

**POLYCARBONATE SHIELDS FOR CROWD RESPONSES**

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I. PURPOSE

This directive outlines the use of Department-issued Polycarbonate Shields when deployed during a Department response to crowds, First Amendment assemblies, or civil disturbance incidents.

II. DEPARTMENT-ISSUED POLYCARBONATE SHIELD

- A. Due to the changing nature of crowd dynamics and crowd management practices, the Department continues to evaluate and seek equipment that provides sworn Department members with added protection while responding to crowds, First Amendment assemblies, or civil disturbances.
- B. The Department authorizes trained, sworn Department members to use Department-issued Polycarbonate Shields deployed within specialized units or from static locations when responding to crowds, First Amendment assemblies, or civil disturbances to maintain officer and public safety and to preserve public order.
 - 1. During incidents involving crowds, First Amendment assemblies, or civil disturbances, incident commanders and on-scene Department supervisors will consider the potential positive and negative impact of a significant display of a law enforcement presence, including the deployment of Polycarbonate Shields.
 - 2. Early or premature deployment of Polycarbonate Shields may contribute to an escalation of tensions in a crowd dynamic. Considerations should be made to stage the Polycarbonate Shields out of sight of the public but in close proximity to deployed officers until ready to be used.
- C. Only trained sworn Department members are **approved** to be issued, deploy with, and use a Polycarbonate Shield.
- D. Department members will only use Department-issued Polycarbonate Shields while on duty, consistent with the provisions outlined in this directive.
- E. **Shield Description**
 - 1. Polycarbonate Shields are cut from clear or transparent polycarbonate composite material which optimizes visibility and maneuverability and may vary in size, cut, thickness, and weight. The shields contain a built-in comfort-molded handle and are designed to be affixed to the non-dominant arm of the holder.
 - 2. The Polycarbonate Shield is a portable device and designed to be issued to members at the scene of an incident.
 - 3. The Department authorizes and provides two models of the Polycarbonate Shield that may be deployed by trained, sworn Department members:
 - a. An ambidextrous shield that is generally rectangular in shape, with a convex front (concave to the holder) curving to the sides of the holder. This shield is approximately .16" (4mm) thick, 36" (924mm) tall, and 19.5" (495mm) wide, weighing about 6.5 pounds.

- b. A mostly flat, generally rectangular shield that is approximately .16" (4mm) thick, 46.8" (1200mm) tall, and 22.5" (572mm) wide, weighing about 13 pounds (lbs). This shield has flanged edges along the long sides that can interlock. These shields are default for right-handed users (left-hand carry) and must be mechanically adjusted (with Philips screwdriver and adjustable wrench) if desired to be carried by left-handed users with their non-dominant/support arm (right-hand carry).

F. Shield Deployment

1. The Polycarbonate Shield is an effective tool to provide added cover and protect the public and sworn Department members from weaponless physical attacks or attacks with sharp-edged or impact weapons, including thrown projectiles (e.g., rocks, bricks, bottles), and allows additional resources the time to respond and counter a threat. The shields may also be deployed as an effective tool to restrict access to secure areas, prevent the breaching of a police line, protect members physically engaging or entering a crowd, or move and direct threatening, aggressive, or violent crowds.
2. Polycarbonate Shields may be deployed upon the approval of the incident commander or on-scene supervisor, either from a static location or as part of active crowd management and response tactics, when any of the following exist:
 - a. Individual(s) within a crowd are threatening or exhibiting aggressive or violent behavior causing a threat to public or officer safety, including when projectiles or weapons are being used against officers or members of the public;
 - b. There is a reasonable expectation aggressive behavior or violence is anticipated based on information obtained, verbal threats, or other crowd indicators;
 - c. There is a need to protect officers when physically engaging or entering a crowd to perform an arrest or other Field Force option related actions (e.g., separating a crowd to access, protect, and provide aid to an injured person); or
 - d. There is a need to provide a physical barrier to restrict access to secure areas or prevent the breaching of a police line.
3. While the Polycarbonate Shield provides obvious, physical protection to sworn Department members, it also increases their confidence in stressful and potentially volatile situations. The ability to maintain composure and a professional demeanor allows officers to remain disciplined and organized and facilitates sworn Department members making decisions that are lawful, constitutional, and commensurate with protections afforded by the First Amendment, consistent with the Department directive G02-02, titled "[First Amendment Rights](#)."
4. The Polycarbonate Shield is designed as a **defensive measure** to maintain officer and public safety and to preserve public order when responding to crowds, First Amendment assemblies, or civil disturbance incidents.
 - a. The Polycarbonate Shield(s) provides added protection for sworn Department members in a static line formation or while moving or redeploying.
 - b. The Polycarbonate Shield can be used as a defensive/protective measure while performing an arrest or other Field Force Option-related actions (e.g., separating a crowd with a wedge formation; or forming a crossbow arrest action).
 - c. When the Polycarbonate Shield is in direct contact with an individual(s), it can be used to redirect or move people as a limited, diffused energy technique, similar to the port arms push with a baton. Shield use in this manner will be accompanied by verbal direction, including instructions or warnings.

