

LESS LETHAL WEAPONS:

Kinetic Impact Projectiles (KIPs)

What are they and how may they be used lawfully?

Kinetic Impact Projectiles (KIPs, commonly known as rubber or plastic bullets), are less lethal weapons whose use must be strictly limited to situations of violent disorder posing a risk of harm to persons. They allow police to intervene at distance.

HOW DO KIPs WORK?

- KIPs are blunt impact projectiles meant to be fired at a person from a certain distance, commonly made of rubber, plastic or other materials, including fabric bags weighted with lead or plastic shot (so-called “bean-bags”).
- They are generally deemed “less lethal” due to their lower velocity and larger surface/impact area.
- Some have a tip designed to crumble upon impact, some containing additional substances, such as paint, CS powder or PAVA.
- Some release multiple projectiles at a time. They can be fired with different types and sizes of launchers, including shotguns.

EFFECTS & RISKS

Warranted effects

- ✓ Minor bruises.
- ✓ Pain through impact.

Unwarranted effects & risks

May cause serious injury and even death.

- ✗ Risk increases with the firing power of the launcher; when projectiles are shot at close range or hit a person in sensitive areas of the body, namely the head, eyes, neck, chest or abdomen.
- ✗ Serious injuries include the penetration of the skin, lacerations, bone fractures, concussions, head injuries such as skull fractures and brain injury, internal organ damage, eye injury or loss of eyesight.
- ✗ There are also cases in which kinetic impact projectiles have led to death, for example, due to inner bleeding, thoracic trauma or brain injury after entering through the eye.

WHEN CAN KIPs BE USED LAWFULLY?

THRESHOLD AND PURPOSE

- ✓ Against a person engaged in violence against another person likely to cause considerable injury.
- ✓ To stop the violent behaviour through the pain inflicted but not to injure the person severely.
- ✓ When other methods are not an option because they require close proximity – such as empty hand techniques (using only the hands) or batons – or because they would not be necessary or proportionate (projectile electric-shock weapons or firearms).
- ✓ Each discharge must be justified on its own whether it is necessary and proportionate.

PROHIBITIONS

- ✗ When a person offers only passive resistance or does not present a serious threat to another person.
- ✗ When the person has already been brought under control.
- ✗ As a means of punishment.

HOW CAN KIPs BE USED LAWFULLY?

Do's

- ✓ After a warning with sufficient time granted to comply with the order.
- ✓ Aim at the lower abdomen or legs in order to avoid any more serious injuries such as eye injuries.
- ✓ Use must stop as soon as the person has stopped engaging in violence.

Don'ts

All uses that increase the risk of hitting a sensitive area of the body or a person who does not present a threat, including:

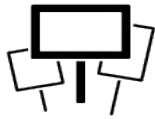
- ✗ Skip firing (firing at the ground for the projectile to bounce)
- ✗ Firing randomly at a crowd.
- ✗ Firing in a particularly volatile situation when it is impossible to target a person engaged in serious violence.

WEAPONS TO BE PROHIBITED

All projectiles that are inherently inaccurate or bear an uncontrollable risk of serious injury:

- ✗ Multiple projectiles.
- ✗ Inherently inaccurate projectiles.
- ✗ Rubber-coated metal bullets.

KIPs AND PROTESTS



Peaceful assemblies must be facilitated. Only a very limited number of law enforcement officials – specifically trained and deployed for that purpose - should be equipped with the weapon to ensure it is only used in the described exceptional circumstances and in a carefully controlled manner with proper supervision by commanding officers. Police may only use KIPs in situations of violent disorder posing a risk of harm to persons.

Police should always:

- ✓ Carefully target the person engaged in serious violence against another person.
- ✓ Aim at the lower parts of that person's body.
- ✓ Fire from the appropriate distance as indicated by the manufacturer and approved by the command leadership of the law enforcement agency after independent testing.

The police should not:

- ✗ Use KIPs against persons who are merely engaged in violence against property or are not engaged in violence at all but only resisting orders.
- ✗ Use KIPs as a means of dispersal.
- ✗ Fire KIPs randomly at a crowd.
- ✗ Intentionally fire KIPs to rebound them off the ground (skip fire) before hitting the target.
- ✗ Fire KIPs from an elevated position (high risk of hitting the head).

KIPs AND CHILDREN



The use of any weapon against children must be avoided!

Children are more likely to suffer greater injury and harm because they have thinner muscle mass, feel pain stronger, and are at greater risk of psychological trauma. Further, they are less likely to present a threat that justifies the use of KIPs. Instructions must include special precautions regarding children, such as a greater risk of hitting the head due to their smaller bodies.

INSTRUCTIONS AND TRAINING



Authorities must provide clear regulations, instructions and training on how to use KIPs properly. Kinetic impact projectiles must be placed at the upper level of the use of force scale, just below the use of (lethal) firearms. They should only be deployed in response to exceptional and particularly serious circumstances that could justify the risks inherent to this type of weapon, based on a clearly established legitimate operational need that complies with international human rights law and standards on the use of force. Random firing at a crowd must be prohibited as well as the use of KIPs as a means of dispersal.

- ✓ KIPs, like all weapons, should undergo rigorous, independent testing to ensure they are safe and appropriate for use in compliance with human rights laws and standards. Any KIPs with a significant risk of causing excessive or otherwise unwarranted injury or harm should not be used, in particular those that have a too great an impact and/or are inherently inaccurate. To meet international standards, impact projectiles should be capable of striking an individual within a 10-centimetre diameter of the targeted point when fired from the designated range.
- ✓ Law enforcement officials must be carefully trained in estimating the correct firing range and targeting properly even in stressful and volatile situations.
- ✓ Only qualified police officials, trained by certified, independent police trainers, and not just the manufacturer of the weapon, should be authorized to carry KIPs.
- ✓ Police must issue a clear verbal warning seeking to calm down the situation; ample time should be given to comply.
- ✓ Each firing of a KIP must be reported and police officials must be held accountable for any unlawful use.

MORE INFORMATION



- Amnesty's Kinetic Impact Projectiles [Position paper](#) and [Summary](#)
- Amnesty's report ["My Eye Exploded": the Global Abuse of Kinetic Impact Projectiles](#)
- Amnesty's [Use of Force: Guidelines for Implementation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials](#) and [Summary](#)
- [UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials](#)
- Amnesty's [Police and Human Rights resources website](#)



