

PAVA Irritant Spray

POLICY & PROCEDURE

OFFICIAL

Government Security Classification Scheme	<i>Policy section:</i> OFFICIAL - Force website approved <i>Procedure section:</i> OFFICIAL - Force website approved
Department of Origin	Matrix Uniformed Services
Policy Holder	Chief Supt Matrix
Policy Author	C/Inspector Firearms - Matrix Command
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Contents

Policy	2
National Context	2
Statement.....	2
Aims.....	2
Application and Scope.....	2
Outcome Evaluation	2
Procedure	4
Version History.....	4
1. PAVA Irritant Spray	6
2. Types of canisters.....	7
3. Assessment and competence	7
4. PAVA Database.....	7
5. Replacement / Issue	8
6. Withdrawn Canisters	8
7. Storage Requirements	8
8. Transport of Pava	9
9. Lost or Stolen Cannisters	10
10. Re-issue of personal issue canisters.....	10
11. Re-issue of canisters in other circumstances	10
12. Carrying of PAVA.....	10
13. Freedom of Information Act	10

Policy

National Context

[Authorised Professional Practice](#) (APP) is produced by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. All officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. Essentially, our “policy” is to comply with APP as it develops to cover all areas of policing.

Statement

Merseyside Police is firmly committed to the effective management and transparent control of all incidents requiring armed policing. Once authority to deploy firearms officers has been granted, there must be a regular review to ensure the authorisation remains appropriate. Reviews will be conducted in line with the [Authorised Professional Practice](#) throughout the life of the authority. The annual Firearms Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment provides the rationale for the daily deployment of armed officers across the force area with a standing authority for officers to carry live firearms.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out the way in which PAVA Irritant Spray will be used in Merseyside Police as a response option for officers’ personal safety and conflict resolution.

Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This is a non-statutory policy that sets out the principles to help guide decision making. It provides guidance that, on occasions, officers and staff may depart from based on the particular circumstances they encounter. On such occasions, officers and staff will be supported provided they can demonstrate a clear rationale which can be objectively justified for why they have departed from the policy.

Outcome Evaluation

This procedure will be reviewed annually, and any necessary amendments made.

The effectiveness of this Procedure will be reviewed at the Quarterly at the Taser Governance meetings where PSD, Federation, Equipment Officers, Academy, Area, Matrix and Management leads can discuss and review.

An agenda item featured will be Pava – Usage, Audit/Compliance, Police

Ammunition & Weapon System (PAWS) Overview, where any issues, Health and Safety reports or governing policy can be discussed, and the policy revisited, and further instructions or control measures issued to all staff.

Evaluation metrics will be provided by the managerial leads who will provide feedback to the Taser Governance group who in turn will liaise with Area leads.

Procedure

Version History

Version Number	Date	Detailed rational behind amending/updating policy or procedure.	Policy Owner Details	Policy Author Details
1.1	18/11/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3 (Assessment & Competence) inserted with link to Risk Assessment. 		
1.2	09/01/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy amendment from CS incapacitant spray to PAVA irritant spray 		
1.3	29/11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy amendment, insert change of policy at 7.5 and move original 7.5 to 7.6 		
1.4	05/09/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Statement – text authorised by Chief Constable (Feb 19). 1.2 – amend from ACPO Manual of Guidance to College of Policing APP. 4.2 – amend from Area/Department to Force. 7.6 – amend from Inspector to Sergeant (as per CC direction Sept 17). 8.1 – amend from CIM to Sergeant (as per CC direction Sept 17). 9.1 – amend from Area/Department to Force. 11 & 12 added. 		
2.0	23/02/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2 Amended to highlight the requirement of a Use of Force Form. 3.2 The following removed in line with the latest National / Force direction in relation to extensions of PSP qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In exceptional circumstances only, this may be extended by 3 months, as long as an appropriate risk assessment is completed. 5.1 b) Conflict Management Form changed to Use of Force Form. 7.2 Grammar error corrected. Confirmation that cannisters must be stored on police premises. 7.3 Amended to remove the reference to PAVA Authority Cards as these are no longer issued. 8 Audit Checks changed to Lost or Stolen Cannisters and points 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.1 & 8.2 removed in line with Regional Practice. This removes the need for supervisors to conduct 5 weekly weighing or the need to update PAWS with this audit. • 9.2 Clarifies that only the Force Armourer / Equipment Officers can reissue PAVA to ensure cannister is fully checked before re-issue. 		
2.1	27/02/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome Evaluation section added. 		
2.2	28/03/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General review – spelling corrections 		
2.3	08/08/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.2 Under exceptional circumstances Pava canisters may be transported in a private motor vehicle to a parade location. There is no requirement for authorisation to be obtained, however officers should make a record of this and have appropriate private insurance policy must be in place to allow the transportation of police equipment and business use. • 8.3 Officers are under no circumstances permitted to take personal Pava to their home address – transportation under 8.2 refers only from one station to another for business purposes. 		
2.4 (2.2)	28/08/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revert to version V2.2 • 8.1 Routine transportation of Pava canisters in private vehicles is prohibited. Regular officers working away from their parade station will have access to pool canisters at other police stations and must follow the booking out and return procedure. • 8.2 Under exceptional circumstances Pava canisters may be transported in a private motor vehicle to a parade location. This must be authorised by an Inspector or above and the appropriate private insurance policy must be in place to allow the transportation of police equipment and business use. 		
2.5	02/01/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment to Cover page wording – Procedure becomes policy & Procedure. • 8.1 Routine transportation of Pava canisters in private vehicles is prohibited. Regular officers working away from their parade 		

