



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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PAUL MIYAMOTO
SHERIFF

February 6, 2025
PM 2025-004

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
City and County of San Francisco
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, Calif. 94102-4689

Emailed to: Angela.Calvillo@sfgov.org

**Response from the San Francisco Sheriff to Request from Rules Committee
Member Supervisor Walton for Information Regarding the San Bruno Training
Incident May 21, 2025 Involving the Accidental Release of CS Gas Into The
Community.**

Dear Madame Clerk,

During the recent Rules Committee review of the Sheriff's Office Military Equipment Use Policy, (MEUP) Supervisor Walton requested information in response to the questions posed on the training incident that occurred on May 21, 2024, and the unintended CS gas exposure to the local surrounding community. We would like to share a timeline and other relevant information regarding the state of the investigation with the members of the Board of Supervisors in preparation for our presentation to the full board on our Annual Report on the Military Equipment Use Policy.

Accompanying this cover letter is briefing for review that includes the following: the event timeline of the training exercise on May 21, 2024, the facts surrounding the exposure of CS to the surrounding community, the response from San Bruno Fire and EMS and the SFSO, and information regarding the chemical agents involved. While the investigation itself is not completed, this document provides information about the current state of the investigation as recent as February 5, 2025. Our office is working collaboratively with the community, the investigation agencies listed in the attached brief, as well as San Mateo County Administrators and public safety partners. Moreover, I made the commitment to the community immediately following the incident to halt all chemical training exercises at the San Bruno facility.

As the Sheriff and the father of five children, I am absolutely dedicated to placing the safety of children, teachers, and the community first. I have also served and continue to be a member of the Special Response Team (SRT), so I am personally familiar with the trainings used for working with chemical agents. The requests in this year's report should not be impacted by this rare occurrence. And in fact the request for new equipment that emits chemical agents ensures a targeted and safer disbursement if deployed.

Finally, I want to share with the Board that the Sheriff's Office, has worked tirelessly with the community to be thoughtful in our acquisition and use of equipment that fall within this category of military equipment. In fact, Chief Counsel Rani Singh and staff from the SRT unit met with John Lindsay-Poland and other members of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) for months beginning in the summer of 2022 prior to our submission of the original Military Equipment Use Policy. The collaboration was so successful that members from AFSC supported the Sheriff's efforts as a "gold standard" in working with community groups that are generally opposed to military equipment use by local law enforcement. The SFSO then again consulted AFSC last year when the first annual report was provided. The history of our willingness to gather input from all sides of the table exemplifies our dedication to the safety of the public at large when deploying military equipment contained in our inventory.

Thank you for your time in advance and I invite any inquiries that the Board members may have. Chief Counsel, Rani Singh is also available for any questions going forward and in advance of Tuesday's vote.

Sincerely,



Paul M. Miyamoto
SHERIFF



San Francisco Sheriff's Office

FACT SHEET: San Bruno Incident, May 21, 2024

Board of Supervisors Briefing Document

In response to the questions posed by the Rules Committee on the training incident that occurred on May 21, 2024, we would like to share a timeline and other information regarding the state of the investigation with the members of the Board of Supervisors in preparation for our presentation to the full board on our Annual Report on the Military Equipment Use Policy.

What chemical agents were used during the SFSO training exercise?

- (One) Combined Systems 5230 CS canister grenade brought by SFSO.
- (Four) Combined systems 4330 CS liquid projectile brought by SFSO.
- (One) Combined Systems 4340 OC Liquid projectile brought by SFSO.
- (Twenty-Four) Federal Sign and Signal G-2 CS canister grenades brought by UC Berkeley PD. (These items are not included in our inventory nor our MEUP annual report specifically. These items must be reported by UC Berkeley PD in their annual report as required by law)

Definition: CS Gas/Oleoresin Capsicum

- CS gas (which contains chlorobenzylidene malononitrile). CS gas is commonly known as one type of tear gas.
- Oleoresin capsicum (OC) liquid, commonly known as pepper spray.

Purpose of training with OC/CS gas:

The SFSO uses CS gas for hostage/rescue scenarios and criminal barricaded incidents. Under mutual aid deployments, it has also been used for crowd control purposes. CS gas helps us test the effectiveness of our equipment and helps us better understand the effects of CS gas on our subjects. By fully exposing ourselves to the chemical agent, we can better empathize with our subjects and understand the limits of CS gas.

Training Frequency:

SFSO conducts these chemical agent training exercises multiple times a year. These exercises have been occurring on San Bruno jail grounds for at least 20 years.

How chemical agents work

- The extent of exposure caused by chemical agents depends on the amount of agent to which a person was exposed, the location of exposure (indoors versus outdoors), how the person was exposed, and the length of time of the exposure.
- Chemical agents work by causing irritation to the area of contact (for example, eyes, skin, and nose) within seconds of exposure.
- The effects of exposure to the chemical agent are usually short-lived (15–30 minutes) after the person has been removed from the source and decontaminated (cleaned off). Most people do not need medical treatment.