G. Shield Restrictions and Limitations

1. The Polycarbonate Shield **will NOT** be used in a "chopping" manner; the motion of using the bottom edge of the shield to "chop" at an individual, is also known as "blading."

REMINDER: The Polycarbonate Shield is a **defensive measure** to maintain officer and public safety and to preserve public order

2. Polycarbonate Shields are **NOT**:
 - a. Bullet-proof and **DO NOT** provide ballistic protection.
 - b. Sharp projectile (arrow) proof.
 - c. Unbreakable.
 - d. Fire-proof

H. **Shield Training.** During the training, sworn Department members will familiarize themselves with the Department-issued Polycarbonate Shield, including but not limited to the following:

1. Purpose of the Polycarbonate Shield.
2. Shield Description.
3. Deployment Considerations.
4. Limitations of the Polycarbonate Shield.
5. Polycarbonate Shield positions, including but not limited to:
 - a. Proper holding of the shield.
 - b. Grounded Shield.
 - c. Standing Shield "At Ease" position.
 - d. Ready Position.
 - e. Bracing the Shield.
 - f. Shield Wall "Tight Spacing."
6. Shield Retention Techniques.
7. Reporting of squad actions and responses, as it relates to the Polycarbonate Shield, including documentation of diffused energy techniques, similar to the port arms push with a baton, on the ICS-211 Incident Response form ([CPD-11.302](#)).

REMINDER: Department members are reminded that any use of an improvised impact weapon (e.g., any blunt object that can be used as an impact weapon) will be considered a baton-use incident. Department members will avoid the use of improvised impact weapons unless reasonably necessary and no other practical options are available and report the use of an improvised impact weapon consistent with the Department directive G03-02-07, titled "[Baton Use Incidents](#)."

III. DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES

- A. The Equipment and Supply Section, Office of Public Safety Administration, will maintain an inventory of authorized Department-issued Polycarbonate Shields and will:
 1. provide the initial issue of Polycarbonate Shields to authorized units;
 2. support units with additional or replacement shields for those that are reported lost, stolen, or damaged upon receipt of the appropriate reports approved through the chain of command; and

3. have a supply of Polycarbonate Shields available for Department use during pre-planned, large-scale deployments or a response to unplanned incidents involving crowds, First Amendment assemblies, or civil disturbances.
- B. District commanders/unit commanding officers will:
1. maintain and be accountable for their unit inventory of authorized Department-issued Polycarbonate Shields;
 2. establish procedures for the storage, maintenance, and distribution of Polycarbonate Shields;
 3. when appropriate, authorize the issuance of Polycarbonate Shields to specific members/assignments under their command for deployment; and
 4. when necessary, request additional or replacement Polycarbonate Shields by following the procedures outlined in the Department directive U05-02, titled "[Department Equipment and Property Control System](#)."
- C. Instructions for Polycarbonate Shields availability, distribution, and deployment for pre-planned events will be listed in the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Authenticated by MWK

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