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Abstract:

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources is currently in the process of upgrading its law enforcement services through advanced training in the area of defensive tactics. One of the objectives of this mission is to certify each of Georgia's conservation law enforcement officers in the use of an intermediate weapon in an effort to have a complete line of force options available to its law enforcement personnel. In an attempt to fill this void, the department has selected one of the most highly advanced intermediate weapons available to law enforcement today, the ASP Tactical Baton. The Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP) Tactical Baton is one the department feels will be most suited for Conservation Law Enforcement. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources feels that based upon tactical performance, control potential, injury reduction, psychological deterrence, instructor certification training availability, ease of implementation and cost there is no better choice. The ASP Tactical Baton, combined with a progressive training program, enables the Georgia conservation officer to have a complete system of force options available in the Continuum of Force.

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In recent years, the role of the police administrator has changed greatly. Their role has become much more complex primarily because of a prolific increase in civil liability. Large court settlements and the reluctance of insurance agencies to provide liability coverage have forced administrators to closely examine their policies and procedures as they relate to training. Vicarious liability has brought attention to all areas, but because of the inherent problems in the use of force, this area has proven to be one of the most costly when mistakes are made. As a result of these considerations, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources recently initiated a review of its training in the use of force area. The first objective that had to be met was to certify members of the training staff as defensive tactics instructors. Once this objective was met, a review of the department's use of force policy was started. This review revealed that both ends of the Force Continuum appeared to be adequately fulfilled. The lowest level of force is covered well in the "Ranger and the Public" instruction section, and the semi-annual training with firearms under various conditions give the ranger sufficient training in these two areas. However, the gap between empty hand control and the use of deadly force was an issue that had to be addressed. A look at other modernized policy agencies revealed that almost all have a complete line of force options available to the officer which includes an intermediate weapon. So the search for an intermediate weapon to complete the rangers force options was initiated.

At first this appeared to be a task for which there was no quick or easy answer. But, just as quickly as the search had started, it appeared that the department had discovered the perfect intermediate weapon. The intermediate weapon that the department had discovered was Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP) Tactical Baton. This baton seemed to fill all the unique needs that are inherent to Conservation Law Enforcement.

The ASP Tactical Baton meets the three major criteria for any effective intermediate control device. First, the baton must work in the field. Studies have been conducted by a very diverse group of law enforcement organizations and the consciences of the studies is that

the baton is the most dynamic and operationally effective impact weapon available to law enforcement personnel today. Second, the ASP baton is capable of being readily implemented. The training program is applicable to all officers regardless of their age, sex, size or skill level. The training program is based on three simple techniques which are capable of being taught to a level of competency in a short amount of time. In addition, Armament Systems and Procedures offers a complete line of instructor training. Finally, the baton was designed to be the most court defensible intermediate control device available.

Everything about the weapon, its unprecedented psychological deterrence, the design which has no sharp edges or knurling, the balance of the baton, as well as its hollow tubular construction minimizes the likelihood for injury while increasing control potential.

The ASP Tactical Baton was designed to be a light, fast and maneuverable impact weapon. As a result, the balance of the weapon tends to transmit fluid shock waves without the impairing crushing injuries that are often associated with heavier impact weapons. To assure that the baton is used to its maximum potential, Armament Systems and Procedures offers an extensive training program. The ASP Instructor Certification is conducted without charge to law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. From the design of the weapon, through the training program and the defense of the officer in court, the ASP Tactical Baton fulfills the needs of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources giving the department a complete line of force options.

## **DESIGN CRITERIA**

The ASP Expandable Baton is American made from the highest quality aerospace alloys and ordnance synthetics. Virtually every component of the baton has undergone extensive research and development efforts and has brought pioneering technology to the field of impact weapons. The baton is non-reflective and its finish is rust resistant. The handle is made of a patented foam vinyl that is attractive and exceptionally tough while providing

a firm, durable gripping surface. There are no sharp edges on the baton to abrade clothing. Batons are available with chrome or black penetrate shafts. Grips are produced with either a foam or textured metal surface. Each baton locks into place with the flick of a wrist. Units may be closed by tapping tip on a hard surface.

## **ADVANTAGES**

The ASP Tactical Baton has been called one of the most tactically advanced impact weapons in existence. The premium materials, exceptional workmanship and flawless function of the baton is set apart from all others in quality, durability and performance. ASP batons are the only impact weapons that meet the rigid requirements established for adoption by federal law enforcement agencies.

