

# Some further questions about the use of force policy

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police June 19, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police 

*Peter Crownfield is officially retired but spends most of his time working with students in his role as internship coordinator for the Alliance for Sustainable Communities–Lehigh Valley.*

*Paul Muschick, “Amid calls for police reform, Bethlehem police went beyond call of duty.” Morning Call, June 19, 2020.*

Gadfly:

Kudos to BPD for releasing this! [The **use of force policy**] As I said before, it is, in my opinion, better than some others I have seen. It does however raise some questions.

The document lists chemical weapons, impact weapons, and electronic control devices as “intermediate weapons” in the continuum, but while these are usually not lethal, all can be lethal for some people under some conditions. There are many documented cases of serious injury from “less-lethal” weapons tear gas & pepper spray, from “flash-bang” devices, and from tasers

It’s not clear from this document whether BPD has or is prepared to use “rubber bullets” that we have seen used this month by police in some cities. (These are usually steel coated with rubber or plastic.) These too have caused many serious injuries (such as permanent blindness and brain injury) and some fatalities.

I won’t go into detail here, but I assume all officers are trained to recognize how these “less-lethal” weapons can in fact cause permanent and sometimes fatal injury even if used properly.

There is also the question as to when some provisions are added. BPD should also release the previous version and show when it was modified.

Peter

*Regarding the last point, this is the second time Peter has made it. What is he getting at? The Muschick article linked above says the policies are reviewed annually*