

Standard Operating Procedures

Pepper Spray

PURPOSE

The Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU) is concerned for the welfare and safety of its employees in the field, especially in areas where wild feral animals such as dogs, pigs, and cattle exist. To address possible encounters with these potentially dangerous animals, PCSU supports [Program's Name] field staff's use of pepper spray to protect themselves. The purpose of this SOP is to provide procedures for safe use of pepper spray and to provide guidance on the transport, decontamination, maintenance, and storage of pepper spray by [Program] staff.

SCOPE

Pepper spray has been proven to be an effective method of self protection when encountering dangerous animals. The spray does not kill the animal but when properly applied, stops the animal and provides the user with time to safely leave the area.

The active ingredient in pepper spray is capsaicin, a substance derived from the cayenne pepper plant. Pepper spray (also known as Oleoresin Capsicum Spray or OC spray), is designed to effect an inflammatory reaction such as dilating capillaries, causing an intense burning sensation to the skin, eyes, and in some cases can induce temporary blindness. As mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, eyes, and respiratory tract react to the capsaicin, tears will be produced, the nose will run, breathing may become labored, saliva will be produced, and coughing will occur as the airways and lungs try to rid itself of the chemical. Rubbing will intensify the burn. Unlike tear gas, that wears off fairly quickly, pepper spray will continue to be painful for 30 minutes or more and discomfort may be experienced for hours.

Recommended pepper sprays for use against wild, aggressive animals feature a minimum 10% solution of oleoresin capsicum and have an effective range of at least 15 feet. Pistol-grip sprays that have a minimum of 7 blasts are recommended. In order to reduce the risk of further harm, pepper spray brands should have a non-combustible base.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

[Program] Manager is responsible for ensuring the [Program] field staff has read and thoroughly understand the product instructions, and will maintain a signed copy of the employee's Standard Operation Procedure – Pepper Spray [Program] Employee Certification page in the office files. The [Program] Manager shall allow the field staff to attend training on the safe use of pepper spray when such training is available.

[Program] Safety Officer shall ensure safe and secure storage of [Program] pepper sprays at [Program's storage area]. The [Program] Safety Officer shall also ensure that the stored pepper sprays are within the expiration dates and when necessary, properly dispose the sprays.

[Program] staff shall read and comply with this SOP and the product instructions on the use, transport, decontamination, maintenance, and storage of pepper sprays. Upon reading the product label and Material Safety Data Sheet, and this SOP, the [Program] staff shall sign their copy of this Pepper Spray SOP (see last page.) By signing, they acknowledge that they have read and thoroughly understand the

product label information, the MSDS, and this SOP; they are then considered trained and allowed to carry the pepper spray into the field.

REQUIREMENTS

In the State of Hawaii pepper sprays can only be purchased from local licensed retailers; state law prohibits purchasing directly from out-of-state vendors. Program pepper sprays shall be purchased from a local licensed retailer. *Note that individual County ordinances may limit the use of pepper spray and all staff must be aware of and adhere to the restrictions for their island; if there are such restrictions within your county, please provide them in this section. All staff must follow state regulations and county ordinances regarding the acquisition and use of pepper sprays.*

[Program] staff shall read and understand all product instructions on the use, transport, maintenance, decontamination, and storage of pepper sprays, the Material Safety Data Sheet, and this SOP.

[Program] staff may only use [Program] issued pepper sprays during their field work; personal pepper sprays are not allowed.

PROCEDURES

I. PROPER STORAGE, DISTRIBUTION, and INVENTORY

Storage: Pepper sprays should be stored as directed on the label and kept in a locked container when not in use to prevent unintentional use. It should be kept in a cool place, not to exceed 120 degrees F (48 degrees C) in temperature.

Distribution: When removing the pepper spray and accompanying decontamination kit from the storage site, staff will sign the items out on an inventory sheet and sign the items back in when placed back into storage. A list of items that should minimally be included in a decontamination kit is presented in **Attachment 1**.