The primary advantage of the expandable baton is their ease of carry. The expandable baton is with the officer when other longer batons are not practical or are left in the patrol car. Since the baton is readily carried on the belt, the officer doesn't have to make a conscious decision to take the baton on each call. The compact size of the baton provides the opportunity for intermediate force that has long been missing from many police agencies. From the non-uniform standpoint, the expandable baton is very easily concealed. As a result, it is compatible for the undercover officer as well as other non-uniformed personnel. The weapon provides a low-profile image without compromising tactical effectiveness.

The ASP Baton has numerous advantages. There is more controlled shock with less physical injury potential. This is due to the lighter design of the baton and the smaller striking tip. The baton is low profile. As a result, public perception is positive which is especially important in conservation law enforcement. No baton in the world is effective if it is left in the patrol unit when needed. The ASP baton is easily carried on the equipment belt on every call. There is an unparalleled psychological deterrent effect when the baton is extended. It is similar to the "racking" of a pump action shotgun. This noise and

psychological effect will often defuse the confrontation prior to the actual use of the baton. Because of the lighter weight and the balance, the baton is better suited for today's police officer. This enables the officer to strike his target with more control and to gain control without permanent damage to the assailant. The baton can be used in the closed mode for a low profile control tool, then instantly extended for use as an intermediate impact weapon. There are no sharp edges or knurling to cut assailant or get caught in clothing.

This is the first impact weapon that is practical for investigators, undercover officers, administrative and tactical personnel. ASP provides an extensive Instructor Certification program available to all law enforcement agencies. Finally, ASP provides some of the nation's most experienced federal court qualified "use of force" experts available for agency defense. This defense is available for all use of force litigation, not just cases involving the ASP Tactical Baton.

## **CONTROL v DAMAGE**

A recent study conducted by the Japanese Secret Service concluded that expandable batons are better for controlling subjects than any other form of impact weapons. Expandable batons produce increased fluid shock waves due to their hollow construction. At the same time, expandable batons are less likely to inflict permanent tissue damage. This greater control potential and the possibility of reduced injury potential is one of the major benefits of the expandable baton concept. Impact weapons have a striking capability that is directly proportionate to their weight. As a result, the heavier the baton, the lower the striking potential. Expandable batons have not only fast striking ability, but they also have extremely fast recovery time. Because of this diverse ability, the batons are an extremely effective defensive weapon. When striking target motor points and nerve centers, the baton provides greater potential for controlling an aggressive assailant. Because the expandable batons are tooled out of metal, the baton, unfortunately, draws analogies between the weapon

and a metal pipe or a flashlight. The truth is, the expandable baton differs greatly from these items in many ways. The design, intent and actual use are completely different. Metal flashlights are designed to produce light. They have sharp edges, knurled handles and very limited reach. They are filled with heavy batteries and are slow in striking. Simply put, they were never intended to be an impact weapon and shouldn't be used as one. Recovery after the strike is also reduced because of their weight. As a result, flashlights have a greater propensity for damage with a reduced propensity for control. Expandable batons are designed for striking. Modern tactical impact weapons do not have knurling or sharp edges that are objectionable in other products. These batons are balanced for striking as well as providing an extended reach. They have a fast delivery with a quicker recovery for multiple strikes. They provide greater propensity for control with a low propensity for injury. They provide greater fluid shock with less tissue damage.

There is little question that an expandable impact weapon has the greatest psychological advantage of any impact weapon on the market today. Balanced with the psychological deterrent is the rapid striking potential and counter strike capability which can't be matched by any other weapon. Expandable batons provide the advantage of short length for better concealment, while also offering extended reach with relatively little effort. The weapon may be used in either a collapsed low profile mode or extended to a higher profile mode. They are the only type weapons that change so quickly from low to dramatic high profile instantly.

## **FREQUENT QUESTIONS**

Question: Isn't the ASP Tactical Baton an exotic weapon?

Answer: While the martial arts community has a number of cheap expandable batons available, such products differ dramatically from the ASP Tactical Baton. The major agencies of the Federal Government including the Federal Bureau of

Investigation, United States Drug Enforcement Administration, United States Secret Service and US Army do not issue exotic weapons to their personnel. Yet, these agencies do issue the ASP Tactical Baton.

Question: Is the ASP Baton safe?

Answer: A study conducted by the Japanese Metropolitan Police Department revealed that hollow tubular weapons provide greater control with less tissue damage than other impact instruments. At the present time a neurological study of the reduced injury potential of the ASP Baton is being conducted.

Question: What are the advantages of an ASP Tactical Baton over a side handle or straight baton?

