

205. USE OF FORCE: CHEMICAL AEROSOLS



RICHFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY

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NOTE: This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for the effective use of chemical aerosols. It will also explain procedures for providing first aid and decontaminating persons who have been sprayed with a chemical aerosol.

II. POLICY

Chemical aerosols are to be used in accordance with Department Policy #201 "Use of Force." When a chemical aerosol is used it is the responsibility of officers at the scene to provide first aid to all contaminated persons.

III. PROCEDURE

Chemical aerosols are just one of the tools available to officers in dealing with actively resisting persons. Annual training on the use of chemicals will familiarize officers with the advantages, disadvantages and considerations in using chemicals.

Only chemical aerosols issued by the Department are approved for use. It is recommended that the chemical be carried on the weak hand side of the utility belt.

Chemical aerosols have a range up to ten feet in distance. Chemical aerosols will be more accurate the closer the subject is to an officer.

The spray is a concentrated stream which should not affect other persons in the area of the target if others are not directly contacted by the chemical. However, in a closed area the chemical aerosol can affect others when the particles are inhaled. Therefore, officers should consider the presence of bystanders before using a chemical aerosol.

The most effective target area when dispersing a chemical aerosol is the eyes. This will have the fastest and most effective controlling potential in most circumstances. Any lachrymal glands, such as the nose and mouth, will also be affected quickly by chemicals.

As with any use of force technique, when possible, officers should use verbal commands before or in conjunction with the dispersal of a chemical aerosol. Clear, concise commands should be given to subjects, i.e. "Stop, turn around, and put your hands on top of your head or I will spray you with mace." Note: The term mace is used as a universal word which most people will understand.

Chemical aerosols may not be effective on all persons. Mentally ill and/or persons under the influence of a controlled substance or persons under the influence of controlled substances may not be affected by chemical aerosols.

The effects of a chemical aerosol will vary from person to person. Officers should always be aware of unusual reactions to chemical aerosols. If a person demands medical attention or the officer detects an unusual or severe reaction to the chemical aerosol, seek medical assistance for the person immediately by requesting Richfield Rescue, Hennepin County Ambulance.

Officers should be aware of common reactions to chemical aerosols. Chemical aerosols are most effective when the chemical is used on the facial area. When the face is contaminated there are common reactions to:

- 1) Burning sensation of the eyes and skin;
- 2) Respiratory discomfort;
- 3) Coughing;
- 4) Mucus drainage from nose.

There are several decontamination procedures for chemical aerosols that officers should perform as soon as possible after the incident is under control:


- 1) Remove the contaminated person to an uncontaminated area;
- 2) Take the person to a ventilated area, preferably outside and facing into the wind;
- 3) Run water over the contaminated area of the person;
- 4) Reassure the person the effects will be reduced by the actions you are taking.

At times it may be possible to use a water supply at the scene to begin decontamination. Richfield Rescue personnel also have water available.

In order to avoid re-contaminating the person, all outer clothing should be removed. A supply of disposable coveralls is kept in the booking room cabinets for use by prisoners. Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag and clearly marked, "Contaminated -- Chemical Aerosol."

Pursuant to MSS626.8452, officers will receive annual Use of Force training and instruction relative to weapons and equipment the officer is issued and/or authorized to use.

By Order Of:



Chief of Police