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LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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SOP# P-056

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SUBJECT: PEPPER AEROSOL RESTRAINT SPRAY  
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INDEX AS: PEPPER SPRAY                      OC SPRAY  
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EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/17/2005                      REVISED DATE:  
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I.     PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of oleoresin capsicum (OC) aerosol restraint spray.

II.    POLICY:  
This agency has issued OC aerosol restraint spray to provide officers with additional use-of-force options for gaining compliance of resistant or aggressive individuals in arrest and other enforcement situations. It is the policy of this agency that officers use OC when warranted, but only in accordance with the guidelines and procedures set forth here and in this agency's use-of-force policy.

III.   PROCEDURES:

A.     Authorization

1.     Only officers who have completed instruction on the use of OC are authorized to carry the device.
2.     Officers whose normal duties/assignments may require them to make arrest or supervise arrestees shall be required to carry departmentally authorized OC while on duty.
3.     Uniformed officers shall carry only departmentally authorized OC canisters in the prescribed manner on the duty belt. Non-uniformed officers may carry OC in alternative devices as authorized by the agency.

B.     Usage Criteria

1.     OC spray is considered a use of force and shall be employed in a manner consistent with this agency's use-of-force policy.

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OC is a force option following verbal compliance tactics on the use-of-force continuum.

2. OC may be used when:
  - a. Verbal dialogue has failed to bring about the subject's compliance, and
  - b. The subject has signaled his intention to actively resist the officer's efforts to make the arrest.
3. Whenever practical and reasonable, officers should issue a verbal warning prior to using OC against a suspect.
4. An officer may use deadly force to protect himself from the use or threatened use of OC when the officer reasonably believes that deadly force will be used against them should they become incapacitated.
5. Once a suspect is incapacitated or restrained, use of OC is no longer justified.

C. Usage Procedures

1. Whenever possible, officers should be upwind from the suspect before using OC and should avoid entering the spray area.
2. An officer should maintain a safe distance, of at least two to ten feet, if possible from the suspect.
3. A single spray burst of between one and three seconds should be directed at the suspect's eyes, nose and mouth. Additional burst(s) may be used if the initial or subsequent burst is not effective.
4. Use of OC should be avoided, if possible, under conditions where it may affect innocent bystanders.

D. Effects of OC and Officer Response

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1. Within several seconds of being sprayed by OC, a suspect will normally display symptoms of temporary blindness, have difficulty breathing, burning sensation in the throat, nausea, lung pain and/or impaired thought process.
2. The effects of OC vary among individuals, therefore, all suspects shall be handcuffed as soon as possible after being sprayed. Officers should also be prepared to employ other means to control the suspect- to include, if necessary, other force options consistent with agency policy- If the suspect does not respond sufficiently to the spray and cannot otherwise be subdued.
3. Immediately after spraying a suspect, officers shall be alert to any indications that the individual needs medical care. This includes, but is not limited to, breathing difficulties, gagging, profuse sweating and loss of consciousness. Upon observing these or other medical problems or if the suspect requests medical assistance, the officer shall immediately summon emergency medical aid.
4. Suspects that have been sprayed shall be monitored continuously for indications of medical problems and shall not be left alone while in police custody.
5. Officers should provide assurance to suspects who have been sprayed that the effects are temporary and encourage them to relax.
6. Air will normally begin reducing the effects of OC spray within 15 minutes of exposure. However, once the suspect has been restrained, officers shall assist him by rinsing and drying the exposed area.
7. Assistance shall be offered to any individuals accidentally exposed to OC spray who feel the effects of the agent. All such incidents shall be reported as soon as possible to the officer's immediate supervisor and shall be detailed in an incident report.

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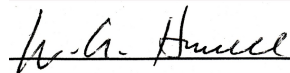
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**E. Reporting Procedures**

1. Accidental discharges as well as intentional uses of OC spray against an individual in an enforcement capacity shall be reported to the officer's immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
2. A use-of-force report shall be completed following all discharges of OC spray except during testing, training, malfunction or accidental discharge.

**F. Replacement**

1. All OC spray devices shall be maintained in an operational and charged state by assigned personnel. Replacements for damaged, inoperable or empty devices are the responsibility of officers to whom they are issued.
2. Replacements of OC spray canisters shall occur when the unit is less than half full, as determined by weighing the canister.
3. OC canisters shall be inspected and weighed at the firing range during firearms qualification. A record of this fact shall be maintained by the appropriate agency authority.
4. Unexplained depletion of OC canisters shall require an investigation and written report by the officer's supervisor to the Sheriff.



**W. A. HARRELL  
SHERIFF**

**8/17/2005**

**EFFECTIVE DATE**