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Evaluation Coordinator: Training Division

*“Department Training Bulletins shall be used to advise members of current police techniques and procedures and shall constitute official policy.”*

## ARMORED VEHICLES

### Overview

The purpose of this Training Bulletin is to serve as a guideline for the safe use and deployment of any armored vehicle allowed to operate in the Department's jurisdiction. This Training Bulletin applies to all armored vehicle deployments by the Department through mutual aid to other jurisdictions, and to armored vehicle deployments by other agencies operating in Oakland under the Department's control. The Department's armored vehicles include a Lenco BearCat and an armored Chevrolet Suburban (Armored Suburban).

An armored vehicle is a piece of law enforcement equipment that may allow officers to use non-force options to safely resolve incidents involving actual, threatened, or reasonably suspected violence using firearms or explosives. The protective capabilities of an armored vehicle greatly exceed those of a patrol vehicle and proper deployment of armored vehicles may increase the safety of the public, law enforcement officers, and other first responders. Armored vehicles provide improved cover for officers, are stocked with tools that might be needed during a critical incident, and increase the options for a safe resolution.

Deployment of an armored vehicle might result in the safe apprehension of an engaged person in a timely manner. The Department recognizes that the deployment or appearance of certain armored vehicles may escalate tension, provoke fear, prevent clear communication, or increase distrust. The Department therefore restricts deployment of armored vehicles to those situations where the benefits of deployment outweigh the potential detrimental effects.

### Authorized Uses of Armored Vehicles

Command officers (at the rank of Lieutenant of above) may authorize the deployment of an armored vehicle for:

- Use as mobile physical cover in incidents involving actual or threatened violence, or when reasonable suspicion, based on articulable facts, exists that violence will occur using firearms or explosives.
- Vehicle blocking for incidents involving armed and unresponsive persons in vehicles (Reference Training Bulletin III-P.01).
- Medical emergencies and disaster responses, when the armored vehicle's capabilities are necessary to prevent loss of life.



- Oversight and informational purposes, as authorized by the Police Commission

Commanders shall only authorize the deployment of armored vehicles when the specific capabilities of the BearCat or Armored Suburban are necessary to bring an incident to a safe conclusion. Any authorized departure from an armored vehicle's place of storage shall be considered a deployment.

Safe use of armored vehicles during authorized deployments:

Vehicle deployments will necessarily vary depending on the circumstances at hand. All uses of armored vehicles should be consistent with Department training and procedures and include:

- Maintaining adequate cover. The armored vehicle's capabilities greatly exceed those of any patrol vehicles and should be maximized.
- Restricting persons' movement. The armored vehicle may give an advantage over conventional patrol vehicles for such maneuvers as blocking in another vehicle.
- Allowing for peaceful negotiations. Armored vehicles may allow officers to get into position to safely negotiate while still maintaining cover.
- The armored vehicle should be placed in such a way as to maximize the position of protection for officers or others at risk of harm, to allow all reasonable means for resolving the incident peacefully.
- Protecting Life. Armored vehicles may be able to operate in situations (e.g. active shooter) where personnel driving conventional vehicles would be at risk.
- Assessing the threat posed by the armed person, and proportional force options to respond to immediate contingencies if necessary. Depending on the ability of officers to mitigate the immediate threat posed by an armed person to officers and the public, officers may not need to necessarily use force pre-emptively even if the person moves or awakens and does not immediately disarm themselves.

**Pre-planned Operation of Armored Vehicles**

All pre-planned deployments of armored vehicles must be authorized by a command officer at the rank of Captain or above. Commanders shall ensure that an operations plan (Reference Training Bulletin III-Q and TF -3116 Operations Plan and Risk Assessment Overview) is completed for all pre-planned deployments.

Commanders shall make every effort to avoid the deployment of armored vehicles in the presence of minors, the elderly, medically compromised people, people with physical, mental or intellectual disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, or other vulnerable people. (Reference DGO K-3 Use of Force for definition of "vulnerable people".)