Answer: The ASP Tactical Baton is always carried. The finest baton on the market is of little value if left in the car. In addition, the ASP has a far greater psychological effect than either the side handle or straight baton. A field study by the Illinois State Police demonstrated that this psychological impact often defuses a confrontation before it occurs. The training program for the ASP Baton is more comprehensive than other available programs. In addition to providing more extensive court defense, the ASP Baton is more defensible. It provides greater control with less tissue damage. The baton can generate greater fluid shock waves and allows the officer to recover faster than is possible with more traditional batons.

Question: Who are the primary users of the ASP Tactical Baton?

Answer: Initially agencies find that plainclothes personnel and, in particular, investigators like the tactical baton. Tactical team members also account for a large segment of purchases. Some officers use the ASP as a backup to their duty baton. In recent years the baton has been adopted as a primary weapon by a number of agencies including County and State Patrol organizations whose officers are

frequently in and out of a car. Such officers find traditional batons cumbersome. Security organizations that want to maintain a low profile are also large volume purchasers of the baton.

Question: What if my department will not allow the expandable baton?

Answer: As with semi-automatic pistols, some agencies are slower than others to respond to progressive movements in modern policing. However, there is a significant liability problem inherent in any agency that does not provide intermediate force for its officers. This applies to plainclothes investigators and tactical team members as well as uniform personnel.

Question: What kind of Certification is available for the ASP Tactical Baton?

Answer: There are three levels of ASP certification. ASP Basic Certification is provided for law enforcement officers. ASP Instructor Certification is designed to train instructors for police agencies. ASP Trainer Certification is available for individuals who will, in turn, train instructors in various law enforcement agencies. Both ASP Instructor Certification and ASP Trainer Certification are provided by Armament Systems and Procedures at no charge. Participation in an AIC or ATC program is scheduled through an authorized ASP Dealer or ASP Technical Support Manager.

Question: Where is training in the baton available?

Answer: Armament Systems and Procedures offers as a service to the law enforcement community semi-monthly Instructor Certification Programs at no charge. In addition, the Corporation has a list of individuals who conduct contract training in the baton on a regular basis.

Question: If an officer in our jurisdiction wants to be trained, what do we do?

Answer: Contact the nearest ASP Dealer who can arrange for attendance of an officer at an ASP Instructor Certification program. Technical Support Managers can also

handle application of an individual to participate in a program.

Question: What is the liability impact of the ASP Baton?

Answer: A recent study by the nation's foremost law enforcement legal organization referred to the expandable batons and indicated that they are "currently issued to members of the Secret Service and US Capitol Police. Japanese experience indicates that the weapon is more effective than the wooden baton and causes less bodily harm."

Question: If our agency gets sued, will ASP defend us?

Answer: Armament Systems and Procedures will provide expert witness support and assist any law enforcement organization that is sued. Extensive litigation experience is available to assist in the defense of officers or agencies. In addition, ASP defense is not contingent upon purchase of an ASP product and is not restricted to a group of specific techniques that are sanctioned by Armament Systems.

Question: Why is the ASP Baton the best baton on the market?

Answer: An extensive study conducted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police as well as evaluations done by Federal Law Enforcement agencies including the United States Capitol Police have demonstrated that the ASP Baton meets the seven basic criteria of less lethal weapons better than any other product on the market.

Question: Why are so many organizations switching to the ASP Tactical Baton?

Answer:

1. The baton is carried and not left in the car.
2. The ASP Tactical Baton is tactically superior to other batons (it works on the street).
3. The weapon is easier to defend in court due to its low profile image, high psychological deterrence, high potential for control and low potential for tissue damage.

## **BASIC CERTIFICATION**

The Basic Certification for the ASP Tactical Baton was developed to teach law enforcement personnel the fundamentals of using the ASP Tactical Baton in an operational setting. The program relies primarily on instructional techniques. ASP Tactical Baton techniques are taught using a four-part "progressive" format designed so all participants gain competency during training sessions. Each of the four segments is structured to set a deliberate pace of instruction so each participant leaves the course confident in the use of the baton. The first step in the process breaks the different techniques into separate steps of movement. Each step is presented in a 1-2-3 sequence to slowly introduce the student to each technique. The second step allows the student to combine all steps of movement to complete a whole system of movement, but the emphasis is still on form, not speed or power in delivery. The next step combines all previous parts, and now speed and power is added for the student to experience the dynamics of the baton. The fourth and final step in the process is simulation. This segment provides a realistic, job related, dynamic use of the baton under stressful conditions.

