (i.e. locked patrol vehicle, locker, etc.) [*RI 2.12\(f\)*](#)

- f. OC spray shall be stored at normal room temperature and not near excessive heat or open flames.
- g. The department-issued OC is not authorized to be utilized as an off-duty weapon.

2. Training and Proficiency.

- a. At least biennially, each sworn officer is required to demonstrate proficiency with Woonsocket Police-approved OC spray which they are authorized to use. [RI 2.19\(c\)](#) Proficiency standards are established as follows:
 - 1) Attain minimum qualification requirements following performance standards as determined by current training doctrine, methods, or trends. [RI 2.18\(a\)](#)
 - 2) Being familiar with recognized safe-handling techniques. [RI 2.18\(c\)](#)
 - 3) Knowledge of department directives on the use of less-lethal force options. [RI 2.18\(b\)](#)
 - 4) The program of instruction will be conducted by a qualified instructor who has achieved and maintained certification in the use of chemical agents.
- b. The Training Officer will maintain training documentation to include lesson plans, attendance sheets, and proficiency records.
- c. Officers requiring remedial training will be given personal instruction on the subject matter by a certified instructor who will document the session and provide a subsequent opportunity to achieve proficiency standards. [RI 2.19\(d\)](#)
- d. Remedial training will be provided, and proficiency standards satisfied before an officer is authorized to carry OC spray.

- 3. The Training Lieutenant shall issue and maintain an inventory of all department-issued OC spray. [RI 2.12\(b\)](#)

C. DELIVERY OF OC SPRAY

- 1. OC spray is an aerosol spray, which emits a stream and is propelled for a distance of several feet in calm conditions. The normal reactionary gap is four (4) to six (6) feet from the subject; however, there is no required minimum distance at which it can be used.
- 2. OC spray must be sprayed directly into the subject's face. A one (1) to two (2) second burst is sufficient to disable the most determined attacker. Once resistance from the attacker stops, the use of OC spray must stop. Once the individual is controlled, they should be ground stabilized and handcuffed.
- 3. If control is not gained with the use of OC spray, the officer must reevaluate the situation and either disengage or utilize another force option to meet the subject's resistance.

4. Officers must exercise caution when deciding to utilize OC spray to not contaminate fellow officers or bystanders. Officers must always warn fellow officers and bystanders before using OC spray.
5. If an innocent bystander should become contaminated, the officer should reassure the individual that the effects are only temporary and medical attention should be summoned. The officer should obtain data on such bystanders and include the data in their report.
6. OC spray is effective on subjects who are intoxicated, under the influence of narcotics or drugs, mentally unstable subjects, and animals.

D. USE OF OC SPRAY IN CELL BLOCK AND BOOKING/DETENTION AREA

1. OC spray may be employed upon a prisoner in a cell when the subject is behaving violently and injuring themselves and must be restrained.
2. When the cell is damaged or malfunctioned and the prisoner must be removed, due to them being physically violent and a danger to officers.
3. In all instances where an officer is present in the cell block and booking/detention area, the officer will be the primary person responsible for handling any confrontations with suspects and arrestees per *300.01 Response to Resistance Policy*.

E. AFTER THE USE CARE OF CONTAMINATED SUBJECT

1. An arrested person must be verbally reassured that they are safe and all right. They must be told to calm down, breathe normally, and obey all police directions and commands.
2. Once an individual has been controlled with OC and removed from the contaminated air, the officer should be sure that the individual is not wet with OC spray, otherwise, the officer or cruiser may be contaminated. Drying is very quick and normally occurs before the individual reaches the police cruiser. Once in the detention area, if aggressive behavior has stopped, allow the individual to splash cool water on their face to quicken recovery.
3. The Officer-in-Charge (OIC) or arresting officer will ensure that the contaminated subjects are monitored after arrival at the detention area to ensure the cessation of all symptoms.
4. If symptoms persist after 45 minutes, the OIC will ensure the subject receives medical treatment.
5. The OIC may acquire medical treatment at any time when it is believed the subject requires greater care than water irrigation.
6. Particular attention will be given to those subjects known to suffer from pulmonary disease, asthma, allergies, or other problems, which may be exacerbated by exposure.

F. SYMPTOMS OF OC CHEMICAL

1. Dilates the capillaries of the eyes causing immediate, temporary closing of the eyes.
2. Causes swelling of the mucous membranes of the respiratory system and induces temporary uncontrolled coughing, gasping, and gagging.
3. May induce temporary nausea.
4. Produce temporary loss of muscular strength and coordination.
5. Symptoms normally disappear in 30 to 40 minutes.

G. PROVIDING FIRST AID

Appropriate medical attention will be administered as needed and as soon as is practical in any use of force incident resulting in injury or allegation of injury. [RI 2.13](#)

H. REPORTING

1. In all cases where OC is used upon a person, a “Response to Resistance” form along with an incident report will be completed by the officer(s) implementing the use of force. [RI 2.14](#)
2. Administrative review of the use of force incidents: [RI 2.15](#)
 - a. All reported uses of force will be reviewed by the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) to determine whether at a minimum:
 - 1) Departmental rules, policies, or procedures were violated;
 - 2) The relevant policy was understandable and effective in covering the situation;
 - 3) If department training is currently adequate;
 - 4) If department equipment needs to be addressed.
 - b. All findings of deficiencies shall be reported to the appropriate unit for resolution and/or discipline.
3. All “Response to Resistance” reports will be retained as required by department policy and a documented annual analysis of those reports will be compiled by OPS. [RI 2.21](#)
4. This analysis shall, at a minimum, identify the following:
 - a. Date and time of incidents;
 - b. Types of encounters resulting in the use of force;
 - c. Trends or patterns related to race, age, and gender;
 - d. Trends or patterns resulting in injury to any person; and
 - e. Impact of findings on policies, practices, equipment, and training.
5. Each calendar year an annual summary report of this analysis will be made available to the public.

Per order,
Thomas F. Oates, III
Chief of Police

Written directives published within PowerDMS are in full force and effect on the referenced dates and have been approved by the Chief of Police