

## Amendment D to CB 120916 Crowd Management Ordinance

**Sponsor:** Councilmember Moore

Add blast ball deployment restrictions

**Effect:** This amendment would require Police Department policy to reflect, that when used for crowd movement or dispersal purposes, blast balls shall not be deployed directly into a crowd. Blast balls shall only be deployed underhand using a bowling motion, away from people. In cases of individual interdiction, when reasonable, necessary, and proportional to address immediate threats to life safety, officers may deploy blast balls overhand and near a person.

**Background on Accountability Agency Input:** On January 8, 2025, the Community Police Commission sent to City Council members and the Mayor a letter that requested that blast balls be “directed away from people, underhand, at a distance of at least 10 yards.”

On January 14, 2021, the Office of Police Accountability (OPA) made in a Management Action Recommendation (MAR) three recommendations on the deployment of blast balls:

[SPD should] “Modify the blast balls policy to prohibit the following:

1. Deploying blast balls directly into crowds unless individuals in those crowds pose a direct threat of harm to officers. A direct threat cannot be established simply because a crowd is not complying with an order to disperse.
2. Deploying blast balls directly at a person’s body or in a manner that creates a likelihood that a person could be struck unless to prevent imminent serious bodily harm or death.
3. Deploying blast balls overhand unless to prevent imminent serious bodily harm or death.”

On January 10, 2025, OPA sent a letter to Councilmembers and the Mayor that largely endorsed the SPD Interim Policies in SPD 14.090 and also indicated that the Mayor’s Office had engaged with the Office on revised policy language that requires that, when feasible, blast balls be directed towards and “open space.”

### **Background on SPD Policy:**

SPD 8.300-POL-10 (Blast Balls) sets forth a number of conditions that must be met before officers may deploy blast balls.

SPD 8.300-POL-10 (Blast Balls) also contains an exception that allows sworn employees to make individual decisions to deploy blast balls “if reasonable, necessary, and proportional to address immediate threats to life safety, but not for crowd dispersal purposes.” Under this exemption, any officer may use blast balls for targeted interdiction with a person or persons

who are creating an immediate threat to life safety. But, blast balls may not be used to disperse a crowd.

**1. Amend Amendment A by striking the third paragraph in Section 2, subsection H, and replacing it with the following:**

When used for crowd movement or dispersal purposes, Police Department policy shall reflect that blast balls shall not be deployed directly into a crowd. Blast balls shall only be deployed underhand using a bowling motion, in an open space away from people. In cases of individual interdiction, when reasonable, necessary, and proportional to address immediate threats to life safety, officers may deploy blast balls overhand and near a person.