

Appendix 'G'

Operational Guidelines on the Use of Vehicles where there is a Serious Threat to Life in Situations of Public Disorder and the Use of Public Order Screens

Tactical Use of Vehicles

- G1 Where there is a serious threat to life in situations of Public Disorder, the tactical use of police vehicles may be justified under Section 3, Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 when such use is a degree of force, which is reasonable in the circumstances, proportionate and necessary to achieve a lawful objective. All officers must however be aware of the provisions of Article 4 of the PSNI Code of Ethics in relation to the Use of Force and in particular 4.2 which states "Police officers responsible for the planning and control of operations where the use of force is a possibility shall so far as possible plan and control them to minimise recourse to force, in particular potentially lethal force"
- G2 The use of vehicles in such situations amounts to potentially lethal force, and therefore should be 'no more than absolutely necessary' and strictly proportionate to the aims set out in Article 2(2) ECHR.
- G3 When considering the tactical use of vehicles in extreme situations, the initial points to consider for a Bronze Commander/Crew Commander are:
- Is it necessary for police to be deployed in a position under threat?
 - What is the potential for serious injury to public?
 - What is the potential for serious injury to police?
 - What police support is at hand?
 - What other policing tactics are available?
 - What is the least amount of force needed to prevent risk to life?
 - Has the crowd a natural escape route?
 - Are there non-rioting spectators against whom force would not be justified?
- G4 Consideration must be given to children in the crowd. Small children will be particularly vulnerable to such tactics, and may be more likely to be out of sight of the driver.

- G5 In relation to how the police vehicle is driven, there must be a credible decision process for the driver as well:
- What effect am I trying to achieve?
 - What is the immediate danger I am trying to avoid?
 - What is the least amount of force needed to reach the objective?
 - Is the crowd fluid or static?
 - Has the crowd an easy escape route?
 - What warning do I need to give?
- G6 The onus for this tactical use of vehicles does not rest solely with the driver. There is a supervisor and crew responsibility in carrying out such a manoeuvre.
- G7 The supervisor or person in charge and crew should agree in advance that the tactical use of vehicle is no more than absolutely necessary in pursuit of one of the aims set out in Article 2(2) ECHR which states:
- “Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary:
- In defence of any person from unlawful violence.
 - In order to effect a lawful arrest or to arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained.
 - In action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection”.
- G8 Article 2(2) does not permit the use of lethal or potentially lethal force simply to prevent the escape of a person, or to quell a riot. The actual use of force will be subject to the tests of absolute necessity, i.e. the balancing of the harm to be prevented with the likely outcome of the force to be used.
- G9 The supervisor or person in charge should give warning to the crowd and ensure maximum use of warning equipment throughout any manoeuvre.
- G10 Where possible, the person in charge should alert UCMC/Silver Command that vehicles are to be used in this capacity and report when the manoeuvre has finished.
- G11 Vehicles should only be used for as long as necessary to reduce threat so that normal police tactics can be used.
- G12 The crew should act as lookout to keep the driver and person in charge aware of events within the vehicle envelope.

- G13 The vehicle should be driven to a safe area at the earliest opportunity.
- G14 Police should be deployed on foot to protect vehicles/disperse crowd at the earliest opportunity.
- G15 When, as a last resort, a vehicle has been used to drive at a person or a crowd during an extreme public disorder scenario, the Crew Commander will ensure that a notebook entry has been completed by the driver and authenticated by the supervisor. This will indicate why it was necessary to do so, indicate who made this decision and identify who drove the vehicle. It must show a logical and reasoned thought process which led to an informed decision to use such force as is lawful and absolutely necessary and therefore reasonable in the circumstances faced.
- G16 This record will provide a professional audit trail that will support the officers involved. The events should also be reported via the police radio to further provide live time evidence of the dangers faced, the action taken to avoid such danger and decision-making process in doing so. The person in charge will at the earliest opportunity after the tactical use of vehicles, report the full details in writing to the District Commander.

Public Order Screens

- G17 PSNI have procured a number of multi-purpose VW Crafter vehicles that can be fitted with a hydraulic folding roof-mounted curtain frame to provide a mobile public order screening capability. The Army previously provided this role.
- G18 In addition to their use at public order situations, the screens can be effectively deployed at scenes of major incidents, such as serious RTCs or crime scenes.
- G19 The screens are designed to be a cover from view, as opposed to a protective barrier.
- G20 When deployed in public order situations, it is recommended that protected officers, or if necessary armoured vehicles, are deployed between the screens and the direction of greatest threat of disorder.
- G21 The screen coverage provided by each individual screen is 7 metres wide by 4 metres. Screens can be linked or overlapped and with current full deployment the maximum coverage from view is approximately 196 metres.
- G22 When not required, the framework can be removed. This service is carried out by Transport Services at Seapark where there are facilities to store the screens. Transport Services will also refit the screens on request.
- G232 For safety purposes, when the screens are fitted the vehicles are only to be driven when the screen is folded and secured to the rear. The exceptions to this are:
- During close manoeuvring at an operational deployment location under the guidance of officers on foot.

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- In an emergency situation where the screen line is under sustained attack and has been ordered to extract from the immediate area. In this case the screen can be pulled back to enable the driver to move the vehicle to a safer area where the screen can be secured.

- G24 The vehicles are liveried and fitted with visible and audible warning equipment. Each vehicle comprises two compartments, one for vehicle crew/search team and the other (rearmost) for carriage of search equipment, (the latter being separated from the crew compartment by a bulkhead and folding door). The search equipment compartment has been fitted-out with racks and securing points to enable the secure carriage of the equipment required by TSG Search and MOE teams.
- G25 Four vehicles have had their rear compartment fitted with a two-person cell instead of a search equipment compartment for use in Districts who experience policing problems associated with the night-time economy.
- G26 The purpose for which the vehicle is used has implications for the civilian driving licence and PSNI authorisation required:
- VW Crafter with cell - 3.1 (transit) police authorisation and D1 on civilian licence.
 - VW Crafter without cells - 5.4 police authorisation and B on civilian licence.