DEFEND THE TERRITORY!

TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES FOR COUNTERING POLICE ASSAULTS ON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Communities that are effective in carrying out resistance will inevitably face some form of state repression, most often carried out by police forces. This text is intended as a review of tactics and techniques that have been used in countering police assaults on crowds and communities.

For police, these types of assaults are referred to as “public order” or “crowd control” operations. Communities targeted by such operations may face riot cops as well as armed tactical units, dog teams, armoured vehicles, the use of chemical agents and baton charges.


The most common target for police crowd control operations against Native peoples are blockades. This is because the blockade is highly effective as a form of direct action taken by communities defending their land and people.

While Native peoples in North America have a recent history of armed resistance (including Wounded Knee 1973, Oka 1990, and TePeten 1995), most communities do not typically engage in such actions. Most, however, do have the capability of carrying out blockades and other similar types of low-level direct actions. As corporations and government continue to relentlessly exploit and destroy the natural world, it is highly likely that such actions will increase in frequency in the future as communities act to defend themselves and their land.

Notes from US Army Counter-Mobility Operations manual

Barricade in Bangkok, Thailand, with tires, sharpened bamboo poles, and razor wire.

The US Army’s Field Manual on Countermobility Operations (FM 5-102) suggests various methods for denying enemy forces vehicular movement. These include destroying bridges, cratering roads, cutting trees (abatis), placing rubble or damaged vehicles on the roadway, digging anti-tank ditches, flooding, and the use of fire.

“The potential of expedient obstacles is almost unlimited. They place a great premium on imagination and ingenuity in the use of available materials and other resources, thus avoiding the logistic burden associated with all other types of obstacles. Their complexity depends upon the time and personnel available.

“By their nature, expedient obstacles substitute locally available materials and soldier labor for a logistical requirement. All that is needed is the imagination to recognize the potential of available materials.”

Build Obstacles in Depth

“A series of simple obstacles arranged one behind the other along a probable axis of enemy advance is far more effective than one large, elaborate obstacle. Restricting the design of obstacles to correspond with the strength of the existing obstacle (as previously discussed) helps to conserve effort and direct it toward executing obstacles in depth. Obstacles must not be located too close together so only a single enemy response is required. They must be far enough apart that each will require a new deployment of the enemy's counter obstacle forces and/or equipment. The distance between obstacles will depend on the terrain and the obstacle effort available. Proper use of obstacles in depth wears the enemy down and significantly increases the overall delay. At each new obstacle, he incurs losses and is forced to stop and react. This wearing down effect is psychologically significant. The desired effect is to degrade the enemy soldier's will and induce a feeling of hopelessness. This can be done by convincing him that, beyond each new obstacle (with its attendant loss of personnel and equipment), there awaits another obstacle with a similar cost; and, beyond that one, yet another, and so on. Another reason for using a greater number of less elaborate obstacles is that each one forces the enemy to expose his limited counter obstacle response to the attack. They must be far enough apart that each new obstacle (with its attendant loss of personnel and equipment), there awaits another obstacle with a similar cost; and, beyond that one, yet another, and so on. Another reason for using a greater number of less elaborate obstacles is that each new obstacle (with its attendant loss of personnel and equipment), there awaits another obstacle with a similar cost; and, beyond that one, yet another, and so on.
Vulnerability of transportation infrastructure

“Most of British Columbia’s scanty population live in a few urban centres, most notably, of course, in the extreme southwest of the province. This population is dependent on an attenuated transport system made up of a few major road and rail routes. The low-density population and the rugged terrain mean surprisingly few transport connections. At the same time, the provincial economy is still largely dependent on gaining access to increasingly isolated pockets of resources, such as timber. Vast amounts of usually unprocessed raw materials are then hauled out for delivery to distant export markets. The result is that the closure of one or two transport routes can have profound consequences. While many blockades have been on relatively minor routes, such as logging roads, a well-placed blockade on a major transport route can have dire consequences. Of special significance were the closures of the Duffey Lake Road in the summer of 1990 (which cut off the towns of Pemberton from the east and Lillooet from the west) and the Stolo [actually Pilalt of the Cheam band] blockade on the main CN rail line into Vancouver in 1993 (which cost CN around $3 million a day).

“The vulnerability of the transport system is further aggravated by the fact that many bottlenecks are tied to reserves, which are, as noted, the usual location for blockades. Not only are such transport corridors an obvious focus for First Nations, given their proximity and their strategic importance to the provincial infrastructure, but they are themselves a frequent source of irritation, given the presumptuous manner in which they were established. For example, temporary access routes, such as logging roads, can become so used by non-Natives that, over time, the assumption becomes that they are public rights of way, although access may, in law, be entirely at the discretion of a band council. Denied access by a blockade, aggrieved non-Natives may condemn Native actions as a violation of their right to travel when, in fact, they may themselves be in trespass. This was at issue, for example, in the dispute at Adams Lake in early 1995. (Nicholas Blomley, “Shut the province down,” p. 18, BC Studies, No. 111, Autumn 1996)"

Train blockades

“Rail lines are often the target of Native blockades. Again they are an easy target because they frequently bisect reserves. BC Rail lines, for example, run through or beside twenty reserves in British Columbia. The existence of such routes, and the process by which they were established, often remains a point of disagreement for generations, thus resulting in rail lines often being seen as legal sites of protest.” (Nicholas Blomley, “Shut the province down,” pp. 19-20, BC Studies, No. 111, Autumn 1996)

Mobility of Native blockades

Finally, blockades are not necessarily tied to an individual location but, on occasion, can be relocated, at least as long as a section of the transport corridor. This is especially the case given that, in most cases, a blockade is little more than a symbolic line marked, perhaps, by a flag or a number of warriors, and it distinguishes First Nations blockades from those that are necessarily tied to a specific site, such as the union picket.

“A striking, if somewhat unusual, example of this occurred between 24 July and 25 August 1990, when the Seton Lake, Fountain, Pavilion, and Mount Currie bands blockaded the BC Rail main line to show solidarity with the Mohawk at Oka and to air their grievances over unresolved land claims. The first rail blockade at Seton Portage was dismantled when it was reported that an RCMP riot squad was en route to the site, but it was then re-established at a Mount Currie location. The track was again blocked at Seton Portage, and an RCMP riot squad led to several arrests. This prompted the re-establishment of the blockade at Mount Currie, which, in turn, was dismantled when it was learned the police were en route. The Seton blockade was set up a third time; this time the only road access route to Seton Portage was also blockaded in order to prevent the RCMP from serving an injunction.” (Nicholas Blomley, “Shut the province down,” p. 21-24, BC Studies, No. 111, Autumn 1996)

“Lack of coordination can limit the abilities of police and intelligence agencies to gather information. Security is especially important for warriors who will be targeted by police during any defensive actions and who may face criminal charges for defending their land and people.”

We live in a high-tech society in which we are always vulnerable to surveillance. By using basic security measures, we can limit the abilities of police and intelligence agencies to gather information.


Internet: The Internet is a main source of intelligence for police. Posting your intentions on Facebook or other social media will help police identify you, track you, disrupt your activities, and create a pool of suspects present during an action. Cops also troll social media for photos and videos to use in investigations.