## **THE FORCE CONTINUUM**

The fact that the police officer has the ability to legally use force in an arrest situation is what distinguishes him from the rest of society. Because of this responsibility, the use of force by police often comes under close scrutiny by both the courts and especially the public. In an attempt to define appropriate circumstances for the use of force, the Use of Force Continuum was developed. This Continuum gives the law enforcement administrator a feasible means of evaluating force usage. The Continuum also gives the officer in the field a means of justifying his action through documentation. This Force Continuum is a very important part of the ASP Certification Course. The officer must clearly understand what circumstances justify the use of an intermediate weapon as well as which

circumstances do not support use of the baton (*Attachment One*). The horizontal Force Option Line provides the officer with a series of responses available for use by the officer when confronting a subject. The most basic and the most desired defensive option available to the officer is dialogue, simply being able to persuade through communication the subject into compliance. This ability to "talk" a subject into compliance avoids the dangers that are inherent to a physical confrontation in which the officer may be injured. It can't be over-emphasized that this is the most preferable defensive tactic.

If the officer is unable to achieve his "goal" which is to maintain control of the subject through dialogue, the next lowest level of force will require the officer to perform some type of escort technique. Grabbing the subject by the arm is a low level of force and continued dialogue may be sufficient force to gain control. The officer is reminded to approach from a sound tactical position. As the reactionary gap is closed or reduced, the potential for injury to the officer is increased.

When the use of an escort technique fails or is not appropriate for the situation, the next force option is a pain compliance technique. One of the simplest techniques is the traditional wrist lock. Now the subject should clearly realize that the officer is accelerating the use of force. Continued communication is essential throughout the encounter. Communication lets the subject know what is expected of him, it gives the offender many things to analyze at one time, and it can provide for witness support in the criminal proceedings.

Once this technique is no longer effective, the officer must then resort to some type of mechanical contact. A punch, kick or some type of stunning technique is now appropriate if pain compliance is not effective in gaining control of the subject. When mechanical control is administered, the officer must realize that his movements must be dynamic and be accompanied by a follow through technique which ends with the subject being completely stabilized.

When those techniques have proven to be inappropriate or ineffective, the next level of force would be the use of an impact weapon. Again, it can't be overemphasized that the officer must continue to attempt dialogue throughout the confrontation. It is also very important that the officer realize the need to handcuff after the slightest physical confrontation. Handcuffing will greatly reduce the likelihood of continued or a renewed attack on the officer.

The vertical Subject Action Line represents the offender's action during a confrontation (*See Chart 1*). This line determines the officer's defensive responses. The Officer Reaction Line bisects the Subject Action Line and the Force Option Line, marking officer reaction to increased offender action. As the resistance offered by the offender increases, the officer's response must increase accordingly to allow the officer to maintain control.

The officer's actions in any confrontation are affected by the totality of circumstances surrounding the situation. Officer/Subject Factors which include age, sex, size and skill level of both the officer and the subject must be considered when evaluating force options. It is understandable that the physical size or opposite sex between the individuals involved may require more or less force to obtain the control of the subject. It should also be reasonable for a single officer to use more force when controlling more than one offender at a time.

The officer must also consider special circumstances which would allow the officer to increase the level of force. A subject's close proximity to a weapon is a threat to the officer which must be addressed immediately. An officer who has been injured or is near exhaustion would also be justified in escalating the use of force to control a confrontation.

## **FORCE EVALUATIONS**

The goal of the police officer in any confrontation is to control the subject. The officer must understand that this is not a 50/50 balance. The officer must stay one step ahead of the offender on the Continuum to maintain control. The officer must win every encounter,

not 50 percent.

Each technique the officer employs in a confrontation should be evaluated by its potential for control as compared to its likelihood for damage. The choice should be to avoid those techniques which result in damage for techniques which result in a high degree of control. When evaluating these techniques, consideration should always be given to officer safety. The officer should always have the ability to instantly disengage or escalate response to a confrontation. Techniques which tie the officer to the subject should be rejected. Techniques which do not afford the ability to escalate force in response to a subject threat are unacceptable.

## **OPERATIONAL INFORMATION**

Proper body mechanics form the foundation of all ASP techniques. The ability for the officer to use the basic principles of body mechanics greatly increase the potential for control for the officer in a confrontation. There are four components which create the pyramid concept of defensive maneuvers. The first component is to have a wide base which is achieved by standing with feet shoulder width apart. This stance provides good lateral balance which isn't present with feet close together. The next component is a deep base. A deep base is achieved by placing the feet one step apart with the reaction leg forward while the weapon leg is slightly back. When the deep base is combined with a wide base, the body is now balanced from all sides. To further improve one's balance, it will be necessary to lower the center of gravity by bending the knees slightly. The weight of the body should now rest equally on both feet without tension in the ankles or knees. The final component is to keep the head over the center of gravity. This keeps the weight balanced over the entire base. It is very important that the officer does not tense the muscles in any of these positions. Tense muscles cannot perform dynamic movement which is vital when using the ASP Baton. While maintaining the pyramid concept of body mechanics, the officer must be relaxed to put the

four principles into action. Only when a strike is delivered is tension a component of the ASP techniques. This tension after dynamic movement will create trauma and generate fluid shock waves to control the assailant.

