

**Principal Researcher(s)**

Daniel Haynes

**Project Sponsor**

Cameron Kowalski

**Instructor**

Marie Graf

**Research Field**

Long Range Less Lethal  
Weapons: Best Practices  
in Implementation

**Program**

Bachelor of Law  
Enforcement Studies

**Course**

LAWS  
4003

**Funding Sources**

N/A: Course-based  
Project.

## Long Range Less Lethal Weapons

### Best Practices in Implementation

**Research Problem & Rationale for Study**

Law enforcement officers are frequently faced with situations where they might prefer to use a TASER to neutralize a dangerous suspect instead of using a firearm. But because of the limited range of TASERS (30 feet), and a concern for officer safety, officers can't always do that. Long range less lethal weapons are a solution to that problem. Having been inspired by body camera footage of officers in this situation, my research focused on understanding what options for long range less lethal weaponry were in use, and how agencies could implement them.

**Methods**

I selected, reviewed, and analyzed existing research articles to determine the effectiveness of existing long range less lethal weapons. Through analysis of the research, I observed common themes throughout the articles and made recommendations based on those themes.

**Results/Findings**

My analysis found that less lethal weapons can be lethal or harmful in any situation. I also found that it is important for law enforcement to be educated about less lethal weapons, and that training in those weapons is crucial. It is also very important for law enforcement agencies to equip their officers with long range less lethal weapons at all levels, and to do so quickly and efficiently. Finally, I found that law enforcement officers need to have multiple less lethal weapon options available to them, so they can adapt to diverse situations and suspects.

**Conclusions / Recommendations**

Through my research, I found that this topic requires further study. It appeared that most of the existing research dates to the early 2000's. I also found that many law enforcement agencies that have long range less lethal options use projectile weapons like a bean bag shotgun. While the shotgun is a good temporary solution, better options should be researched. Along with more research, additional less lethal weapons should be developed.

## Structured Abstract

**Introduction:** Law enforcement officers are limited in their capacity for neutralizing violent suspects by the range of their less lethal weapons. TASERs, a very common type of less lethal weapon, have a range of approximately 30 feet. This research project sought to study long range less lethal weapons, to discover what weapons are being used, and to make recommendations on how agencies could implement long range less lethal weapons. This was done by answering the research question, “what best practice approaches can law enforcement adopt when implementing the use of long range less lethal weapons?”

**Methods:** Academic articles were selected, reviewed, and analyzed to determine what types of long range less lethal weapons were in use across multiple jurisdictions, and to seek out best practices for the implementation of such weapons by law enforcement agencies. The project used qualitative methods and inductive coding to find three key themes across the literature.

**Results/Findings:** It was found that less lethal weapons are very capable of causing lasting harm or death. Education and training in long range less lethal weapons is extremely important for law enforcement officers. Law enforcement agencies should equip all their officers with long range less lethal weapons in an efficient manner. Finally, law enforcement officers need to be equipped with a variety of less lethal options to be able to adapt to varied scenarios.

**Discussion:** Giving law enforcement officers access to long range less lethal weapons could save lives. Officers would be more capable of neutralizing dangerous suspects from a safe distance, likely reducing the number of fatal police shootings.

**Practical Applications:** If long range less lethal weapons are given to front line officers, safety for both officers and suspects will probably increase.

## References:

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