Cell phones: Some phone companies are tracking through the cellular network, enabling police to track your movements. Some phones also have built-in GPS that are even easier to track. Spyware can be covertly downloaded into cell phones, turning them into listening devices even when turned off. If you carry a cell phone during an action, and particularly when any sensitive discussions are occurring (such as planning or strategy, etc.), the battery should be removed. Some also advocate the phone itself be kept away from an area in which sensitive information is being discussed. Unless you need a cell phone for vital communications work, it may be best to leave it at home when participating in a defensive action.

Identity: The identities of warriors should be concealed during defensive actions. The main methods for doing this are by using code-names and wearing uniform clothing and masks.

Mask and Uniform

Warriors often wear a mask and uniform clothing to conceal their identity during an action. The most common uniforms worn are combat fatigues, usually in the US woodland camouflage pattern. But wearing combat and non-distinct civilian clothing with masks can also work (as in Kanesatake 2004).

The more uniform the clothing is among a group, the more difficult it can be for police to identify individuals.

A common tactic is to wear civilian clothing under an outer layer of clothing that can be quickly removed if it is necessary to escape a police containment (for example).

Masks are among the most controversial items of clothing worn by protesters and warriors alike. Police and politicians hate them because it makes it difficult to do surveillance of a crowd & identify individuals. Some reformists and pacifists condemn the mask as it threatens their media image. Nevertheless, masks are an important tactic for warriors that serve an essential defensive role.

The most effective mask covers the entire head, such as a balaclava or ski mask. Bandanas tied around the back of the head can become loose and slip down. A balaclava over just the lower face is not an effective disguise.

When putting on masks and clothing it is important to do so in a location that is not under surveillance, otherwise police may gain photos of individuals as they are preparing. This could then be used in court as a means of identifying a masked individual.

Masks and Legalizing

In 2013, new legislation was introduced in Canada criminalizing masks worn during an unlawful assembly or riot. A gathering must first be declared an “unlawful assembly” or a “riot” before putting on masks and clothing can be arrested and charged. The new law, entitled the Preventing Persons from Concealing Their Identities During Riots and Unlawful Assemblies Act, carried a maximum 5 year sentence for wearing a mask during an unlawful assembly, and 10 years for wearing one during a riot.

Despite this, it is not “illegal” to wear a mask during a protest, defensive action, or any public gathering. The only other criminal charge related to masking is Disguise with intent (part of Section 351 of the criminal code). Under this law, it must be proven that an individual had the intent to commit a specific criminal act (such as burglary).
Protective Gear for Chemical Agents

A minimum defence against chemical agents is the use of eye goggles and a covering over the nose and mouth (such as a bandana or mask). This is greatly improved with a filter mask in place of the bandana. The most effective protection against chemical agents is a military issue gas mask.

Goggles: Goggles vary from those used in swimming to skiing goggles or workshop type eye protection goggles. Swimming goggles and other types that form a tight barrier around the eyes, thereby keeping out chemical agents, also have a tendency to fog up. Those with small air holes along the side and top rim fog up less, but can allow small droplets of chemical agents into the eye area.

Bandana: Improved protection against tear gas has included goggels (the type that seal around the eyes and have no small air holes) along with a bandana soaked in a spray of vinegar in 2006. The bandana can be carried in Ziploc bags until needed. A bottle of apple-cider vinegar should be carried in a group, as the bandana can become dried out. Any piece of suitably sized cloth can be used in place of a bandana.

Filter mask: These are usually half face masks that cover the nose and mouth, with filters that can be replaced. They can be acquired from hardware and industrial supply stores, for uses such as aerosol painting, renovations, or jobs producing large amounts of dust. An average cost is $25. A recommended mask is the 3M half mask filter with a 100 filter (P100 is a recommended rating for CS, CN, and OC chemical agents). Goggles must be worn with a half face mask to protect the eyes.

Fresh air: The air which the chemicals travel through the filter mask is treated to remove chemical agents. The mask contains a filter that removes the chemicals.

Gas mask: The best type of protection against chemical agents is a full face gas mask, such as those found in military surplus stores or industrial supply stores.

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Common military gas masks available include the Canadian Forces issued C4 version (no longer in production), as well as Israeli civilian gas masks. Prices are usually around $50 or more for a military gas mask in surplus stores.

First Aid for chemical agents

Eye face wash: The most common and readily available treatment for chemical agents is flushing the eyes and face with water. A water bottle with a small cap and which is squeezable is recommended, as this produces a stronger stream of water. When flushing the eyes, the head should be tilted to the side so that contaminated water can flow off the face.

Street medic often use a diluted liquid antacid solution, usually Maalox. This is half water, half Maalox. It is placed in a squeezable bottle, and used in the same way as water.

Along with the eyes, it is also important to wash off any chemical agents that has landed on exposed skin. Failure to do so can result in blistering of the skin.

Sudecon is a decontamination wipe produced by Fox Labs (who also make pepper spray), often used by police and paramedics for CS, CN, and OC agents. It comes in a small foil pouch and opens to a towelette 8 x 12 inches in size. The manufacturer recommends two wipes be used per casualty, and claims to enable recovery after 7 to 15 minutes. A Sudecon wipe costs approx. $2 each.

Fexor produces an OC First Aid towelette that is similar to Sudecon.

Fresh air: The casualty should be removed from the area if possible, and preferably placed in a cool, windy location.

Decontamination: Any contaminated clothing and gear should be removed as soon as practical and placed in a garbage bag. Contaminated clothing can later be cleaned in a washing machine, while packs etc., can be scrubbed with soapy water. If this is not done, wherever the casualty and/or their gear goes will become contaminated with the chemical agent (such as vehicles, rooms, tents, etc). If possible, the casualty should also shower as soon as possible to remove chemical agents from the skin and hair.

Goggles with chemical filter mask.

Treating a pepper spray victim with diluted Maalox.

State Repression of Blockades

Unless there is an imminent emergency, or the pretext of one manufactured by police, blockades usually initiate a legal process by the group being blockaded (such as a logging or mining company, or a government agency). The legal process begins with the target group applying to the courts for an injunction ordering the removal of the blockade. This same legal process applies to occupations as well.

When a group applies for an injunction, it is common for the blockading group to file a counter-injunction to show why an injunction should not be issued. At times, the courts may refuse to issue an injunction if it can be shown that there is no imminent need for it to be re-opened, and negotiations may be recommended to end the dispute.

In the prelude to the 1990 Oka Crisis, there were months of injunctions and counter-injunctions applied for by the municipal government (who wanted to expand a golf course and condominium development) and Mohawks (who opposed the expansion and construction). Eventually the courts issued an injunction, which the SQ attempted to enforce on July 11.

When courts do issue an injunction, it is then up to the police and the courts to enforce it. Often, the police have some control over when and how the injunction will be enforced. It is common for police to try to delay enforcement action for several days as they mobilize a large enough force to dismantle the blockade if necessary. During this time, police will frequently use deception to convince the blockading group that no action is imminent.

