

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office

Less-Lethal Shotgun

1 Hour

Course Title: Less-lethal shotgun update

Course Goal: Train deputies to effectively operate the Remington 870 less-lethal projectile launching system.

Audience: Sworn personnel

Core Competencies: Decision making; firearms safety; operation of weapon system.

DATE: 02/12/2026

TIME: 1500-1600

LOCATION: San Benito County Sheriff's Office Shooting Range 1456 Bolsa Road, Hollister, CA 95023

INSTRUCTORS: E. Engelhardt / P. Sandlin / M. Moise

Mandated Training: Yes

Method of Presentation: Lecture, demonstration, discussion, dry practice, live fire, scenarios

I. Orientation / Instructor / Overview

1. Class Orientation
 - a. Instructor introductions (Instructors, background, etc)
 - i. Course Outline / Overview (Purpose of training, what will happen throughout the class – safety brief, less-lethal policy & procedure review, Remington 870 nomenclature and operation, live fire training, scenarios with live fire and qualification course)

II. Safety Plan

1. Designated class medic (if any participants or instructors are certified EMT or higher)
2. Location of first aid kit
3. Location of nearest emergency room

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4. Location of nearest trauma center (this gets briefed but is obviously up to AMR and varies based on nature of injury and availability)
5. Actions in event of injury
 - a. Minor injury – treat with first aid kit (ensure that a Sgt or higher completes Worker's Comp forms within 24 hours; also notify Firearms Team Sgt)
 - b. Transport to ER by private vehicle if necessary (private vehicle only if injured deputy agrees and injury will not be worsened by transport)
6. Actions in event of serious/traumatic injury
 - a. Begin treatment with first aid kit
 - b. Notify dispatch by radio or 911 for EMS response
 - c. If necessary, evacuate to ER by marked Code 3 vehicle
7. Notify dispatch that firearms training is in progress

III. References

1. Lexipol Policy 300 – Use of force
 - a. Duty to intercede
 - b. Duty to report excessive force
 - c. Deputies shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given that the facts and totality of the circumstances known to or perceived by the deputy at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
 - d. Any peace officer may use objectively reasonable force to effect an arrest, prevent escape, or to overcome resistance.
2. Lexipol Policy 302.8 – Kinetic Energy Projectile Guidelines
 - a) No lethal ammunition anywhere
 - b) Circumstances appropriate for deployment include but are not limited to, situations in which:
 - a. The suspect is armed with a weapon and the tactical circumstances allow for the safe application of approved munitions.
 - b. The suspect has made credible threats to harm himself/herself or others.
 - c. The suspect is engaged in riotous behavior or is throwing rocks, bottles or other dangerous projectiles at people and/or deputies.
 - d. There is probable cause to believe that the suspect has already committed a crime of violence and is refusing to comply with lawful orders.
 - c) Deployment considerations
 - a. Distance and angle to target.
 - b. Type and thickness of subjects clothing

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- c. The location of the subject.
- d. Whether the subjects actions dictate the need for an immediate response and the use of control devices appears appropriate.
- d) A verbal warning of the intended use of the device should precede its application, unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of deputies or when it is not practical due to the circumstances.
- 3. Review of less-lethal philosophy: Less lethal is force that when used properly, are less likely to result in death or serious physical injury and can be used in an attempt to de-escalate a potentially deadly situation. Not less than lethal.

IV. Classroom Instruction

1. Nomenclature

- I. Buttstock
 - 1. Orange to denote use as less-lethal device only
- II. Fore-end (Foreward horizontal hand grip, aka slide)
- III. Receiver
- IV. Trigger
- V. Safety (Crossbolt safety – push to left for OFF – red stripe shows on outside of safety when OFF)
- VI. Barrel
 - 1. Smooth bore (No rifling – projectile's stability comes from within its own features – we will cover this after covering operation of the weapon itself)
- VII. Magazine (tubular – 4 rounds)
- VIII. Loading port
- IX. Carrier (aka tongue – raises shell from magazine into breech)
- X. Action bar lock (angled tab with sawtooth edge protruding downward just in front of trigger guard – allows slide to be moved to rear when hammer is cocked)
- XI. Sling
- XII. Tactical light (demonstrate operation of light and modes, if applicable)
- XIII. Sidesaddle ammunition holder (discuss whether shells are stored primer-up or –down)
- XIV. Sighting system (rear notch, front bead – fixed sights; discuss proper sight alignment)

