

RCW 10.116.030 Use of tear gas. (1) A law enforcement agency may not use or authorize its peace officers or other employees to use tear gas unless necessary to alleviate a present risk of serious harm posed by a: (a) Riot; (b) barricaded subject; or (c) hostage situation.

(2) Prior to using tear gas as authorized under subsection (1) of this section, the officer or employee shall:

(a) Exhaust alternatives to the use of tear gas that are available and appropriate under the circumstances;

(b) Obtain authorization to use tear gas from a supervising officer, who must determine whether the present circumstances warrant the use of tear gas and whether available and appropriate alternatives have been exhausted as provided under this section;

(c) Announce to the subject or subjects the intent to use tear gas; and

(d) Allow sufficient time and space for the subject or subjects to comply with the officer's or employee's directives.

(3) In the case of a riot outside of a correctional, jail, or detention facility, the officer or employee may use tear gas only after: (a) Receiving authorization from the highest elected official of the jurisdiction in which the tear gas is to be used, and (b) meeting the requirements of subsection (2) of this section.

(4) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Barricaded subject" means an individual who is the focus of a law enforcement intervention effort, has taken a position in a physical location that does not allow immediate law enforcement access, and is refusing law enforcement orders to exit.

(b) "Highest elected official" means the county executive in those charter counties with an elective office of county executive, however designated, and in the case of other counties, the county sheriff. In the case of cities and towns, it means the mayor, regardless of whether the mayor is directly elected, selected by the council or legislative body pursuant to RCW 35.18.190 or 35A.13.030, or selected according to a process in an established city charter. In the case of actions by the Washington state patrol, it means the governor.

(c) "Hostage situation" means a scenario in which a person is being held against his or her will by an armed, potentially armed, or otherwise dangerous suspect.

(d) "Tear gas" means chloroacetophenone (CN), O-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile (CS), and any similar chemical irritant dispersed in the air for the purpose of producing temporary physical discomfort or permanent injury, except "tear gas" does not include oleoresin capsicum (OC). [2024 c 232 s 1; 2021 c 320 s 4.]