Most police raids on blockades have occurred in the early morning hours. At Kamaseattle on July 11, 1990, the SQ raided the Pines at around 5:15 AM. The 2001 RCMP raid on a ten-day long blockade at Sutikalik occurred at 5:00 AM. During the Six Nations land reclamation in 2006, the OPP raided the blockade site at around 4:30 AM on April 20, despite explicitly stating the day prior that they had no intentions of taking enforcement action.

Some blockades, primarily those established by band councils, are handled as acts of ‘civil disobedience’ and are coordinated with the police. When the enforcement of an injunction occurs in these cases, there is usually a warning provided so that those not wishing to be arrested can move aside. Those who remain are then arrested and charged, usually with obstruction for disobeying the injunction.

In 1985, the Haida, largely under the direction of the band councils, erected a blockade against logging on Lyle Island. The courts issued an injunction against the blockade, and the enforcement action was carefully scripted with the police. Eventually 51 people were arrested. Most later had their charges dropped, and just 9 Haidas were convicted. They were each given 5 month conditional sentences (meaning no jail time).

In December 2001, the OPP arrested the participants of a blockade at Sutikalik, for example, during which 7 persons were arrested by a large paramilitary RCMP operation. They were charged under Section 423 (1) (g) of the Criminal Code of Canada of using intimidation by blocking a highway. In November 2002, four of those arrested received jail terms up to 4 months, two young women were given conditional sentences, while a seventh had already served his jail time during pre-trial custody.

In the case of Sutikalik, there was no legal process involving injunctions and police instead proceeded on criminal charges. This also occurred during the anti-Sun Peaks ski resort campaign carried out by Secwepemc peoples near Kamloops, BC, in 2001. Several hours after a blockade was established on the main road into the ski resort, RCMP arrested the participants for intimidation. Those arrested later received jail terms of up to three months.

Likewise, during an October 2003 blockade in Cheam, a CN railway cutting through the reserve-territory, it took the RCMP just 4 hours to mobilize 30 officers and dismantle the blockade, arresting 7 people (almost all women, including one who had her arm broken by cops).
vehicle being seized if police overrun the blockade.

Some blockades have used abandoned or wrecked vehicles to block a roadway.

When Quebec police raided the Mohawk blockade at Oka/Kanesatake on July 11, 1990, warriors used several abandoned police cars to establish a hasty blockade on a nearby roadway. These vehicles were put in place by a front end loader, and the vehicles themselves were destroyed. The barricade was reinforced over time and persisted throughout much of the summer long standoff.

Shortly after the raid on Kanesatake, Mohawk warriors at Kahnawake seized the Mercier Bridge, a vital commuter link into Montreal. They drove their vehicles onto the bridge and blocked the roadway. When cars began driving around them, they pulled out assault rifles and established an armed blockade, forcing cars back and down off the bridge. This hasty blockade was also reinforced over the days and weeks that followed, including the construction of sand bagged positions (protection against small arms fire).

In 1993, members of the Cheam band in BC blocked a railway by parking heavy machinery on the tracks, threatening to tear the tracks up if the RCMP raided the blockade. In September 1995, following the police shooting of Dudley George at Ipperwash, Natives set up a road block using an abandoned vehicle that was set on fire. In 2000, Mi'kmaq at Burnt Church, New Brunswick, also blockaded a road using an abandoned car set on fire to prevent RCMP and/or vigilante citizens from entering the reservation.

**Spike boards**

Another technique often used to establish a blockade is the use of a spike board (at least in south central BC). Similar to the spike belts used by cops, a spike board consists of a piece of lumber with large spike nails hammered on one side. This is laid across the roadway, and is pulled off/on with a rope handle attached to one end. If a vehicle refuses to stop, they will drive over the spikes and puncture their tires.

Spike boards were used during blockades in the south central BC region during the spring of 1995, and during a 10-day blockade of commercial vehicles on Highway 99 at the Sutikaliks camp (St'at'imc territory) in 2001.

**Trees / Abitis**

Some hasty blockades have been established by cutting down trees so that they fall across the roadway, making them impassable. A military term for this technique is abatis (or abattis), with the trees felled so that they cross over top of one another. Historically, abatis were made of branches pushed into the ground with their sharpened tips pointed toward the enemy. An abatis made of trees can be dismantled fairly quickly by forestry workers equipped with chainsaws, or by heavy trucks equipped with cables that pull the trees off the roadway.

Felled trees were used during the 1995 siege at Ts'Pet'en (Gustafson Lake) in south central BC (Secwepemc territory), and during the October 2013 Mi'kmaq blockade of fracking vehicles in New Brunswick.

**The Piqueteros “hasty blockade” and tire fires**

The piqueteros of Argentina, a movement of poor and unemployed people that arose in the late 1990s, developed the hasty blockade to a high level. During large mobilizations, and through coordination between many autonomous groups, they used hasty blockades to paralyze the transportation infrastructure of the entire country. In August 2001, for example, the piqueteros were able to shutdown some 300 highways and roads throughout the country.

**Protective Gear against Blunt Trauma Wounds**

**Helmets:** Hockey, skateboarding, bicycle, and motorcycle helmets can be worn to protect against baton strikes or projectiles. Motorcycle helmets with face guards can prevent the wearing of a gas mask. Helmets can have distinctive logos removed and be spray painted a uniform colour.

**Gloves:** Leather gloves are preferred to protect the hand from hot objects, such as tear gas canisters (which are often picked up and thrown back into police lines).

**Body Armour:** Sports gear for hockey, lacrosse, or motocross type body armour, such as shin guards, forearm protectors, as well as chest protectors and shoulder pads. Smaller shin guards can be used for forearm protectors. Armour that has good foam padding and a hard plastic outer is preferred.

**Foam padding,** such as those used in sleeping pads (closed cell foam), cut into shape and held in place with duct tape. Close cell padding can be used for legs, lower and upper arms, as well as chest protectors.

The most common tactic used by piqueteros was to arrive on a road, highway or city intersection, and block it with tires. Small fires were often built in the middle of the road, and if necessary the tires themselves were set on fire, often by inserting a few plastic bags doused with gasoline into each tire's rim and igniting them. The burning plastic bag would quickly

**Squatters in Brazil with shields, helmets and batons. The shields appear to be cut from large, heavy duty, plastic water barrels, with eye slots and rope handles attached.**

**Spaceship and motorcycle helmet (full face version).**

**Motorcross upper body armour**

**Knee and shin guards made of hard plastic, light improvised upper body armour from foam cell padding.**

**Lexan**, a brand of polycarbonate. Lexan sheets can be acquired from hardware stores such as Home Depot (approx. $150 for a 36 X 72 inch
In some mobilizations, protesters have designed shields that also function as protest signs. In one student strike, students made shields in the form of large books.

Shields walls have been most commonly seen in Italy. Large sheets of clear plexiglass type material have been used. Some are built with wood frames and have wheels attached to aid in moving them.

The shield wall enables protesters to approach a police line without fear of police firing projectiles, and then to begin pushing the police back (but this relies on having enough mass to counter that of the police line). Shield walls are vulnerable to flank attacks, when cops begin assaultig shield wall carriers from the sides.

Another type of shield wall seen is that of a section of galvanized sheet metal, carried at the front of a crowd.