Event History: On May 21, 2024, an SFSO training exercise held by the Sheriff's Special Response Team (SRT) in conjunction with the UC Berkeley PD on the San Bruno Jail campus exposed children and adults to CS gas at Portola Elementary School located approximately a mile northeast of the San Bruno training site. Weather condition played a factor in the direction of travel. San Bruno Fire and EMS reported to the incident and treated 21 children and 2 adults for CS symptoms. No one was transported to the hospital for advanced medical services. SFSO responded to the school as well to check on the health and welfare of the school community.

Chronological Report of Training

- 0700-1100 Hrs.
 - Training at Colma BART, unrelated to gas. Training on movement, no gas.
- 1100-1215 Hrs.
 - Lunch, travel back to San Bruno, instructors set up training area.
- 1230-1600 Hrs.
 - Safety brief regarding launchers and handling gas
 - Instruction on launchers and munitions
 - A Deputy fired one OC liquid round and two liquid CS rounds at a tire that was placed up against our connex box. SRT members inspected the tire and liquid without a mask on to understand the effectiveness and exposure potency of the liquid outdoors.
 - Operators shot inert training rounds (no gas) at the tire to train on the operation of the launcher.
 - The Deputy fired two liquid CS rounds into the trailer. Operators walked through the trailer to experience liquid CS indoors without Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - The Deputy discharged one 5230 CS canister in a metal bucket outside of the connex box. About 10 minutes later a UC Berkeley officer discharged one of the G-2 CS canisters into the metal bucket. Operators were to become fully immersed in the gas to test their PPE. Operators trained on removing their masks, being exposed, and putting them back on after being exposed.

- 1330 Hrs.
 - Instructors set up “officer down/rescue drills” inside the connex box. Operators were instructed to run up a hill with the mask on, run down the hill, enter the connex box, shoot a hostile target, and rescue a hostage by carrying out a 165-pound dummy. During the duration of this drill, multiple G-2 CS canisters were deployed to keep the connex box filled with CS agent. This helped train on confidence in the PPE under stress, understanding the capabilities of the PPE when performing strenuous physical activities, understanding how to continue to work through any failures in the PPE when in a heavy CS environment, and understanding the lack of visual acuity caused by CS smoke when performing tasks. An exact number of canisters used is unknown, however it is estimated at about 8-10.
- 1430 Hrs.
 - Training instruction completed.
 - A Sgt offered to train operators on how to properly deploy CS canisters. Multiple operators were trained on proper hand placement, removal of the pin, and placement after discharge. All canisters were deployed into the metal bucket in the connex box. About 10 G-2 CS canisters were discharged.
- 1445 Training Ended
 - Clean up commenced.
- Between 1500hrs and 1600 Hrs.
 - San Bruno Fire arrived at the Jail grounds. The Deputy showed them the area where we trained and explained the training to them.
- 1400-1500 Hrs.
 - Sheriff’s administration received reports of exposure at Portola Elementary
- 1700 Hrs.
 - Sheriff’s executive staff report to pre-scheduled Portola Elementary Open-House to provide information to parents and public regarding incident and provide contact information for follow up

Steps taken after the May 21, 2024 incident:

Our Office halted all chemical training exercises while we reviewed best practices. On August 8, 2024, Sheriff Miyamoto issued a letter to the Portola Community and local authorities that moving forward the Sheriff’s office will not use chemical agents for training at the San Bruno Complex. In addition, the Sheriff’s Office is participating in the San Mateo Alert system (SMC-Alert) to notify community members of any potential hazards or critical incidents that may impact the community. At a community meeting held with San Mateo County first responders and city officials, the Sheriff provided claim information and offered community members and opportunity to conduct a site visit of the area where the training took place. Approximately 10 community members and local officials participated in the site-visit in July 2024.

Training Notification Procedure:

Our Office always notifies the San Bruno Police and San Bruno Fire Departments on the morning of such training exercises. That notification did occur on May 21, 2024. Due to unforeseen circumstances that occurred on May 21, 2024, we are currently revisiting a notification system that would include both Portola Elementary School and surrounding neighbors.

Regulatory Agency Investigations:

- This incident was reported to Cal-Oes and is registered under incident ID number 24-3187
- The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has issued a violation (Violation #A60970) and assessed a fine of \$35,000.00. The violation results from allegations arising from Health and Safety Code Section 42403(b). Results of their investigation are not available until the fine has been paid. We are currently working with the City Attorney to address the terms of the violation payment.
- The County of San Mateo Environmental Health Services (CUPA) is also investigating the matter under Health and Safety Code Section(s) 25507 as well as chapter 6.95 and 25505(a)(4). The final results are still pending. SFSO is working with the agency and made contact as recently as February 5, 2025 via phone to verify that there are no final reports available at this time.