POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 400.2

Less Lethal Weapons and Restraints Guidelines

Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards:
1.1.4

Date Issued: April 13, 2007
Date Effective: September 4, 2026
Review Date: September 4, 2027 8 Pages

1. PURPOSE:

To establish Worcester Police Department (Department) guidelines for the carrying and use of authorized less lethal weapons, including chemical agents, impact weapons, kinetic impact devices, and conducted energy weapons, and of authorized restraints. The decision to use any less lethal weapon as a force option is governed by Policy 400 Use of Force. Nothing in this policy expands or limits the authority to use force set forth in Policy 400 Use of Force.

2. POLICY:

Officers shall use less lethal weapons only when de-escalation tactics have been attempted and failed or are not feasible based on the totality of the circumstances, and only to the extent the force used is necessary, proportionate, and objectively reasonable to accomplish a lawful objective, in accordance with Policy 400 Use of Force and M.G.L. c. 6E. The authorized use of any less lethal weapon ends when resistance ceases or the lawful objective has been accomplished.

This policy lists the less lethal weapons authorized by the Department, the personnel who may use each less lethal weapon, and the manner in which each less lethal weapon is used. The make, model, and specification of each authorized less lethal weapon and its munitions are listed and maintained in Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition. Noise flash diversionary devices, chemical munitions, and launcher-delivered less lethal munitions, and the personnel who may use them, are governed by Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition and, in a crowd or unlawful assembly setting, Policy 440 Crowd Control Response and Training. MPAC 1.1.4

No less lethal weapon shall ever be used as punishment or retaliation, for interrogation, for any unlawful purpose, or for horseplay.

3. DEFINITIONS:

Restraints: Handcuffs, flexible cuffs, and leg restraints, as authorized in Section 11 of this policy.

Drive-Stun Mode: The application of a conducted energy weapon directly against an individual without the deployment of probes, producing localized pain without neuromuscular incapacitation.

Probe Deployment Mode: The discharge of a conducted energy weapon so as to propel probes toward an individual, producing neuromuscular incapacitation.

The terms conducted energy weapon, electronic control weapon, kinetic impact device, oleoresin capsicum spray, tear gas, chemical weapon, passive resistance, force, deadly force, and serious bodily injury have the meanings set forth in Policy 400 Use of Force.

4. GENERAL PROVISIONS:

A. Only officers who have been trained and, where required, certified in a less lethal weapon are authorized to carry or use it. Authorization is contingent upon successful completion of all training, certification, and proficiency requirements, and may be revoked or suspended by the Chief of Police at any time.

B. Only less lethal weapons and munitions listed in Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition are authorized for use under this policy. Restraint devices authorized by this policy are addressed in Section 11.

C. Training, proficiency testing, remedial training, and training documentation for less lethal weapons are governed by Section IV.M of Policy 400 Use of Force. Conducted energy weapons carry an annual proficiency requirement. Impact weapons, kinetic impact devices, and oleoresin capsicum spray require training and proficiency testing at least every two years under a certified instructor.

D. Following any use of a less lethal weapon, officers shall provide an appropriate medical response in accordance with Section IV.H of Policy 400 Use of Force. Refusals of treatment shall be documented. Where warranted, the supervisor shall ensure that photographs of any visible injuries are taken, documented, and preserved.

E. The use of any less lethal weapon on or toward a person, including the pointing of a conducted energy weapon at a person and the use of oleoresin capsicum spray on or toward a person, is a reportable use of force and shall be documented and reported in accordance with Sections IV.N and IV.O of Policy 400 Use of Force.

F. An officer trained and qualified in a less lethal weapon has the right and the obligation to decline an order to deploy that weapon in an improper, illegal, or excessively dangerous manner.

G. The security, storage, and safe handling requirements for less lethal weapons, both on and off duty, are set forth in Section IV.K.6 of Policy 400 Use of Force, except where this policy imposes an additional weapon-specific requirement.

5. OLEORESIN CAPSICUM AEROSOL SPRAY:

A. Carrying. Oleoresin capsicum spray will be routinely carried by trained sworn officers in the performance of their duties. Officers shall carry only Department approved oleoresin capsicum spray and shall successfully complete the Department approved training program prior to being issued it.

B. Deployment. Oleoresin capsicum spray may be used only where de-escalation tactics have been attempted and failed or are not feasible based on the totality of the circumstances, and its use is necessary, proportionate, and objectively reasonable to effect a lawful arrest or detention, to prevent escape from custody, to prevent imminent harm, or to defend against an individual who initiates force against an officer, consistent with Policy 400 Use of Force. Oleoresin capsicum spray shall not be used against an individual engaged only in passive resistance, as defined in Policy 400 Use of Force.