Blockades

"[T]he frequency and intensity of Native blockades in BC suggests that it is seen as a particularly effective form of direct action. Indeed, the blockade need not be established to be effective; its threatened use may be enough." - Nicholas Blomley, "Shut the province down," p. 17, BC Studies, No. 111, Autumn 1996.

Blockades are a common tactic used by Indigenous peoples, whether in Canada, Mexico, or Brazil. They are used primarily to stop vehicle traffic, including commercial traffic, specific equipment used in a resource exploitation project, as well as trains. They may be used to disrupt economic activity or to deny access to an area. Some blockades have been established to defend a community against invasion by settler vigilantes and/or police (i.e., the blockades set up around Kahnawake in 1999).

Types of Blockades

Nicholas Blomley, in his article "Shut the province down" (BC Studies, No. 111, Autumn 1996) identifies three types of blockades which he terms the information checkpoint, the partial blockade, and the full blockade. Some people refer to "soft blockades" and "hard blockades."

Information Checkpoint

Not a true blockade, the checkpoint temporarily stops traffic to distribute information, such as leaflets. It is a tactic used to slow traffic (causing a minimal level of disruption), raise public awareness about a campaign, and at the same time serve as a warning to authorities. Informational packets are often used by grassroots groups as well as Indian Act band councils (as forms of "civil disobedience").

From July 27 to August 4, 2000, the Sr'ar'mic conducted an information checkpoint on Hwy. 99 at the site of the Sitkaliik camp (near Mt. Currie, BC). They distributed 1,500 leaflets and collected hundreds of signatures on a petition against a proposed ski resort in an alpine area. The threat of a full blockade, along with substantial grassroots organized, pressured the council into also opposing the ski resort, which was eventually defeated.

Partial Blockade

This blockade targets certain types of vehicles, most commonly logging trucks and/or commercial trucks, while allowing other types of local traffic through. A partial blockade must have an obstacle that can be quickly moved off the roadway.

In late June and early July, 2001, participants and supporters of the Sitkaliik camp established a partial blockade on Hwy. 99 that turned back all commercial vehicles, including logging trucks, oil tankers, cargo trucks, etc. Non-commercial traffic was allowed to pass. A spike board was used to block the roadway. Over 60 RCMP raided the camp, using a helicopter, dog teams, ERT, and an armoured vehicle. Seven unarmed persons were arrested.

Full Blockade

All traffic is stopped. Full blockades of roadways have been achieved using simple spike boards, vehicles, or trees. In 1990, the Sr'ar'mic at Mount Currie, BC, established a blockade on the Duffy Lake Road. It was comprised of a series of 3 foot high earth mound across the roadway, along with couches and tents that blockaders stayed in. The blockade lasted four months until a large force of RCMP moved in to dismantle it on November 6, 1990.

Blockade Tactics and Techniques

Military manuals suggest that road block is placed:

- at choke points, to block the smallest pass (not the widest).
- for example, on a bridge or in a narrow canyon pass, or on a roadway with heavy forest on either side, etc.
- so that they look down on opposing forces, not up (for example, near the top of a hill).

Vehicles

Many Native blockades are established by simply parking vehicles across the roadway. This has the advantages of being a large barrier that is easily put in place, and which can also be quickly moved on or off the road. Disadvantages include the owner of the vehicle possibly facing charges, the vehicle itself being damaged by vigilante citizens or police, or the

BASIC GEAR LIST

Whether or not you wear a mask and uniform clothing, the following pieces of equipment should be carried in any confrontational action, blockade, etc.:

- A medium sized backpack to carry tools and equipment, including protective gear.
- A water bottle for hydration as well as first aid for chemical agents.
- Gloves to keep your hands warm and limit forensic evidence (fingerprints). Leather gloves are preferred so you can handle hot items from a camp fire or pick up a tear gas grenade.
- Energy bars or other high energy snacks (i.e., pemmican or dried fish, dried berries, etc.).
- Rain gear, such as a jacket & pants or a poncho, protect you from wind and rain as well as chemical agents.

First Aid for blunt trauma wounds

Bruising and swelling

The most common injuries are painful bruising and swelling, which can be treated using the acronym RICE, which stands for Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevate:

Rest: Both the casualty and the injured area should get rest. An injured limb should not be used.

Ice: Apply a cold pack (such as a bag of frozen vegetables, or ice-cubes wrapped in a towel, or an actual cold pack). A cold packs reduces pain and swelling. Apply for 20 minutes and let the area rewarm for 30 minutes, then reaply.

Compress: Applying a snug but not overly tight compress to the injured area can also help reduce swelling and pain. Elastic bandages are commonly used, but a towel or shirt can also be used. A compress should be checked to ensure it does not restrict circulation.

Elevate: elevate the injured part above the heart, if possible, as this will also help reduce swelling and pain.

Immediate pressure can be applied with the casualties hand (if capable) or the first aider’s hand. Pressure can also be applied using a clean towel or shirt. Once the bleeding is controlled, maintain pressure with sterile dressing and bandages (or, a clean t-shirt, etc.). If dressing become blood soaked, do not remove them as this may disturb blood clots, instead, apply new dressings over top.

Rest: The casualty should rest to slow the flow of blood.

Shield wall on march in Italy.
Defence against armoured vehicles

Military anti-armour manuals have various means of defeating armoured vehicles, but most of these involve weapons that land defenders are unlikely to possess (such as anti-tank rocket launchers, mines, etc.).

One tactic that is recommended is the digging of anti-tank ditches across a roadway (or open field). To be effective, the ditch must be at least 3 metres in length and 1.5 metres deep, as wide as the roadway (or field, etc.). Ditches can be dug either by shovel or with a front end loader. The dug-up earth can be piled up to increase the height of the ditch on the side opposite of the enemy's approach. Anti-tank ditches can also be concealed with sheets of plywood covered with a thin layer of earth (for example).

Armoured vehicles are also vulnerable to tipping over on uneven terrain; in Afghanistan, a Canadian LAV 3 armoured vehicle was hit by a car and toppled over an embankment.

In riotous situations, it appears that the most common tactics used against armoured vehicles consist of Molotovs, building barricades to prevent their movement, and paint bombs to obscure their vision. Barricades need to be heavy enough that they cannot be simply pushed aside by the armoured vehicle.

Water Cannons

Water cannons are very large trucks with one or more cannons that can shoot water at a high velocity up to a range of 50 metres or more. They are used to disperse crowds, target individuals in a crowd, and to extinguish fires (such as burning barricades, trash bins, etc.). Water cannon trucks can carry between 8,000 to 12,000 litres of water and can shoot in a continuous stream or pulses, as a hard jet or as a spray. They can also have dyes or tear gas added (the dye is used to identify crowd members for later arrest). The force of the water can be strong enough to knock people over, resulting in serious injuries and even death.

Water cannons are frequently used in W. Europe (including Northern Ireland, Germany, as well as Turkey) and in Chile. They are not often deployed by police in Canada or the US.

For the 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, police had two water cannons that were used to force crowds back from sections of security fencing. One had its unprotected side window smashed with a rock and the vehicle was withdrawn. It is not known if these vehicles were rented or what became of them after the Summit.

