

Less-Lethal Options in Delta Green

“Law enforcement officers and correctional officers of the Department of Justice may use deadly force only when necessary, that is, when the officer has a reasonable belief that the subject of such force poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to the officer or to another person.” —U.S. Attorney General October 17, 1995 Memorandum on Resolution 14

Most federal agents in Delta Green are in the FBI. A minority are in the DEA and the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS). A smaller number still are scattered throughout other agencies, mostly in the Department of Justice (DOJ). All those agencies are governed by the DOJ’s deadly-force policy, and most have policies that limit use of any force to the minimum necessary to control a suspect. All have policies governing agents’ use of “less-lethal” weapons when controlling a suspect requires more than bare hands but less than deadly force.

Allowed Weapons

What less-lethal weapons is your Agent legally allowed to use? A 2009 DOJ review offers a handy overview.

ATF: The ATF allows agents to use batons, bean-bag shotgun rounds, baton launchers, pepper spray, and Tasers. The ATF increasingly deployed less-lethal weapons in the late 2000s—particularly Tasers—as its focus changed to street-level firearm trafficking. The ATF’s Special Response Teams may use tear gas.

DEA: The DEA allows agents to carry batons and pepper spray, but few agents do. The DOJ’s 2009 review found no reported uses of batons or pepper spray from 2002 to 2008. The DEA usually makes arrests in drug busts against armed suspects, so its agents prefer a show of overwhelming force, in full body armor and with firearms drawn.

FBI: The FBI allows agents to carry batons and pepper spray, but few agents do. FBI agents use pepper spray rarely. Like many ordinary police officers, they find it more useful to ward off guard dogs than to subdue suspects. The FBI’s SWAT teams may use tear gas.

USMS: Responsible for capturing and transporting fugitives, Deputy U.S. Marshals have wider less-lethal options than any DOJ agency except the Bureau of Prisons. They may use batons, bean-bag shotgun rounds, pepper spray, stun belts, and Tasers. In 2009 they were allowed to use the Ultron II contact stun device, but it had already been phased out in favor of ranged Tasers.

TASK FORCES: ATF and DEA task forces require members from local, county, and state police forces to abide by ATF or DEA less-lethal weapon policies. The FBI and USMS allow task-force members to follow their local departments’ policies.

Optional Rule: Baton Training

Federal agents and police officers have special training (see *Delta Green: Agent's Handbook*, page 30) with batons. They are trained not to break bones but to subdue, mostly with blows to the outer thighs where nerve clusters can cause enough pain to force compliance but muscle mass reduces the risk of serious harm. Most carry telescoping steel batons, if they carry them at all.



Special training with a baton allows an Agent to use it with the Unarmed Combat skill instead of Melee Weapons. Used with Unarmed Combat, a baton adds +1 to unarmed damage instead of its usual 1D6 damage. If the Handler allows the optional rule for making a called shot to stun the target (see *Delta Green: Agent's Handbook*, page 52), special training with a baton gives a +10% bonus to the called shot.

New Weapons

Pepper spray, stun guns, Tasers (CED pistols), and tear gas are described in the *Agent's Handbook*. Aerial-dispersal shotgun rounds, rubber pellets, and StingBalls are not allowed by the agencies that produce most Agents of Delta Green. But they are allowed to the Bureau of Prisons, so incautious Agents may run into them soon enough.

AERIAL-DISPERSAL SHOTGUN ROUND: A compressed-air shotgun shell. When fired it makes as much noise as a shotgun firing, allowing a “warning shot” without causing harm.

BATON ROUND: A plastic-tipped, aluminum bullet about 37 mm across, fired from a specially-adapted shotgun (or grenade launcher). Double the target's armor against a baton round. *Skill:* Firearms. *Base Range:* 20 m. *Damage:* 1D6. *Expense:* Incidental.

BEAN-BAG SHOTGUN ROUND: A small, heavy cloth square filled with an ounce of birdshot and loaded into a shotgun shell. Must be fired from a specially adapted shotgun. Double the target's armor against a bean-bag round. *Skill:* Firearms. *Base Range:* 3 m. *Damage:* 1D4. *Expense:* Incidental.

RUBBER PELLETS: A shotgun shell loaded with buckshot-size rubber pellets. Each shot affects two targets who are within 1 m of each other. Double the target's armor against rubber pellets. *Skill:* Firearms. *Base Range:* 5 m. *Damage:* 1D4. *Expense:* Incidental.

STINGBALL: A small, rubber ball about the size of a hand grenade, with an explosive charge. When it bursts, it expels over 100 soft rubber balls that inflict damage on all targets within 10 m. Double the target's armor against a StingBall. Some StingBalls are also loaded with tear gas. A StingBall may be thrown with special training in Athletics, or fired from a specially-adapted grenade launcher with Heavy Weapons. *Skill:* Athletics or Heavy Weapons. *Base Range:* 20 m thrown or 150 m launched. *Damage:* 1D4. *Expense:* Incidental.

STUN BELT: A velcro belt that delivers an incapacitating shock by remote control at up to 100 m. In combat it is activated with a DEX test, but any result succeeds except a fumble. Some versions can be set to activate automatically if the target moves. *Skill:* DEX test; any result but a fumble triggers the stun belt. *Range:* 100 m. *Uses:* 300. *Victim's Penalty:* -20% for 2D20 minutes. *Expense:* Unusual.