2. Loading

- a. Safety on
- b. Move slide to rear

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- I. If slide is locked forward, depress action bar lock and then move fore end rearward
 - c. Visually and physically inspect chamber and magazine
 - I. View magazine follower to confirm magazine is empty
 - d. Loading
 - I. Move slide forward (hammer is now cocked and will fall when trigger is pulled. Additionally, action bars are locked and bolt cannot be moved rearward unless either 1. Trigger is pulled and hammer falls, or 2. Action bar lock is pressed)
 - II. Confirm safety on
 - III. Insert four shells into magazine (verify that each shell is a less-lethal round)
- 3. Unloading
 - I. Safety on (remember that action is still cocked)
 - II. Move slide to rear, while at same time inserting finger or thumb tip into loading port
 - III. With fingertip, push carrier upward to prevent shell from being lifted into chamber
 - IV. With fingertip, push on shell latch to allow shells to be pushed backward by magazine spring
 - V. Remove shell from magazine
 - VI. Repeat until magazine is empty
- 4. Patrol safe configuration
 - a. Magazine loaded
 - b. Chamber empty
 - c. Slide forward
 - d. Safety on

(LL devices carried in patrol cars will have 4 rounds in magazine plus 1 in each slot on the sidesaddle; inspect magazine to ensure 4 rounds are inside before beginning shift)
- 5. Aiming
 - a. Hold shotgun up with cheek securely against the stock.
 - b. Eye should be looking directly down the top of the barrel.
 - c. Bead should appear to be just sitting on top of the barrel, no barrel should be visible.
 - d. While aligned, place bead on desired target.
- 6. Firing
 - a. Safety on
 - b. Depress action bar lock (necessary to get a round into chamber due to patrol safe configuration)
 - c. Move fore-end fully rearward
 - d. Immediately move fore-end fully forward (do it like you mean it – move the slide forcefully to make sure it goes full stroke)

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- I. Chamber is now loaded and ready to fire
 - e. When decision to fire is made and sights are on target, safety off
 - f. Pull trigger
 - g. Immediately move fore-end fully to rear and return to fully forward
 - I. Action bar lock will not need to be depressed
 - h. When no further rounds need to be fired, safety on
 - i. When incident is secure, unload shotgun and return to patrol safe configuration
(Cycle of operation – cocking, chambering, locking, firing, extraction, ejection)
- 7. Reloading
 - a. Combat reload (fastest way to get a round in the chamber when magazine is empty)
 - 1. With slide locked to rear (chamber open), remove shell from sidesaddle carrier
 - 2. Cup shell in support hand with primer to rear
 - 3. Move hand underneath receiver to ejection port
 - 4. Insert shell into ejection port
 - 5. Move fore-end fully forward
 - b. Reload magazine (get device ready for immediate re-use – you don't know what's going to happen next)
 - 1. Remove shell from sidesaddle carrier
 - 2. Insert shell into magazine through loading port
- 8. Malfunctions (like with all firearms, most malfunctions are caused by operator error)
 - a. Failure to feed/Failure to fire
 - I. Move fore-end fully to rear and immediately move it fully forward
 - II. Failure to extract/Failure to eject
 - 1. Move slide fully to rear and immediately fully forward
 - 2. If unsuccessful, repeat more forcefully
 - 3. If fore-end does not move, depress action bar lock
- 9. Employment of less-lethal shotguns
 - a. Policies and philosophy of less-lethal force remains the same as before
 - I. Review of Lexipol 300 (Use of force) and 302.8 (Kinetic energy projectile devices)
 - II. Effective ranges
 - 1. 7 yards minimum distance – Any closer and the bean bag round could penetrate skin and is considered lethal force at that distance.