C. Target Areas. The primary target areas for oleoresin capsicum spray are the face, eyes, nose, and mouth. Application shall be consistent with Department training.

D. An officer should exercise caution before using oleoresin capsicum spray where its use could reasonably and foreseeably cause a panic, when a person sprayed could walk into the path of oncoming traffic or fall from an elevated area, or in enclosed areas with closed ventilation systems.

E. Decontamination. After control has been established and resistance has ceased, the officer shall make reasonable efforts, as practical under the circumstances, to provide the affected person relief from the effects of the spray consistent with Department training. Such efforts may include removing the person to fresh air, keeping the person calm and informing them of the anticipated effects of exposure, and flushing the affected area with clean water or assisting the person in doing so. The officer shall arrange professional medical treatment unless the person is treated at the scene by qualified medical personnel.

6. SERVICE BATON AND EXPANDABLE BATON:

A. Authorization. Only the batons listed in Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition are authorized, and only for officers trained in their use. The large riot baton may be used only by officers who have been properly trained and only when authorized by an official who determines that a disturbance, riot, or tactical deployment situation may require it. Members of the Tactical Patrol Force may carry the tactical baton listed in Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition for tactical deployment situations after receiving additional training; upon leaving the Tactical Patrol Force, the officer shall return it and resume carrying a standard authorized baton.

B. Deployment. The baton may be used only where de-escalation tactics have been attempted and failed or are not feasible based on the totality of the circumstances, and only to the extent the force used is necessary, proportionate, and objectively reasonable, in accordance with Policy 400 Use of Force. Consistent with Department training, the baton may be used as a restraining or come-along tool, including armlock techniques; as a defensive tool to ward off strikes; and to deliver strikes to authorized target areas where necessary, proportionate, and objectively reasonable to prevent an imminent threat of bodily harm to the officer or another person.

C. Display. The baton should not be displayed or brandished as a threat unless its actual use in the situation would be proper. This does not prohibit an officer from having the baton readied, in a manner consistent with training, when it is reasonably anticipated that it may be required.

D. Target Areas. Baton strikes shall be directed to target areas consistent with Department training. Strikes to the head, neck, throat, and spine shall be carefully avoided. A baton strike

applied to a part of the body likely to cause death or serious bodily injury constitutes deadly force and is governed by the deadly force provisions of Policy 400 Use of Force.

E. Subsequent Strikes. Subsequent strikes may be delivered only where the subject continues to present a threat to the officer or another person. Use of the baton shall cease when resistance ceases or the subject is under control, after which the subject shall be monitored and provided medical attention in accordance with Section 4.D.

7. PEPPERBALL SYSTEM:

A. Authorization. Pepperball projectiles are plastic spheres filled with oleoresin capsicum that are delivered by an air-powered launching device and burst on impact. The system can deliver projectiles with sufficient kinetic energy to produce abrasions, bruises, and welts. Only the launching systems and projectiles listed in Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition are authorized, and only sworn officers trained and certified in the system are authorized to use it.

B. Saturation Deployment. Officers may use the system to deliver oleoresin capsicum to an area when the use of oleoresin capsicum is justified under Section 5.B but it is unsafe for an officer to approach the subject within contact range.

C. Direct Impact. Officers may use the system to directly impact a subject, as a kinetic impact device, when necessary, proportionate, and objectively reasonable to prevent an imminent threat of bodily harm to the officer or another person, and lesser options have failed, are not feasible, or would be obviously futile, consistent with Policy 400 Use of Force. Direct impact applied in a manner or to a part of the body likely to cause death or serious bodily injury constitutes deadly force.

D. Decontamination. Officers shall follow the decontamination requirements of Section 5.E.

8. CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPONS:

A. Authorization. Only sworn officers who have been trained and certified in the conducted energy weapon are authorized to carry, deploy, or discharge it. Prior to authorization, officers shall receive instruction and training on the device and its application under Policy 400 Use of Force, including familiarization with the manufacturer's product warning for law enforcement.

B. Carrying and Storage. The conducted energy weapon shall be carried fully armed with the safety on in preparation for immediate use when authorized. It shall be secured in its approved holster on the officer's support side, opposite the officer's firearm, in order to mitigate the risk of weapon confusion, and shall be drawn in a cross-draw manner. Conducted energy weapons stored at a Department facility shall be kept within authorized secured areas not accessible to the public. When off duty, officers shall secure the Department issued conducted energy weapon in a safe designed for the storage of a firearm and shall ensure that it is inaccessible to children and any other unauthorized person. Loading, unloading, and reloading shall be consistent with Department training, with the device pointed in a safe direction.