Inventory: Expiration dates for pepper sprays are typically 3-4 years after the date of purchase. Because potency can decrease over time, it is recommended that all pepper sprays or cartridges be replaced every year to ensure the most potent spray possible. If the cartridges are not date stamped, the date of purchase should be written on the can with indelible ink. Items in the decontamination kit should also be replaced before their expiration date.

II. TRANSPORT

Vehicular Transport: Nonflammable chemical agents, such as pepper sprays may be transported inside the passenger compartment with the following transport conditions:

- a. Transported in a protective case or secured wrapping that will contain all atomized mist. PCSU recommends transport in a sealed plastic container within a metal ammo case.
- b. A safety lock or device in place that protects the trigger mechanism from accidental discharge.
- c. Stored away from direct sunlight or exposure to temperatures exceeding 120 degrees F (48 degrees C).

Helicopter Transport: Pilots must be notified of the location and type of hazardous material being transported with them, either in writing or verbally depending on the situation, which are discussed below. The pilot shall ensure that all personnel are briefed as to what the specific actions are required in the event of an emergency.

1. Written notification must be provided for pilots under OAS agreements and include the following; a cargo manifest or similar documentation may be used for written notification:
 - a. Common name of hazardous material (i.e., Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray or Pepper Spray).
 - b. Hazard class (i.e., Class 9, Miscellaneous Hazardous Material).
 - c. Emergency Response Guide number (i.e., ERG #126, Aerosols).
 - d. Quantity and Location.
2. Verbal notification of the type and quantity of pepper spray is acceptable for external jettisonable load operations and for pilots that are not flying under OAS agreements.

In all cases, the pilot is the final authority for the operation of the aircraft, which includes the acceptance or refusal of hazardous materials such as pepper spray and reporting requirements.

If accepted, pepper sprays may be placed in the external compartment whenever practical or directed by the pilot, following these transport conditions:

- a. Must be transported in a protective case that is of sufficient strength that prevents the aerosol from accidentally discharging in the aircraft.
- b. A safety lock or device in place that protects the trigger mechanism from accidental discharge.
- c. Stored away from direct sunlight or exposure to temperatures exceeding 120 degrees F (48 degrees C).

Interisland Commercial Airline Transport: There are TSA transport restrictions of pepper sprays on airlines and violations are a federal crime. Therefore, it is PCSU policy that airline transport of [Program] pepper sprays is not allowed for PCSU staff.

On-your-person or in packs: When carried on a belt loop or elsewhere on a person, the safety lock or device shall be in place until used. Field staff carrying pepper spray within a plastic container or airtight bag inside their packs shall make every effort to place the pepper spray in such a way to prevent unintentional discharge.

Note. If traveling interisland whether for work or pleasure, staff is reminded to check their carry-on, daypacks, and checked luggage to ensure there are no pepper spray left unintentionally in their possession.

III. UTILIZATION PROCEDURES

Trained staff may utilize the pepper spray when verbal yelling or shaking trees/bushes to deter wild, feral animals is ineffective or inappropriate; when feral animals are present and show signs of aggressive behavior or attack; or times when use of firearms for protection is not possible.

Pepper spray will only be used as a measure to protect staff from attack or aggressive behavior from wild animals encountered in the field and shall never be used for any illicit, unlawful, or unintended purpose.

Take precautions to discharge the pepper spray in low-wind conditions and upwind from the target animal to prevent blow-back.

To spray an animal, aim for the eyes or face. Release a one- to two-second burst of spray onto the animal. After spraying, move out of the way, keeping your eyes on the animal. Once the threat has dissipated, quickly move to safety.

Special note to asthmatics: Asthmatics have a higher risk of adverse reaction to blow-back from pepper spray and some have suffered anaphylactic shock, although reported instances of death from pepper spray are very few and very unusual. Staff with asthma may consider a formulation that does not contain oleoresin capsicum or using a foam-type spray to reduce the risk of blow-back.