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2. 25 yard maximum – any farther and the bean bag round loses too much velocity/kinetic energy to be effective.
- III. Target zones
 1. Primary (green)
 - a. Upper legs
 2. Secondary (yellow)
 - a. Lower abdomen
 - b. Extremities
 - c. Upper back
- IV. Non-target (red) zones
 1. Face & head
 2. Neck
 3. Upper abdomen (Large vital organs with lots of blood can be seriously damaged by blunt force injury)
 4. Groin
 5. Spine
 6. Lower back (kidneys can be seriously injured)
- V. Less-lethal devices will not be deployed without lethal cover present/immediately available from a deputy other than the less-lethal operator (transition to higher level of force might be immediately necessary)
- VI. Formulate a plan for handling incident prior to making suspect contact (if circumstances allow time for predeployment planning) (fail to plan, plan to fail; at the very least, make sure everyone knows everyone's role. If time is available, brief on roles, deployment/contact plan, contingency plan, post-event actions, and have everyone brief back their role.)
 1. Minimally, designate less-lethal operator, lethal cover and suspect control (handcuffing) deputy
- VII. Prior to firing less-lethal launcher, the operator will loudly call out the word "Device"
 1. Review this procedure prior to making suspect contact
 - a. Prevent sympathetic fire
 - i. Even more important if other agencies are present
 - b. Load chamber prior to making suspect contact
 - i. If operator attempts to fire device and failure occurs due to empty chamber, resulting delay could negatively alter outcome of incident (assume that the suspect is going to move and you will be in contact before expected)

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- c. If projectile is fired, immediately rack slide to place fresh projectile in chamber
 - I. Be prepared for immediate followup shots (suspect's size, alcohol, drugs, emotional state, accuracy of shot could cause munition to be ineffective)
 - d. Remain prepared to launch projectiles until suspect is secure and possibility of threat is confirmed to no longer exist (make independent decision for each shot)
 - e. Return to patrol safe configuration prior to returning device to patrol car
10. Actions following less-lethal device firing
- a. Medical treatment/clearance for suspect (even if no obvious injuries and suspect says he's okay – blunt force injuries might not be visible, drugs/alcohol/adrenaline might mask pain)
 - b. Supervisor notification (as soon as practical when Code 4)
 - c. Documentation (report written by every deputy who used force in accordance with policy; consult Lexipol 302.8 for wording re less-lethal device)
 - d. Evidence collection (retain expended projectiles and shell casings unless directed by supervisor that it isn't necessary. If so, document in report.)
11. Live fire training
- a. 7 yards (Instructors look for immediately racking slide and chambering fresh round when each round is fired; also look for accuracy and proper stance/recoil absorption for accurate followup shot)
 - I. Load magazine with four rounds
 - II. Load sidesaddle with six rounds
 - III. Fire 2 rounds to the arms
 - IV. Fire 2 rounds to the legs
 - 1. Reload (Instructors watch for students hurrying and fumbling with rounds, or for students who need additional individual instruction; if so, delay next string until that training is accomplished. There is plenty of time built in for additional training.)
 - b. 15 yards
 - I. Fire 2 rounds - legs
 - II. Fire 1 round – lower abdomen
 - 1. Reload
 - c. 20 yards
 - I. Fire 1 round – lower abdomen
 - II. Fire 2 rounds - legs
 - d. Instructors evaluate student performance

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- I. Assign additional training as necessary
- 12. Qualification course of fire (80%)
 - a. 7 yards
 - I. Load with 4 rounds in magazine and 4 in sidesaddle
 - II. Fire 2 rounds
 - III. Fire 1 round
 - b. 15 yards
 - I. Fire 1 round
 - II. Challenge – Suspect complies – De-escalate
 - III. Fire 2 rounds
 - c. 20 yards
 - I. Fire 1 round
 - II. Fire 1 round
- 13. Review of material/Student questions & further discussion
- 14. Secure from training
 - a. Unload and make safe all less-lethal shotguns
 - b. Secure munitions

VI. References:

- 1. Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Policy on Use of Force (300)
- 2. Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Policy on Kinetic Energy Projectile Weapons (302.8)