		<p>station will have access to pool canisters at other police stations and must follow the booking out and return procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.2 Under exceptional circumstances Pava canisters may be transported in a private motor vehicle to a parade location. This must be authorised by an Inspector or above and the appropriate private insurance policy must be in place to allow the transportation of police equipment and business use. • 8.2.2 Special constables who routinely work from different stations do not need to seek the permission described in 8.2 to transport PAVA in their private vehicle providing the appropriate private insurance policy is in place to allow the transportation of police equipment and business use. • 8.3 Officers are under no circumstances permitted to take personal Pava to their home address – transportation under 8.2 refers only from one station to another. • Section 12 changes to: Carrying of PAVA: “PAVA must be carried by Police Officers who require a PPST course and are conducting a role where it is reasonably foreseeable there will be contact with the Public.” • Section 12 becomes Section 13: Freedom of Information Act • Changes on 23/02/22 re the need for supervisors to conduct 5 weekly weighing or the need to update PAWS with this audit reviewed at Taser governance and still not required. • Transfer of policy to new template 		
2.6	12/06/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to reflect new organisational structure only; formatting refresh (no change to review date) 	Ch/Supt Matrix	Ch/Insp Firearms

1. PAVA Irritant Spray

- 1.1. PAVA irritant spray is covered under the provisions of [Section 5 \(1b\) of the Firearms Act 1968](#) and therefore it must only be carried by authorised officers.

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- 1.2. All personal safety considerations regarding use of PAVA irritant spray are covered by the College of Policing APP and various Academy lesson plans and risk assessments.
 - 1.3. The Force has an obligation to inform other agencies of hazards they may encounter resulting from the police use of PAVA irritant spray.

2. Types of canisters

- 2.1. The Force currently uses canisters supplied by CDS (Civil Defence Supply). Storage and maintenance of these types of sealed canisters are not covered in the PSP manual.
- 2.2. Any use of the canister will require immediate notification to a supervisor. A report outlining the circumstances surrounding the use must be submitted via a Use of Force Form (available on Pronto).
- 2.3. There are no special maintenance requirements in respect of PAVA irritant canisters, but officers should ensure that the canister is always inserted in the belt holder ready for use. Canisters do have a 4-year shelf life and should be replaced after this date. This will be recorded on Police Ammunition & Weapons (PAWS), but staff do have a personal responsibility to ensure their canister is in date before use.

3. Assessment and competence

- 3.1. Staff must demonstrate both initial and on-going competence for techniques being taught in relation to PAVA. They must be assessed as competent against the requirements of the GC10 National Occupational Standard.
- 3.2. Refresher training: In line with College of Policing guidelines, staff must receive assessed refresher and developmental training on an annual basis for PAVA.

4. PAVA Database

- 4.1. A database has been set up on PAWS to provide an audit trail for every canister supplied to the Force. The Force Armourer must enter details of each new canister received at Headquarters, including the serial number, weight, date of receipt and withdrawal from service.
- 4.2. When a canister is transferred to an Area / Department and subsequently issued to an officer, it is the responsibility of the Force Equipment Officers to ensure that the database is further updated.