For the Toronto G20 in June 2010, the RCMP acquired a new water cannon that closely resembled the ones used in 2001. This version had metal screens over the front and side windows. It was not deployed during the protests and it is unknown where this vehicle is normally stationed or if the RCMP still have possession of it.

Both these models of water cannons (called "water projection systems" by the RCMP) resembled fire-fighting trucks used at airports, equipped with what are called "deck guns" (the actual water cannon).

Both of these models of water cannons (called "water projection systems" by the RCMP) resembled fire-fighting trucks used at airports, equipped with what are called "deck guns" (the actual water cannon).

Defence against water cannons: Water cannon trucks are slow and hard to manoeuvre. Some defences used against water cannons have included shields (such as sheets of plywood), barricades, and attacks on the vehicles themselves (including Molotovs and paint bombs). Anti-tank ditches would also be effective against a water cannon travelling on a road.

The Ripper Cannons

Riot cops are usually referred to as crowd control units or public order units. The RCMP refer to their riot cops as Tactical Troops, while many other police call their riot cops Public Safety Units. These are police officers who, in addition to their regular duties, are also on call to respond to crowd control situations. They receive additional training in crowd control tactics, unit formations, etc., and are issued protective gear such as helmets, shields, gas masks, etc.

It is standard practice for crowd control units to deploy with other police units, primarily armed tactical units (such as Emergency Response Teams), dog teams, medics, and video surveillance teams. Armed tactical units are usually responsible for firing less-lethal and lethal weaponry, and operating any armoured vehicles used.

Tactics and Formations

Line formation: This is the most common formation used by riot cops, usually across streets or roadways. It is used to block entry to an area, or to stop the advance of a crowd. The line can be comprised of one row of police, or multiple rows. If multiple rows, the front rank will be shifted to the rear, and the second rank shifted to the front. This allows cops to rest before being put into the front line again.

Snatch squads: Snatch squads are small groups of cops that rush into a crowd and grab a targeted individual, who is then dragged back behind the police line for arrest and removal. A snatch squad with 4 cops, for example, might have two who grab the target and two who provide security against the crowd.

Arresting cops in a snatch squad do not carry shields. Snatch squads can sometimes be observed preparing, positioning themselves in a line, and/or pointing out targeted individuals.

Kettle / Containment: A kettle is a police tactic in which a crowd is completely surrounded or boxed in by police. It is used to capture large groups of protesters, to prevent them from marching, and for mass arrests. In some cases, people are "kettle"d for several hours and then released through checkpoints, at which they must provide ID. During the Toronto G20, several hundred people were kettled for hours during a heavy rain storm.

Indications that police may attempt to kettle a group are police lines at the front, sides and rear. People escape kettles by dispersing before the kettle is established, or at times by breaking through a line of police.

Baton charges: Baton charges are when riot cops charge a crowd and assault people with batons. It is at times preceded by the firing of less-lethal projectiles, including flash-bang rounds and/or chemical agents. Baton charges usually only last 20-30 feet, at which point the cops stop and re-establish their line formation. Some people panic and begin running, but it is better to make an orderly withdrawal and stop at a point just beyond where the cops will stop to re-establish their line.

Surveillance: Crowd control units have police video surveillance teams attached to them to document individuals in a crowd and any “illegal” activities that occur. Police or intelligence agencies may also conduct covert surveillance from nearby houses or buildings, vehicles, etc.

Undercover cops: Police routinely send undercover cops into protests or actions to gather intelligence, often just by listening to protesters or announcements that are made. Undercover cops are also used to identify individuals in crowd and those that carry out “illegal” activities. When attempting to infiltrate a group of masked militants, undercover cops may also wear masks.
Riot cop protective gear

Riot cops have different levels of uniform. A level one is often referred to as “soft tac” or “soft hat.” In this mode, the cops wear a tactical uniform and baseball cap, along with their patrol belt (including pistol, pepper spray, and baton). This presents a less threatening image and is used when their intelligence indicates a low possibility of conflict.

The second level of uniform is referred to as “hard tac” or “hard hat.” In this mode, the cop wears body armour and carries a gas mask, shield, as well as a 3 foot long riot baton. Most police in Canada also wear a fire retardant cover all over top of the body armour. Fire retardant balaclavas may also be worn. Hard tac is worn when cops expect some form of conflict from a crowd. Often, police first deploy personnel in soft tac, and if the situation escalates send in the hard tac cops (who are on standby in a nearby location, sometimes an underground parking lot, or in vehicles such as buses or vans). In hard tac, a riot cop can wear up to 100 pounds of gear.

Chemical Agents

1. Pepper Spray / OC
   Pepper spray contains *capsaicin*, a chemical derived from cayenne, paprika, or chilies. It is also known as *Oleoresin Capsicum*, which is abbreviated as OC. Pepper spray is carried by individual officers on their duty belt, and is sold commercially as a defence against dogs and bears. It is usually encountered as a fine mist spray with a pepper-like taste and sensation. During crowd control situations, cops may carry large canisters that resemble small fire extinguishers.

   **Method of dispersal:** Pepper spray can be released through hand-held aerosol spray canisters or as part of a projectile weapon (usually rubber pellets, which explode on impact and release OC particles). Police must be within 10-15 feet to be effective with aerosol spray, although rubber pellets can be shot up to an effective range of 50 feet or more.

   **Effects:** Pepper spray attacks the mucous membranes (eyes, nose, and mouth). Exposure to pepper spray causes blurring of vision, tearing and closing of eyes, coughing, and difficulty breathing (most often a tightening of the chest). These can occur within seconds of exposure and persist for 20-30 minutes after. The casualty will probably still feel the effects of OC several hours after exposure.

2. Tear Gas
   There are two main types of tear gas used: CN and CS. CS, or Chloroacetophenone, was first developed after World War 2, and can be identified by its white smoke and smell of apple blossom. CS type tear gas is a more potent and less toxic

   **Tactical Armoured Vehicle**

   18 TAVs were acquired in 2012 by the RCMP for use by Emergency Response Teams throughout RCMP divisions. Cost: $14 million for the fleet, manufactured by Navistar Defence Canada (the TAV is a variation of their MXT APC, used by British and Canadian military). RCMP detachments are present in all provinces and territories except Ontario and Quebec. They may also be called in to assist municipal and provincial police forces as necessary. The TAV has an armoured turret on top.