IV. DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES

Unintentional contact with the pepper spray contents may occur, which is problematic in remote field situations. If staff are accidentally sprayed or experience blow-back, DO NOT RUB THE AREA. The resin in the spray allows it to stick to skin so rubbing the affected area spreads the capsaicin, further irritating the site.

Clothing: If the pepper spray comes in contact with clothes, remove the clothing and bag them to prevent contamination of skin or other items. Wash the clothing separately.

Skin: If the pepper spray comes in contact with skin, use the decontamination spray (Bio-Shield Anti-Pepper Spray and Disinfectant, Cool It! Decontamination Aid, or similar) or decontamination wipes (Sudecon decontaminant wipes or similar) from your decontamination kit. Spray the decontamination spray directly onto the affected areas, then lightly blot the skin (don't rub) with the napkins provided in the decontamination kit. For decontamination wipes, place over the contaminated area; relief should be experienced within 2-5 minutes. Water can be used to soothe the affected area. However since pepper spray is oil-based, water by itself will not offer much comfort unless utilized continuously for approximately 30 minutes or more. If staff have access to a water source, the affected part may be soaked in a solution of 1:3 ratio of Dawn[®] to water, without rubbing. The Ziploc bag in the decontamination kit may be used for this purpose.

Eyes: If sprayed in the eyes and the person is wearing contacts, remove the contacts as soon as possible, and then flush the eyes repeatedly with eye wash, saline solution, or water. DO NOT RUB YOUR EYES! Standing in shade and into the wind allows the cooling breeze to soothe eyes. Sunlight exacerbates the burn.

Additional Remedies: For further remedies when out of the field, some homemade remedies can be made using a combination of milk, honey, a mild detergent (Dawn[®] is recommended) and a small amount of baking soda. This is normally mixed together then applied as a salve to the affected area. Normally more than one application is necessary and the affected area should gently be washed between applications. Similar to the above is a mixture of cornmeal, milk and honey, again not an immediate fix, but certain to act as an aid to lessen the burning sensation. A fan or cooling breeze, while not a cure for pepper spray, can help soothe the skin while the effect of the spray diminishes.

V. POST-DISCHARGE PROCEDURES

After safety of the [Program] field staff has been established and/or threat ceased, the field staff will make reasonable efforts to remove themselves from the area to prevent further attack or aggression. If the threat was a dog and marked as owned, such as having collars or other markings to indicate ownership, field staff should attempt to locate the owners to inform them of the threat they encountered and to allow the owners to render appropriate aid to the animal.

VI. DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURES

On each occasion of pepper spray use, a written *Use of Pepper Spray Report* (Attachment 2) will be completed within 5 days. Staff shall notify their supervisor of its use within 24 hrs. The MSDS for the pepper spray model is provided as Attachment 3.

DISPOSITION

Since there is an expiration date for pepper spray, and [Program] policy is to have the spray replaced after a year of the purchase date, the [Program] Safety Officer shall dispose of the spray in accordance with the product instructions.

ATTACHMENTS

projects need to develop their own attachments based on what they will purchase

- 1 Decontamination Kit
- 2 Use of Pepper Spray Report
- 3 MSDS

REVIEWS AND UPDATES

The SOP may be updated at any time during the year. Minimally, the SOP should be reviewed annually by those whose work is covered by the SOP. [Program] Manager and [Program] Safety Officer must concur and approve the updated versions. An electronic copy of updated versions with new signatures will be sent to the Principal Investigator for his review, approval/signature.

SIGNATURES

[Program] Manager/Date

[Program] Safety Officer/Date

Principal Investigator/Date

[PROGRAM] EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATION

I have read, understand, and agree to follow the directions and procedures described in the following documents:

1. [Program] Standard Operating Procedures-Pepper Spray
2. Oleoresin Capsicum (pepper spray) product label
3. MSDS for Pepper Spray

I also certify that I am at least 18 years old.

Employee (print name) Signature Date

Supervisor (print name) Signature Date

[Program] Manager (print name) Signature Date

Principal Investigator (print name) Signature Date