5. Replacement / Issue

5.1. After operational use, the officer must return the canister to a supervisor who must:

- a) Ensure the officer has correctly completed all sections on the PAVA irritant storage bag.
- b) Ensure the Use of Force Form is completed and linked to Niche if appropriate.
- c) Check and weigh the canister, recording the weight on the PAVA irritant storage bag.
- d) Complete all other relevant sections on the PAVA irritant storage bag.
- e) Give the Officer the tear off strip containing the serial number of the bag to retain as a receipt.
- f) Place the canister in the PAVA irritant storage bag and secure it by means of the tamper proof seal.
- g) Submit the bag to the Equipment Officer.
- h) Obtain a replacement/initial issue PAVA canister from the designated storage cabinet.
- i) Weigh the canister to ensure it is within the permissible weight range.
- j) Record the details, including the weight, in the cabinet log.
- k) Mark the canister with the officer's FIN and issue the canister to the officer.
- l) Provide details of the replacement/initial issue for the information and attention of the Equipment Officer.
- m) Update PAWS with this information.

6. Withdrawn Canisters

6.1. The Equipment Officer must retain all withdrawn canisters for a period of 28 days prior to transfer to the Force Armourer for subsequent disposal. When the Force Armourer weighs a canister returned for disposal and finds a significant discrepancy in the weight shown on the label attached to the PAVA irritant storage bag, he/she will submit a report to the relevant Equipment Officer who should enquire into the matter and report the circumstances to his/her supervisor to determine if further action is necessary.

7. Storage Requirements

7.1. Storage areas must be dry and well ventilated. Smoking is prohibited in the storage area. Specific advice, labels, and markings together with safety wear has been issued to all police stations along with advice sheets for Custody officers, Forensic Medical Examiners and persons released from custody.

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- 7.2. Cannisters must be kept in secure cabinets within the station at the conclusion of each shift. Under no circumstances will canisters be retained in personal lockers, any location outside police premises or used for other than duty purposes. Where necessary, alarm facilities will be fitted at none 24-hour police stations to comply with legislation.
 - 7.3. Only officers who are currently qualified through Personal Safety Training (Green on Chronicle for PST) are permitted to remove their canisters for use during that tour of duty.
 - 7.4. Each time a canister is removed from the cabinet; individual officers are responsible for checking their own canister to ensure that it is not damaged. Any discrepancy must be reported immediately to a supervisor who will ensure compliance with the replacement and reporting procedures.
 - 7.5. Due to the introduction of communal PAVA cabinets each time PAVA is removed from the cabinet it is the individual officer's responsibility to record the weight of the canister using the scales provided. The weight is to be recorded in the officers Pronto / notebook. Any discrepancies must be reported immediately to a supervisor who will ensure compliance with the replacement and reporting procedures.
 - 7.6. Within the cabinet, each officer should have their own storage space clearly marked with their FIN. Any spare spaces should be marked as such to help monitor the issue of PAVA. The duty Sergeant / Equipment Officer is responsible for completing a check of the cabinet.

8. Transport of Pava

- 8.1. Routine transportation of Pava canisters in private vehicles is prohibited. Regular officers working away from their parade station will have access to pool canisters at other police stations and must follow the booking out and return procedure.
- 8.2. Under exceptional circumstances Pava canisters may be transported in a private motor vehicle to a parade location. This must be authorised by an Inspector or above and the appropriate private insurance policy must be in place to allow the transportation of police equipment and business use.
 - 8.2.1 Special constables who routinely work from different stations do not need to seek the permission described in paragraph 8.2 to transport PAVA in their private vehicle providing the appropriate private insurance policy is in place to allow the transportation of police equipment and business use.

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- 8.3. Officers are under no circumstances permitted to take personal Pava to their home address – transportation under 8.2 refers only from one station to another.

9. Lost or Stolen Canisters

- 9.1. Lost and stolen canisters will be reported immediately to a supervisor. This will be followed by a report to the officer's relevant Command Team outlining the circumstances and investigation. Command Team will make a decision on further action. (Discipline, training, advice).

10. Re-issue of personal issue canisters

- 10.1. PAVA canisters are issued on a personal issue basis and must be returned to the Force Equipment officer when an officer leaves that Area/Department.
- 10.2. Provided the canister is fit, it may be re-issued to another officer at any time thereafter by the Equipment Officers / Force Armourer. It must be weighed on return from the original officer and prior to re-issue on the PAWS system.

11. Re-issue of canisters in other circumstances

- 11.1. Where canisters are re-issued daily at specific events (e.g. Grand National) and returned at the end of the tour of duty, it is essential that proper records of issue are made. These records may be paper based provided there is no use of the canister, and the records must be retained for 12 months. Canisters must be weighed prior to issue and on return and PAWS updated.

12. Carrying of PAVA

- 12.1. PAVA must be carried by Police Officers / Special Constables who require a PPST course and are conducting a role where it is reasonably foreseeable there will be contact with the Public."

13. Freedom of Information Act

- 13.1. Consideration should be given to the fact that information regarding this procedure may be requested by members of the public under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Any such enquiries should be directed to the Force Freedom of Information Manager.