

# Long Range Less Lethal Weapons: Best Practices in Implementation

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## Introduction

Less lethal weapons like TASERs, commonly used in law enforcement, have a limited range of 30 feet. Long range less lethal weapons can enable officers to safely apprehend suspects from a greater distance than traditional less lethal options. This research project sought to uncover long range less lethal weapons that are used across multiple jurisdictions, and to determine best practices for the implementation of long range less lethal weapons in law enforcement agencies that do not have such options in place.

## Background

This research topic was inspired by a video taken from body camera footage of police in the United States who were forced to fatally shoot a suspect because they could not safely get close enough to use a TASER. If those officers were equipped with a long ranges less lethal weapon, perhaps the suspect would have survived the encounter. With increasing public scrutiny around police shootings, long range less lethal weapons provide a way to potentially reduce police use of firearms against suspects in a way that does not jeopardize officer safety.

## 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. Due to scope constraints, the research was limited to secondary data. Unfortunately, most of the existing research was found to be over 10 years old.

## Results/Findings

My analysis found that less lethal weapons can be lethal or harmful in many situations. I also found that it is important for law enforcement officers 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 different situations and suspects.

## Discussion

Giving law enforcement officers access to long range less lethal weapons could save lives. Officers would be more capable of incapacitating dangerous suspects from a safe distance, likely reducing the number of fatal police shootings. In addition to a likely reduction in deaths, having long range less lethal weapons would probably reduce the possibility of injury to both suspects and officers, because officers would be able to subdue dangerous suspects from a safe distance.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Through my research, I found that more research needs to be conducted on this topic. It appeared that most of the existing academic research occurred in 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, the rounds have potential to cause lasting damage to their targets. Better options should be researched. Along with more research, more less lethal weapons should be developed. Through the research, it was found that there are many types of less lethal weapons that have not been explored to their full potential.

## References

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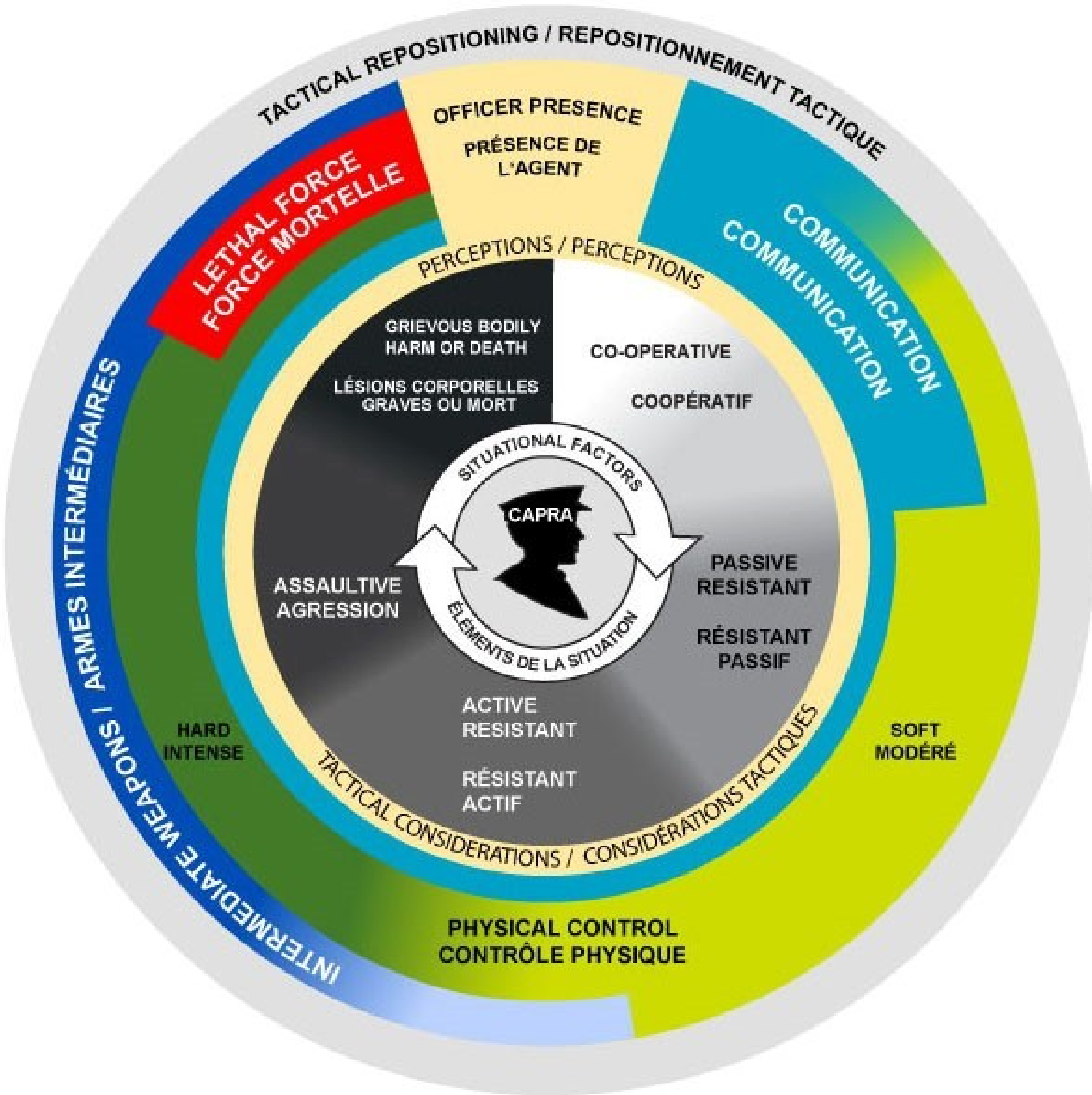
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### Maximum Range

Bean Bag Shotgun: 65 Feet

TASER: 30 Feet



Royal Canadian Mounted Police. "Incident Management / Intervention Model"  
[<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/incident-management-intervention-model-imim>]