Commanders shall determine whether to deploy an armored vehicle based on credible intelligence, and consider the following variables when determining whether to deploy an armored vehicle, and the type of armored vehicle to deploy:



- Whether the use of an alternative operation location would diminish the need to use an armored vehicle.
- Potential presence of minors, elderly, medically compromised, people with physical, mental or intellectual disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, or other vulnerable people. (Note: This variable should be given special consideration due to the potential for trauma.)
- Potential presence of uninvolved persons. (Note: This variable should be given special consideration due to the potential for trauma.)
- Potential traumatic effect of an armored vehicle's presence on neighbors and other bystanders.
- Lack of knowledge on relevant characteristics of the operation location and persons present.
- Reliability of intelligence source for information on the operation location and persons present.
- For night-time operations, potential effects on sleeping or just-awakened persons.
- Potential presence of firearms (including caliber and type), explosives, chemical agents, edged weapons.
- Potential skills of persons present to use firearms or other weapons, including experience in law enforcement, military, or other armed groups.
- Whether the targeted person(s) have a history (within a time period relevant to the suspected crime) involving the criminal use of firearms or other weapons.
- Geographic factors, such as barriers, locked gates, water, thick brush, and narrow roads, and other factors that limit the maneuverability of the armored vehicle.
- Presence and type of animals present.

### **Prohibited Uses of Armored Vehicles**

All uses that are not authorized by this policy are prohibited. For purposes of clarity, the following are specifically noted as prohibited uses:

- Recruitment, public relations, or promotional activities
- Crowd control
- Routine patrol operations
- Attachment of a weapon
- Attachment of a ram (outside of use during natural disasters or medical emergencies)



## **Operation of Armored Vehicles**

Armored vehicles shall only be operated by officers<sup>1</sup> certified by the Tactical Operations Team commander. This includes, but is not limited to, all members of the Entry Team and Sniper Team elements. It also includes all Patrol Rifle Officers (PRO's).

## **Vehicle and Operations Training**

All officers authorized to operate armored vehicles shall participate in training sessions for their proper operation, which shall be conducted by a member of the Department's Training Staff. Periodic training shall include a review of the essential features of the vehicle, and a driving, operational and tactical maneuvering assessment, to ensure all operators are proficient in its use, and aware of emergency procedures. The records of such training shall be maintained by the Department's Training Staff.

Armored vehicles shall also be included in scenario-based training, to provide officers who respond to critical incidents with continued familiarization to ensure the safe operation and effectiveness of these vehicles. Scenario and classroom-based training also offer the opportunity to screen for, monitor, and assess an officer's mental and physical readiness to conduct critical incident operations prior to deployment in such operations.

Use of an armored vehicle for training purposes shall be considered a "use" for purposes of reporting.

## **Use of Video Recording Devices with Armored Vehicles**

Officers operating an armored vehicle shall utilize any video recording devices assigned to that vehicle<sup>2</sup> in accordance with Departmental policy for the use of portable digital recording devices (e.g. Departmental General Order I-15.1). This means that absent exigent circumstance (e.g. active shooter) the recording devices shall be attached to the armored vehicle and activated prior to initiating the circumstances enumerated in policy (e.g. detentions and arrests, serving a search or arrest warrant). Additionally, recording devices shall not be deactivated until allowed per policy.

Once an armored vehicle is deployed to the scene, the on-scene supervisor of the officers utilizing the armored vehicle (e.g. Team Leader of the Designated Arrest Team) shall ensure the cameras are positioned towards the person or the location of interest when it is feasible to do so safely.

The officer operating the armored vehicle is responsible for ensuring video recording devices are deployed with the armored vehicle and activated appropriately, recordings are uploaded to the appropriate system, and video recording devices are returned to their charging stations. These duties may be assigned to other personnel by the incident commander as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> "Officers" includes all sworn members of all ranks and is used for brevity.

<sup>2</sup> This includes the portable video recording devices assigned each of the Department's armored vehicles, but might include additional devices purchased for armored vehicles in the future.



### **After Action and Documentation of Deployments**

Commanders authorizing deployment of an armored vehicle shall notify their chain of command of the deployment as soon as is practical after the incident has been resolved. A commander who authorizes the deployment of an armored vehicle for purposes other than training or maintenance shall email notification to all OPD commanders (e.g. DL – OPD Command). The email shall include a brief synopsis of the incident along with at least the following details:

- Date, time, and location
- Report and incident numbers
- Incident commander and tactical commander (if applicable)
- Scene supervisor(s)
- Which armored vehicle(s) were used
- Justification for deployment of the armored vehicle(s)
- Other specialized resources used (e.g. helicopter, canine)
- Demographic information about persons engaged at the target location (e.g., gender, race, age, membership in a vulnerable population)
- Presence or absence of media
- Description of arrests, injuries, uses of force, complaints, and/or property damage

Notifications of deployment shall include dissemination of information to the Department PIO and through Department social media channels. The commander of the Special Operations Section shall maintain a record of all deployments and ensure that information about all deployments (both callout and pre-planned), including for each of the above data points, is included in the division's Annual Management Report. Dispatch shall make a log entry in incident notes when an armored vehicle is deployed in a call-out (i.e. not pre-planned), for tracking and documentation purposes.