   **Nyala RG-12**
   Used by London Police Service Emergency Response Section, donated in 2005 by General Dynamics. Based at airport and equipped with MARS.
   **Personnel:** Up to 12, including driver.
   **Weight:** 11,500 kg
   **Length:** 5.8 metres
   **Width:** 2.3 metres
   **Height:** 3.7 metres
   **Range:** N/A
   **Speed:** 100 km/h

   **Nyala RG-31**
   Used by London Police Service Emergency Response Section, donated in 2005 by General Dynamics. Based at airport and equipped with MARS.
   **Personnel:** Up to 10, including driver.
   **Weight:** 6,200 kg
   **Length:** 6.4 metres
   **Width:** 2.4 metres
   **Height:** 2.5 metres
   **Range:** 640 km
   **Speed:** 100 km/h

   **Nyala RG-33**
   Used by London Police Service Emergency Response Section, donated in 2005 by General Dynamics. Based at airport and equipped with MARS.
   **Personnel:** Up to 12, including driver.
   **Weight:** 6,200 kg
   **Length:** 4.8 metres
   **Width:** 2.4 metres
   **Height:** 2.5 metres
   **Range:** 640 km
   **Speed:** 100 km/h

   **Thunder 1 APC used by various police forces.**

   **Thunder 1**
   **Personnel:** 10-14, including driver.
   **Weight:** 12,700 kg
   **Length:** 6.4 metres
   **Width:** 2.4 metres
   **Height:** 2.5 metres
   **Range:** 640 km
   **Speed:** 100 km/h

   **Trooper**
   Used by Toronto Police Service’s Emergency Task Force, acquired in 2005 for $250,000 and built by Ontario-based Armet (no longer in business). Based on Ford 550 4x4 chassis.
   **Personnel:** Up to 14, including driver.
Cougar
Used by RCMP Emergency Response Team in Greater Vancouver Region (BC), donated in 2010 from CF, and the New Glasgow Regional Police Service Emergency Response Team (Nova Scotia), donated by CF in 2013. At that time, the defence minister stated that Cape Breton Regional Police and the Windsor, Ontario, Police Service had also made requests for surplus Cougars. May also be provided to other police forces over time. Police version has turret and small cannon removed.

Grizzly
Acquired by Edmonton Police Service Tactical Unit in 2007, donated by CF. Used by New Glasgow Regional Police Emergency Response Team, donated in 2013 by CF.

Gurkha
Used by Peel Regional Police Tactical Rescue Unit, Airport Division. Equipped with MARS (multi-access ramp system). Built by Ontario-based Terradyne Armored Vehicles Inc., based on the Ford F550 chassis.

Dragoon Patroller
Used by Surete du Quebec (SQ).

Hummer H1 Armoured
Used by Surete du Quebec Emergency Response Team, a civilian version of the US military Hummer truck, with armour added on.

Smoke Bomb and Chemical Agent:
A mix of a chemical agent with high density smoke, which also obscures the vision of the crowd. This can either be a hand thrown canister or a round fired from a less-lethal launcher.

Muzzle Blast Rounds:
Shoots a blast of chemical agent from a less-lethal launcher or shotgun and is intended for close-range use. One manufacturer, Florida based Amtec Less Lethal Systems, claims its effectiveness is “30-30 feet based on weather conditions.” According to another manufacturer, NonLethal Technologies of Pennsylvania, the round is “designed for close range crowd dispersal. When fired a cloud of irritant power agent (OC, CN, or CS) is discharged out to around 20 feet.”

Rubber Ball / Pellet Grenades:
These are grenades that are thrown into a crowd and then explode with a loud flash and bang, dispersing rubber pellets mixed with a chemical agent. The grenade may have 80-120 rubber pellets, with an effective radius of about 10-15 feet. Some brand names include Hornet’s Nest Sting Grenade and the Stinger Rubber Ball Grenade. Defense Technology, the manufacturer of the Stinger (along with many other products for military and law enforcement), states that these are intended as a “pain compliance, distraction and disorientation device for crowd management.”

Less-Lethal Launchers
Less-lethal launchers are specialized rifles used to fire 37mm or 40mm projectile rounds, such as rubber balls or pellets, wood or rubber ball rounds, chemical agent rounds, or a mixture of an impact round and a chemical agent. Although widely used for crowd control, less-lethal launchers are also frequently used by police for barricaded...
suspects, prison cell extractions, etc. Emergency Response Teams are among the primary users of less-lethal launchers and munitions.

Effective Range of Less-Lethal Launchers

The effective range of less-lethal launchers varies depending on the weapon and type of round fired. Manufacturers claim ranges of up to 100 metres, but according to Dave Young in the article “Special Deliveries,” published Nov 1, 2005, on Policemag.com, the actual effective range of a rubber baton round fired from a 37/40mm less-lethal launcher is around 20-30 feet, while a bean bag round may have an effective range of up to 25 feet.

According to the Final Report of the Use of Force Committee of the Toronto Police, published in 1998, “Although some wildly optimistic claims are made as to the effective range, the best ones like the ARWEN 37 and SL6 have proven effective and accurate out to about 30 yards under operational conditions” (p. 92).

ARMEN 37

One of the most common less-lethal launchers used by police in Canada is the ARWEN 37, manufactured by Police Ordnance in Markham, Ontario. The ARWEN, which stands for Anti-Riot Weapon Einfield (the designer), was first developed by the British military for use during anti-riot operations in Northern Ireland during the 1970s. They also replaced the wooden baton round with a hard rubber version at this time. Police Ordnance is now the main manufacturer of the ARWEN 37 in North America.

The ARWEN has a 5 round cylindrical magazine. It weighs 8.4 lbs. when loaded. Most ARWENs are fitted with an optical sight.

40mm Launcher

Manufactured by Defense Technology (part of the Safariland Group, based in Florida), this is a single shot 40mm less-lethal launcher similar to the ARWEN Ace. A 37mm version is also produced.

Multiple Grenade Launcher (MGL)

The Sage SL6 is one of the more common MGL-type launchers used in North America, and primarily by police in the US. It is a 40mm launcher with a 6 round cylindrical magazine. The SL6 is manufactured by Sage Control Ordnance. The MGL concept was first produced in South Africa during the 1980s by Milkor, and one of their newer variations is the MGL Mk 1, used by many military and police forces around the world. The US Marine Corps also uses a version of the MGL Mk 1, known as the M32.

Pepper Ball Launchers

These types of less-lethal launchers evolved from paint ball gun manufacturers. They look similar to paint ball guns but instead fire rubber pellets at a higher velocity. They can inflict severe bruising and swelling injuries. One producer of pepper ball launchers is Pepper Ball (based in Indiana), and one of its best sellers to police around the world is the Tac-700. This shooter has full auto capability as well as 3 round bursts. Pepper Ball claims the Tac-700 is accurate up to 60 feet. Its rubber pellets can contain chemical agents, including a high concentrate version of OC, as well as paint markers that can assist police in

Armed vehicle specifications:

Most, if not all, of the armoured vehicles used by police have the following attributes:

- Armoured plated and windows that are resistant to small arms fire (i.e., 5.56mm or 7.62mm). Newer models, such as the MRAPs, have reinforced and specially shaped hulls to resist explosive devices and mines.
- Firing ports on the side and rear, which enable persons inside the vehicle to fire their individual weapons outward. These ports have ballistic covers that can be opened and closed by those inside. In crowd control operations, police inside the vehicle could fire less-lethal weapons including projectiles as well as pepper spray through these gun ports.
- Run flat tires and rims that enable the vehicle to maintain mobility even when the tires are punctured and deflated.

Balkan Mk 7

Used by the Calgary Police Service Tactical Unit (in Alberta). Purchased in 2008 for $250,000, manufactured by Ontario-based Armet (now out of business).