C. Deployment Standard. The conducted energy weapon, in either probe deployment or drive-stun mode, may be used only where de-escalation tactics have been attempted and failed or are not feasible based on the totality of the circumstances, and the deployment is necessary, proportionate, and objectively reasonable to effect a lawful arrest or detention, to prevent

escape from custody, to prevent imminent harm, or to defend against an individual who initiates force against an officer, consistent with Policy 400 Use of Force. The conducted energy weapon shall not be used against an individual engaged only in passive resistance, as defined in Policy 400 Use of Force.

D. Totality Factors. In assessing whether deployment is objectively reasonable, an officer may consider the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the suspected offense; the immediacy of any threat posed; the individual's access or proximity to weapons; disparities in size, strength, or number between the individual and the officers present; the availability and proximity of assisting officers; and the feasibility of lesser force options.

E. Warning and Target Areas. A verbal warning shall be given prior to deployment when feasible, consistent with Section IV.C of Policy 400 Use of Force, and a spark display should be used where appropriate. All deployments should be aimed shots using the device's laser aiming device. The preferred target area is below center mass or the legs. Officers should avoid the head, neck, and genitalia.

F. Multiple Deployments. Only one officer at a time should deploy probes against a person. Where a probe deployment is ineffective, subsequent probe deployments are authorized. Where the device is capable of deploying more than one cartridge, officers shall evaluate each cartridge deployment separately and shall not re-energize probes once the individual's resistance has ceased or the circumstances justifying deployment no longer exist. Where the device is ineffective in achieving the desired effect, officers should consider reloading and redeploying or using another authorized force option.

G. Duration. Officers should begin control and restraint procedures as soon as it is safe to do so in order to minimize the total duration of exertion and stress experienced by the subject.

H. Deployment Restrictions. Absent exigent circumstances, officers should avoid deploying the conducted energy weapon where there is a known presence of combustible vapors, liquids, or other flammable substances; against a person in control of a motor vehicle in motion, including automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, bicycles, and motorized scooters; where the person is in an elevated position or where a fall would otherwise likely cause substantial injury or death; against a person located in water; against a person known or believed to be pregnant; or against children, the elderly, the infirm, or other susceptible populations.

I. Medical Attention. Following any probe deployment, officers shall request emergency medical services to the scene. A person exposed to a probe deployment shall be transported to an emergency care facility for removal of the probes. Officers shall not remove probes in the field. A person exposed to a drive-stun deployment shall be transported to an emergency care facility if the deployment site shows obvious injury or if the person claims injury. All other medical response requirements of Section IV.H of Policy 400 Use of Force apply.

J. Evidence and Data. The assigned device number, the anti-felon identification number found on the cartridge, and the number of cycles shall be recorded in the officer's report. Deployed cartridges and, where practicable, probes shall be collected and submitted as evidence. Where probes have entered a sensitive soft tissue area, including above the neck or the genital area, the Crime Scene Unit shall be notified for photographs. Certified instructors shall download

and review the usage data stored in each device and shall submit a report of that data to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security at least twice each year.

K. Animals. The use of a conducted energy weapon against an animal is governed by Section IV.K.7.e of Policy 400 Use of Force.

9. KINETIC ENERGY IMPACT PROJECTILES AND THE LESS LETHAL SHOTGUN:

A. Authorization. Only trained and certified members of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team are authorized to deploy or discharge kinetic energy impact projectiles from the less lethal shotgun. Deployment in a crowd or unlawful assembly setting is further governed by Policy 440 Crowd Control Response and Training. Only the launching systems and projectiles listed in Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition are authorized. Any weapon dedicated to the launching of kinetic energy impact projectiles shall be visually distinguishable from weapons carrying lethal ammunition and shall be stored and issued in accordance with Section 4.G.

B. Deployment. Kinetic energy impact projectiles may be used when necessary, proportionate, and objectively reasonable to prevent an imminent threat of bodily harm to the officer or another person, and lesser options have failed, are not feasible, or would be obviously futile, consistent with Policy 400 Use of Force.

C. Aimed Shots Required. Each shot shall be aimed using the sights of the weapon. Random firing into crowds, firing from the hip, and any other deployment that does not involve a well-aimed shot are prohibited.

D. Target Areas. Kinetic energy impact projectiles shall be directed to target areas consistent with Department training. A projectile directed at a part of the body likely to cause death or serious bodily injury constitutes deadly force and is governed by the deadly force provisions of Policy 400 Use of Force.