## **TRAINING TERMINOLOGY**

To ensure the safety of the participants and the instructor, both must share common training terminology.

Strong Hand - Often called the "weapon hand," the hand used to draw and fire the firearm regardless of which hand is used. The strong hand is used to execute ASP strikes.

Reaction Hand - The hand opposite the strong hand. The reaction hand is used to maintain distance and to redirect an assailant.

Strong Leg - Sometimes called the "weapon leg." The leg on the firearm side of the body. This side of the body is referred to as the strong side.

Reaction Leg - The leg opposite the strong leg. This side of the body is referred to as the reaction side.

Closed Mode - When the ASP Baton is fully closed within the handle of the weapon.

Open Mode - The ASP Baton is fully open and locked in place.

Ready Position - This is when the baton is held in the weapon hand just behind the strong leg. The reaction hand is up. The baton may be open or closed.

Loaded Position - The baton is held in the strong hand at the point of the shoulder. The reaction hand is up. The baton may be open or closed.

ASP Strikes - There are three basic ASP baton strikes: the Strong Side Strike, Reaction Side Strike and the Straight Strike. Each strike is performed with the weapon hand from either a ready or loaded position. The reaction hand redirects, creates distance and supplies power through hip rotation. All strikes may be executed from the open or closed

mode. The ASP Technique Sequence Chart diagrams the basic strikes.

## **ASP TARGETS**

There are three principal target areas for the ASP Baton. All techniques are designed to deliver one or more strikes to the knee, abdomen and elbow. Because of their physiological vulnerability, these areas were selected as target areas. Strikes to the abdomen generate fluid shock waves, while strikes to the knees and elbows disable an assailant's "delivery system." It can't be overemphasized that the face, head or neck are not target areas. Do not strike the face, head or neck. Strikes to these areas may produce fatal injuries and may not be effective at immediately terminating resistance. However, strikes to the target areas have a high potential for control and a low potential for fatal injury. These are forgiving targets. If the offender moves or a strike misses, surrounding targets also have high potential for control and low potential for damage.

### Strong Side Strike

A strong side strike is delivered from the weapon side of the body. The strike is delivered at a 45-degree downward angle targeting the knee or elbow. The strong side strike may be delivered from the ready or the loaded positions.

### Reaction Side Strike

The second ASP strike is delivered from the reaction side of the body. The strike is executed at a 45-degree downward angle targeting the knee or elbow. The reaction side strike may be executed as part of a "cross draw" or may be used as a follow through after a strong side strike.

### Straight Strike

The straight strike is delivered to an assailant's abdomen from the ready or loaded position. The striking surface of the baton is the tip. The straight strike is designed to create distance and to deal with a sudden attack at close range.

## CONCLUSION

I believe that the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has taken a bold step forward. Its decision to include an intermediate weapon in its force options for the conservation ranger was not an easy decision to make. No department likes the thought of addressing a "forced encounter," but they do occur and are occurring more frequently each year. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away or any easier to deal with after the fact. The approach is to be proactive rather than reactive. This is addressed through a progressive training program which gives the ranger every possible option before the use of deadly force. Through proper training, the ranger is capable of making an educated decision as to what level of force is necessary to control the situation. This "educated" decision is much less likely to bring harm to the ranger or to the offender. Regardless of what some people would like to think, conservation law enforcement is real police work. Statistically, the conservation ranger is more likely to be fatally assaulted than any other police officer. The point is that the potential for injury is present and must be addressed.

As stated earlier, the decision to adopt the ASP Tactical Baton was not a hard decision to make. The baton has been tested in the field and has proven to be effective. The training provided by Armament Systems and Procedures is excellent. The Basic Certification Course can be taught to a level of competency to any officer in a relatively short period of time. The Basic Certification consists of three simple techniques which the officer is able to retain in a confrontational setting. The baton was designed to be the most court defensible control device on the market today. The design has no sharp edges, and the balance is such that it minimizes the likelihood for injury while increasing the likelihood for control. There is no decision of whether or not to take the baton on a call. It's always there. Because of its very low profile image, it is perfect for conservation law enforcement. It would be best to never have to use the ASP Baton, but now if the situation warrants, the ranger is prepared to meet the situation in a confident manner.

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