Patrol Guidelines for Deployment of Ballistic Shields

Purpose

This training bulletin provides technical and procedural information regarding the deployment of the “Minuteman” Ballistic Shield. Additionally, the bulletin will address deployment techniques, general use of the ballistic shield, and its limitations.

Introduction

The “Minuteman” – First Responder Folding Ballistic Shield, is a Level 3A ballistic barrier (24” x 48”) with view port (2” x 10”) that folds into three sections for ease of storage. The NIJ-3 ballistic panels are made of “Dyneema” and have the ballistic capacity to stop handgun caliber ammunition. When deployed from the carrying case, the Minuteman shield extends into three panels, with overlapping ballistic material covering the creases. The shield deploys into a rigid configuration using the included stiffening dowels. An attachable light is carried with the shield and may be used in low light conditions.

The “Minuteman” shield can be deployed in situations where its ballistic capacity may afford officers greater coverage then their personal ballistic vest, as well as instances when the shield can be used as a physical barrier when engaging non-ballistic threats. The “Minuteman” shield is not designed to stop rifle fire.

I. Tactical Deployment

A. Ballistic Shields

Ballistic Shields will be maintained in the sergeants’ units. Except under extraordinary circumstances, only supervisors and officers who have undergone ballistic shield training shall be authorized to deploy the device. Supervisors in possession of the shield will take several factors into consideration prior to authorizing deployment.

B. Factors

Some of the factors to be considered are as follows:
1. Whether it is exigent in nature and requires an immediate response, or if the situation meets the criteria for a S.W.A.T. call-out. (See Departmental Order No. 355 for the S.W.A.T. Call-Out Procedure)

2. Whether or not it is believed the weapon possessed by the suspect exceeds the protection capabilities of the Minuteman Shield, which is only effective against non-armor piercing handgun ammunition.

3. Whether the officers at the scene possess the necessary capabilities; taking into account their experience, applicable training, and physical ability to effectively carry the shield.

C. Threats

The Minutemen Shield may be deployed to address both Ballistic and Non-Ballistic threats.

1. Ballistic Threats

Ballistic threats may include, but are not limited to, the following:

   a. Active Shooter
   b. Rapid deployment and entry of a structure (Exigent Circumstances). For further information regarding Rapid Deployment, refer to Training Bulletin 04-03.
   c. Rescue missions (Officer/Citizen Down)
   d. Evacuation efforts
   e. Clearing vehicles during high-risk traffic stops involving possibly armed suspects
   d. Providing cover for perimeter officers exposed to windows and doorways

2. Non-Ballistic Threats

Non-Ballistic threats may include, but are not limited to, the following:

   a. To shield officers from combative suspects armed with weapons other than firearms
   b. To provide a protective barrier between officers and suspects during the deployment of less lethal weaponry

D. Other Situations

Listed above are but a few examples of when a ballistic shield can be deployed in a patrol environment. Due to the dynamic nature of police work, other situations will arise in which the utilization of a ballistic shield could aid officers in addressing both Ballistic and Non-Ballistic threats.

II. Operation of the Minuteman Shield and Light Attachment
The Minuteman Ballistic Shield and stiffening dowels are stored in a nylon carrying case inside the trunks of sergeant's vehicles. The shield can deploy quickly and is made rigid within 20-30 seconds by inserting the stiffening dowels into pockets sewn onto the shield cover.

The Minuteman shield contains four nylon carry handles (2 vertical & 2 horizontal) on the backside of the center ballistic panel. Any of the handles can be utilized by the shield bearer when carrying and/or deploying the shield.

When the shield is being carried in a two-handed method by the shield bearer, a secondary officer uses the shield for cover while remaining at the ready position to engage with lethal or less lethal force. Both the shield bearer and secondary officer must remain cognizant of their “line of fire” whenever working together.

In most cases, the shield should be carried in a two-handed method. However, in extraordinary circumstances the shield may be carried with the one hand. In the event that the shield is carried with one hand (non-gun hand), it is recommended that the top horizontal handle be utilized and the forearm of the carry arm be pressed into the shield for stability. When carried in this manner, the shield bearer can utilize their weapon with their free gun hand to engage deadly threats. Use of the duty weapon’s sights can be achieved by canting the duty weapon at an approximately 45 degree angle and picking up the sights through the view port when the shield is held close to the bearer’s face.

When facing a lethal threat where the suspect’s location is known, the shield bearer should face the threat and provide cover for the armed secondary officer(s). If the suspect’s location is unknown and the officer’s are under fire, the officers should back out of the fire zone to an area of safety.

Darkness may necessitate the use of the attachable Surefire Ballistic Shield light. The light can be clipped to the top ballistic panel of the shield and can be operated via a remote pressure switch attached to the light. The light can also be locked in the “ON” position by turning the control located on the backend of the light. Officers also have the option of utilizing their individual weapon’s lighting system (M3 Tactical Illuminator) in conjunction with deployment of the shield.

Summary

The issuance and deployment of Ballistic Shields within Field Operations provides Officers with an additional safety tool that would afford them greater protection in handling critical situations. The decision and manner in which to deploy the ballistic shield will be based on the tactical concerns that the on-scene commander may face when addressing both ballistic and non-ballistic threats.

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