E. Medical Attention. Officers shall render medical aid within their level of training when tactically feasible and shall request emergency medical services to the scene, in accordance with Section IV.H of Policy 400 Use of Force.

10. USE AGAINST CROWDS:

Officers shall not discharge or order the discharge of the Pepperball system, any kinetic impact device, rubber pellets, tear gas, or any other chemical weapon against a crowd, including at a mass demonstration, unless de-escalation tactics have been attempted and failed or are not feasible based on the totality of the circumstances, the measures used are necessary to prevent imminent harm, and the foreseeable harm inflicted is proportionate to the threat of imminent harm, all in accordance with Section IV.G of Policy 400 Use of Force and 555 CMR 6.00. A threat of property damage alone does not justify such a discharge.

Any such deployment requires the authorization of the Incident Commander or their designee. The personnel authorized to deploy each less lethal munition in a crowd or unlawful assembly setting are set forth in Policy 440 Crowd Control Response and Training. Any officer who utilizes or orders such a use against a crowd shall write a report detailing the facts and circumstances, including a detailed justification of why the use was objectively reasonable. Reporting of such incidents to the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training

Commission is governed by Section IV.N of Policy 400 Use of Force. The use of kettling is prohibited.

11. HANDCUFFS AND RESTRAINTS:

A. Authorized Restraints. Only handcuffs issued by the Department, or purchased by individual officers and meeting the specifications set forth in Policy 93 Authorized Weapons and Ammunition are authorized. Department issued flexible cuffs and Department issued leg restraints are also authorized. Flexible cuffs will only be used by officers involved in mass arrests, in situations where handcuffs are unavailable, or during incidents involving the Special Weapons and Tactical Team, the Tactical Patrol Force, or the execution of a search warrant.

B. Application. The use of restraints is mandatory on all detainees, unless in the officer's judgment unusual circumstances exist which make the use of restraints impossible or unnecessary. For purposes of this Section, a detainee is a person under arrest or otherwise in custody. The restraint of a person under investigative detention short of arrest is governed by subsection F. Where feasible, detainees should be handcuffed with hands behind the back in accordance with established standards. Metal handcuffs shall be double-locked after they are placed on the subject, when tactically feasible, to prevent tightening. All restraints shall be applied with caution. Restraints applied too loosely may permit escape or attack, and restraints applied too tightly may cause injury and be difficult to remove. Physically escorting or handcuffing an individual who offers minimal or no resistance does not constitute a use of force under Policy 400 Use of Force, but any injury shall be reported in accordance with Department policy.

C. Leg Restraints. Once restrained with handcuffs, a detainee shall not be further restrained unless the detainee continues to attempt injury to officers or other persons. Should this occur, leg restraints may be used. This limit does not apply to an arrested adult being transported from one facility to another, including from the holding facility, or being guarded at a medical facility; leg restraints in those settings are governed by Policy 701 Detainee Transportation & Guard Protocol. Applying leg restraints in those settings to a detainee who offers minimal or no resistance does not constitute a use of force under Policy 400 Use of Force. Leg restraints shall not be secured to a detainee's handcuffs in a hogtie fashion. At no time shall a detainee be hogtied.

D. Positioning and Breathing. The restrictions governing the positioning of an individual during restraint, the obstruction of an individual's airway, and the use of force against restrained individuals are set forth in Section IV.F of Policy 400 Use of Force and are not restated here.

E. Transport. The transportation of detainees, including the use of the patrol wagon and marked cruisers and the seating of transporting officers, is governed by Policy 701 Detainee Transportation & Guard Protocol. Handcuffing and restraint at the station shall be in accordance with Policy 700 Holding Facility and Detainee Processing.

F. Pre-Arrest Handcuffing. Officers may use a reasonable amount of force to effectuate an investigative detention. The force used shall be commensurate with the purpose of the stop and proportional to the degree of suspicion that prompted it. If the force used exceeds what is reasonably required under the circumstances, the seizure may rise to the level of an arrest, and if probable cause has not been established it may constitute an unreasonable seizure in violation

of the United States Constitution and the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights, leading to dismissal of charges and civil liability. The circumstances in which pre-arrest handcuffing is permissible are very limited, and officers shall be able to articulate all of the circumstances that contributed to the decision. Massachusetts cases permitting pre-arrest handcuffing have involved dangerous felonies very recently committed, accurate descriptions of the suspects or their vehicles, weapons believed to be in the possession of the subjects and used in the crime, and a reasonable belief that officers' lives could be in jeopardy, supported by factors such as the time of day, the location of the detention, and the number of officers and suspects present.