Personnel: Crew of 2, plus 8 personnel
Weight: 8618 kg / 9.4 tons
Length: 6.45 metres
Width: 2.5 metres
Range: 600 km
Speed: 130 kmh

BATT (Ballistic Armoured Tactical Transport)


Personnel: 10-12 including driver
Weight: 8.7 tons
Length: 6 metres
Height: 2.4 metres
Speed: 120 kmh

Bison

Not currently used by police, nine Bison APCs were used by RCMP ERT units during the 1995 siege of TV-Petten (Guntersville Lake, BC). These were supplied by the CF, along with their crews. They are still in service with the CF as a support vehicle (i.e., ambulance, communications, etc.), though no longer used as an APC for infantry. It is possible that Bison APCs could be delivered to police, as with the decommissioned Cougar and Grizzly armoured vehicles. Originally manufactured by General Motors Diesel Division (now General Dynamics Land Systems Canada) in London, Ontario.

Personnel: Crew of 2, plus 8 personnel
Weight: 12.39 tons
Length: 6.45 metres
Width: 2.5 metres
Height: 2.21 metres
Speed: 100 kmh
Range: 665 km

BearCat

Used by Ottawa Police Service Tactical Unit (Ontario), Saskatchewan Police Service Emergency Response Team (in Saskatchewan), and the Abbotsford Police Department Emergency Response Team (in BC). Manufactured by Lenco Industries Inc., based in Massachusetts.

Personnel: Crew of 2 + 10 personnel
Weight: 8.7 tons
Length: 6 metres
Height: 2.4 metres
Speed: 120 kmh

BearCat armoured vehicle in use by Ottawa police.
LRAD / Long Range Acoustic Device

The LRAD is both a very powerful public address system as well as an acoustic weapon. The LRAD was first used in N. America as an acoustic weapon during the G20 summit in Pittsburgh, 2009, when police deployed them against protesters. Since that time, more police forces throughout N. America have acquired them. The Vancouver police acquired an LRAD just prior to the 2010 Olympics, claiming it was solely for use as a PA system to address crowds. Both the Toronto and Chicago police also bought LRADs just prior to major economic summits.

As an acoustic weapon, the LRAD emits a powerful sound wave that affects not just hearing but the entire body. In Pittsburgh, it sounded like a high pitched siren. To be effective, the person(s) must be in front of the LRAD where the beam is directed. One of the most common types of LRADs used by police is the 500X model, usually a square black device 25” X 25”. It can be vehicle mounted or carried and erected on a collapsible tripod. Two options that can be fitted to the 500X are a powerful white light and a green laser dazzler. Some reports states that the 500X, when used as an acoustic weapon, can be effective up to 300 metres.

Defence against LRAD: Against the LRAD as an acoustic weapon, wearing ear protection (such as ear plugs or ear protectors) can reduce the effects. Placing a solid object, such as a shield or sheet of plywood, for example, between oneself and the LRAD, reportedly blocks the sound wave.

Armoured Vehicles

With the ongoing militarization of police around the world, many police departments have armoured vehicles as part of their heavy armed tactical units. These are predominantly 4 wheeled armoured cars, used to transport personnel and protect them from small arms fire. Some are fitted with battering rams used to punch holes in structures. They may be used during large crowd control situations as a protective vehicle for cops and for barricade removal.

The first use of armoured vehicles against Indigenous land defenders in Canada occurred in 1990, during the Oka Crisis, when the 5th Mechanized Infantry Brigade of the Canadian Forces was deployed. The military used Grizzly and Cougar armoured vehicles in both Kanishkatake and Kahnawake for operations to dismantle warrior barricades and during a raid on the Kahnawake Longhouse.

Following Oka, a strategy of criminalization against Indigenous resistance was employed, including better equipping of police to confront future confrontations. This strategy was seen in the summer of 1995 in two separate conflicts.

During the month-long siege at TEsPoten (Gastafshen Lake) in south-central BC, RCMP ERT units were provided with 8-9 Bison armoured personnel carriers from the Canadian Forces (including a crew of two for each APC). The RCPM used these vehicles to conduct patrols around the Sundance camp and, on Sept 11, to carry out an assault on the defenders. During an ensuing firefight, one of the Bisons was disabled by gunfire and its personnel had to be rescued by another Bison.

During the re-occupation of Ipperwash Provincial Park by members of the Stoney Point band in southern Ontario, the OPP had two Bison APCs on standby (although they were not deployed).

Today, most police in large cities have an armoured vehicle. The OPP and SQ both have armoured vehicles, as does the RCPM, the national police force of Canada. These vehicles are used by armed tactical units, such as the RCPM’s Emergency Response Team (ERT) or the OPP’s Tactical Response Unit (TRU). These tactical units are usually deployed during crowd control operations, and are frequently used during Native blockades for both surveillance and lethal over watch. It should also be noted that police agencies may have arrangements with nearby military bases for the use of armoured vehicles (in March 2005, RCPM ERT responding to the shooting of four cops in Mayerthorpe, Alberta, requested three armoured vehicles from CFB Edmonton, which were dispatched to assist in a possible standoff).

It is likely that Native communities engaged in resistance activities in the future, such as blockades or land reclamation, will be faced with police using armoured vehicles. For this reason, it is good to know some of the types of armoured vehicles used by police forces, and the geographic regions in which they are located.

12 Gauge Shotgun

Although widely used by police and military as a lethal weapon, 12 gauge shotguns can also fire a wide variety of less-lethal rounds. These can include rubber batons, rubber balls or pellets, bean bag rounds, sock rounds, muzzle blasts, as well as mixtures of these with chemical agents.

Common shotgun models used by police include Mossberg and Remington 870. At times, shotguns are used as dedicated less-lethal weapons, and may have an orange or yellow fore stock. But any 12 gauge shotgun can be used to fire less-lethal rounds.

Less-Lethal Ammunition

Note: Rounds fired from less-lethal launchers and that contain chemical agents are listed here and described above in the section on Chemical Agents. All these rounds can be fired from 37/40mm launchers or shotguns.

Plastic baton round, aka "rubber bullet."

Bean Bag / Sock Impact Round: Of the most common less-lethal rounds fired from a shotgun are bean bags, which are small square or round pouches filled with metal or ceramic pellets. Bean bag rounds can also be fired from high powered rifles. Although seemingly harmless, the bean bag round delivers a strong impact that has resulted in serious injuries as well as death. A variation of the bean bag is the sock round.

Plastic Bullet / Impact Round: Also incorrectly called rubber bullets, these rounds are less-lethal rounds. These can include rubber batons, rubber balls or pellets, bean bag rounds, sock rounds, muzzle blasts, as well as mixtures of these with chemical agents.

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Plastic baton round, aka "rubber bullet."
Rubber Balls / Pellets: Another commonly used round, disperses a number of rubber balls at a high velocity that can inflict serious injury at shorter ranges. If fired from a 37mm gun in launcher, these rounds can contain between 24 to 180 rubber balls, depending on their size. Shotgun versions may contain 3 large rubber balls, or between 15 to 25 smaller rubber pellets.

The effective range claimed by one manufacturer for a 37mm round was between 5 to 17 metres (15 to 55 feet).

A variant is the Pepper Ball, usually fired from launchers resembling a paint ball gun, which contain a chemical agent (usually OC) that disperses on impact (see section on chemical agents, above).