G. Medical Concerns. Officers shall monitor and evaluate the medical well-being of restrained subjects and shall be aware of conditions that have caused sudden death during and after the arrest process, including elevated body temperature; known cocaine or other drug use; impaired thinking, disorientation, hallucinations or delusions, or intense paranoia followed by violent or bizarre behavior; unusual strength and diminished sensitivity to pain; a known psychiatric patient not taking prescribed medication; an extended fight or period of active resistance; and the addition of alcohol to any of the above. If a subject exhibits two or more of these symptoms or actions, officers shall continue to monitor the subject and shall call for medical attention. When an officer believes an individual in custody has swallowed a controlled substance, emergency medical services shall be requested and the individual monitored until relieved by emergency medical services, in accordance with Section IV.H of Policy 400 Use of Force.

12. REPORTING:

All reporting of less lethal weapon uses shall be in accordance with Sections IV.N and IV.O of Policy 400 Use of Force, including supervisor notification, completion of the Use of Force Reporting Form, and Commission reporting where required. Whether a use of a less lethal weapon is a Serious Use of Force, and the review that follows, are governed by Policy 400 Use of Force Sections III and IV.O; incidents within the scope of Policy 501 Officer Involved Shootings, In-Custody Deaths and Serious Uses of Force are also governed by that policy.

Per:

Paul B. Saucier
Chief of Police

Revisions:

September 4, 2026–

Section 3: Removed the Active Resistance and Assaultive Conduct definitions. Sections 5.B, 6.B, 7.C, 8.C, and 9.B: Replaced the conduct-based deployment criteria for oleoresin capsicum spray, baton techniques, Pepperball direct impact, conducted energy weapons (one standard for probe and drive-stun modes), and kinetic energy impact projectiles with the de-escalation, necessity, proportionality, and objective reasonableness standard of 555 CMR 6.04(1) and Policy 400, Use of Force; baton strikes, Pepperball direct impact, and kinetic energy impact projectiles require an imminent threat of bodily harm to the officer or another person. Sections 5.B and 8.C: Added a prohibition on use against an individual engaged only in passive resistance. Section 8.D: Added totality-of-the-circumstances factors: offense severity, proximity to weapons, disparities in size, strength, or number, and availability of assisting officers. Section 8.E: Added the spark display as a warning measure. Section 8.F: Replaced the re-energizing limitation; probes shall not be re-energized once resistance has ceased or the circumstances justifying deployment no longer exist.

August 14, 2026–

New consolidated policy. Consolidates and supersedes Policy 400.1, Handcuffs and Restraints Guidelines (April 13, 2007); Policy 400.2, OC Aerosol Spray Guidelines (May 6, 2008); Policy 400.3, Service Baton/Expandable Baton Guidelines (April 13, 2007); Policy 400.4, Pepperball Guidelines (April 13, 2007); Policy 400.5, Conducted Energy Weapon (Taser) Guidelines (December 12, 2022); and Policy 400.6, Kinetic Energy Impact Projectiles Less-Lethal Shotgun Guidelines (April 13, 2007), placing all authorized less lethal weapons in one written directive as required by MPAC 1.1.4. Deployment criteria re-anchored to the de-escalation, necessity, proportionality, and objective reasonableness standards of Policy 400, Use of Force, and M.G.L. c. 6E; former five-level Use of Force Model references, the baton lesser-methods progression, and crowd deployment on threatened property damage alone removed; baton strikes limited to assaultive conduct and restraining and come-along techniques to active resistance. Crowd deployment conformed to 555 CMR 6.00 and Policy 400, Section IV.G, with authorization by the Incident Commander or designee consistent with Policy 440, Crowd Control Response and Training; kinetic energy impact projectiles limited to certified Special Weapons and Tactics Team members. Restraint positioning, medical response, weapons security and storage, training and proficiency, and reporting and review governed by Policy 400 by cross-reference; weapon, munition, and restraint specifications listed in Policy 93, Authorized Weapons and Ammunition; detainee transport and seating governed by Policy 701, Transportation of Detainees. Retained mandatory transport for probe removal and added an express requirement to request emergency medical services after any probe deployment. Removed the provision on an aerosol irritant used against an officer; self-defense is governed by Policy 400. Decontamination restored to permissive framing and made available to a restrained person. Restraints under Section 11.B limited to persons under arrest or in custody; restraint short of arrest governed by Section 11.F.

Original Issue Date: April 13, 2007