Flash Bang / Stun Grenades: Also known as “Distraction Devices,” these are most often hand thrown grenades that explode with a concussion blast and blinding light. These devices can cause momentary blindness and loss of hearing. An example of a hand thrown Flash Bang is the MB4. These types of explosive devices were first developed by the British military.

Projectile stun grenades can be fired from less-lethal launchers and shotguns. NonLethal Technologies claims its 40mm Distract Round detonates at a range of approximately 115 metres. Flash Bang grenades can cause injury at close range as well as fire when used indoors.

Lethal Weapons / Firearms

All police are armed with a sidearm (a pistol) carried on their patrol belt. Currently, most police forces are equipped with 9mm pistols, which have an effective range of up to 50 metres. Most police will have three magazines of 9mm rounds (one in the pistol, two in a magazine pouch on their pistol belt).

Smith & Wesson 5906: This is a semi-automatic 9mm pistol that is the standard issue sidearm for the RCMP. It has a either a 10 or 15 round magazine.

Sig Sauer P226: Used by Vancouver police and several other agencies in Canada, with the P229 used by the OPP. The Canadian military also uses three variants of the Sig Sauer P model. The P226 can have magazines with 10, 15, 17, 18, or even 20 rounds.

Heckler & Koch MP5: A 9mm submachine gun of German design and is one of the most commonly used submachine guns used by police and military forces around the world. In Canada and the US it is used by most police armed tactical units. It usually has a 30 round magazine, with 3 or more magazines carried in pouches. The MP5 has an effective range of up to 200 metres (depending on variant).

C8 carbine: This is the Canadian military version of the US M4 carbine (basically a shortened M16A2). The rifle fires a 5.56mm round and is commonly used by police tactical units, often with an ELCAN optical gun sight (a small scope) attached.

Has a 30 round magazine. Variants can fire full auto and semi-automatic, or a three-round burst and semi-automatic.

Some RCMP officers also carry C8 carbines in their vehicles, which replaces the shotgun formerly carried as a standard long rifle. The C8 has a effective range up to 400 metres.

C7: The Canadian version of the US M16A2 assault rifle. Used by police tactical units, often in rural areas. Fires a 5.56mm round with a maximum effective range up to 600 metres. Has a 30 round magazine.

Shotgun: The Remington 870 is a standard 12 gauge shotgun used by police forces. It can have either a 4+1 to 7+1 round internal tube magazine located under the barrel. It is commonly carried in patrol vehicles (although police are increasingly turning to the patrol carbine to fulfill this role). Armed tactical units and crowd control unit also use shotguns, which can fire a wide variety of rounds including less-lethal rounds such as bean bags, etc.

When used as a less-lethal firearm, shotguns typically fire 00 Buckshot. The buckshot, about one inch of spread for every yard of distance, so it is only used for close encounters. After about 20 metres, slug rounds are usually used which can be effective up to 100 metres.

Sniper rifles: Most police snipers use a 7.62mm rifle (308), such as a Remington 700 or 300 Winchester Magnum. These are customized hunting rifles, with scopes and a small bipod. Such rifles have effective ranges of between 800-1000 metres.

Other Police Weapons

Baton: A baton is a stick, usually around arms length, that is used for defensive and offensive purposes. There are many types of batons used by police, but about one commonly encountered are the tactical baton, the tonfa, and the riot baton.

Most police deployed as riot cops, including the Vancouver Police “Public Safety Unit”, have a 3 feet (36 inches) long hardwood baton.

RCMP Tactical Troop with riot batons.

Taser / Stun Gun

A Taser is considered a conducted energy weapon. They are frequently used by police to incapacitate individuals seen as combative, or as a pain compliance device (viewed by some as a form of torture). Tasers resemble electrical devices, with distinctive yellow and black stripes on its side (although all black versions are available). They are usually carried on thigh holsters but are not routine issue to patrol officers (although the Canadian Police Association has lobbied for every cop to carry one) . They are also not commonly used during crowd control situations, although they were used in the initial police raid at Six Nations on April 20, 2006.

The most commonly used model at this time is the X26, produced by Taser International, based in Scottsdale, Arizona. The X26 has various cartridge ranges, but the maximum range is 35 feet. A newer version, the X26P, has a video camera and flashbuilt into it. There is also the X2, which has a second shot capability. The X2 can be distinguished from the X26 variants by having two seperate firing panels (as opposed to one). Many police forces in the US now reportedly use the X2, and it can be expected that police in Canada will also adapt it in the near future. Each X26 can cost up to $1,000, while the X2 can cost up to $1,300 each.

How a Taser works: Tasers are aimed and fired like a pistol, most often with a red dot laser beam to assist in aiming. When fired, two small darts attached to fine wire cables are shot out, which remain attached to the Taser. In order to function, both darts must be attached to the person. These darts are designed to penetrate clothing and embed themselves in a person's skin. They are barbed to make removal difficult. A Taser's dart does not have to make direct contact with skin as it can jump up to 2 inches through clothing (from the darts), as well as heavy material (including thick leather and even Kevlar vests). They can disorient someone up to 50,000 volts of electricity, overwhelming the central nervous system and usually causing immediate incapacitation as muscles involuntarily tense up. Many people fall, while some go unconscious. Their heart and breathing may also be affected.

The initial electrical charge usually lasts approximately 5 seconds, but this can be adjusted by the user. Additional pulses can be sent by the user pressing the trigger. One person killed from a Taser was shocked 9 times. Some reports state that if the Taser is continuously applied for up to a minute, when its battery dies.

Once a Taser is fired, a new cartridge must be loaded (with the exception of the Taser X2 and X3, which have 2 or 3 cartridges, respectively). A Taser can also be held to a person and activated, without firing the darts (referred to as Drive Stun). In this mode it is used as a "pain compliance" weapon. The shock cycle can be stopped by placing the weapon on safety. Persons that touch the tasered individual will not be shocked. Like other electrical devices, Tasers can cause fires when used near flammable materials, such as gasoline, gas vapours, meth labs, or even pepper sprays that contain alcohol.

Injuries and Fatalities: Some people who are briefly tasered recover almost immediately, while others may experience difficulty walking and breathing properly and take several minutes to fully recover. Injuries from a Taser dart generally include cardiac arrest, blinding (when the dart penetrates the eye), burn wounds, punctures and infection (from the darts), as well as hernias and fractures. Falling is a common response to being tasered, often causing head injuries, bruises, as well as fractures. Some people lose consciousness. Tasers have also resulted in hundreds of deaths over the years.

Defence Against Taser

Shields or packs used as shields can block taser darts.

Carbon fibre textile reportedly defeats the electrical charge of Tasers and stun guns. This material can be purchased in a variety of forms, including upholstery fabric. Carbon fibre tape is also reportedly used to line the inside of clothing as defence against Taser strikes. Another defence is evasion.

First Aid for Taser:

- Calm, comfort, and reassure the casualty.
- Treat injuries resulting from falls.
- Treat darts as impaled objects if embedded in the skin, treat the wound.
- Treat any burns left by the darts.
- In the event of localized muscle spasms, ice the affected area.
- Monitor/treat for shock, advise rest.
- Restore the electrolyte level of the person's body. This can be done with Emergen-C, or water with a banana.

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Taser dart stuck in the eye.