



TRAINING BULLETIN

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

DARYL F. GATES, CHIEF OF POLICE

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USE OF FORCE SIDE HANDLE BATON

Police officers have been provided certain tools and techniques to aid them in the performance of their duties. The Side Handle Baton is one of the tools available to officers in use of force situations. The PR-18 and PR-24 models of the Side Handle Baton are the approved batons for the Los Angeles Police Department, and can provide officers with a safe and effective means of handling many situations when faced with bodily attack.

The purpose of this Training Bulletin is to provide officers with a better understanding of when the baton should be used and to illustrate the various drawing, blocking, and defensive techniques used with the Side Handle Baton.

NOTE: In order for officers to carry and use a PR-24, they must be certified by Training Division through a Department approved course. Officers who wish to carry the PR-18 must complete the PR-24 course as well as the PR-18 course.



GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE SIDE HANDLE BATON

While control of a suspect through verbalization is preferable, the use of physical force to gain control of a suspect is sometimes necessary. When verbalization appears to be ineffective and an officer has a reasonable belief that the situation may escalate, the officer may draw the baton as a show of force. This action may, in many cases, de-escalate the situation. Officers should continue verbalization in an attempt to further de-escalate the confrontation. If the incident escalates to a physical confrontation, the Side Handle Baton provides officers with an alternative between unarmed self-defense skills and deadly force.

The mere failure of verbalization to effect control of a suspect does not automatically warrant use of the baton. As the suspect's actions vary, officers must constantly re-evaluate the situation and escalate or de-escalate the amount of force used. There are many variables that can dictate the amount of force to be used on an uncooperative or combative suspect. Some of the variables include the suspect's state of mind, the weapon used by the suspect, the size of the suspect compared to the size of the officer, and the location and number of suspects. What constitutes a reasonable amount of force in a one-officer situation may not fit a similar field situation where several officers are present. The officers' response in each incident must be based upon the tactical situation, Department policy on the use of force, and relevant State and/or Federal statutes.

The following examples were taken from actual use of force situations. In these tactical situations, the officers properly used the Side Handle Baton to overcome and control a suspect's resistance.

- * Upon observing a vehicle being driven erratically, officers initiated a vehicle stop. When the driver stopped the vehicle, two male companions jumped out and fled between the nearby buildings, escaping. The driver ran in the opposite direction, and officers, believing the vehicle to be stolen, gave chase. After a short foot pursuit, the officers had the suspect "boxed in." The suspect ignored the officers' verbal orders to submit to arrest and attempted to escape by running between the two officers. The suspect's escape was prevented by one officer using his baton in an extended front punch to the suspect's abdominal area.
- * Two officers received a "415 MAN" radio call. Upon arrival at the scene, the officers observed two men involved in a fight. The officers separated the two men and determined they were brothers involved in a family dispute. Neither brother wished to press charges and the officers dispersed the two men. As the two brothers were leaving, one of them picked up a bottle and started to charge the other one. To prevent possible injury to the unarmed brother, the officers reacted with their batons using a series of chops and jabs which resulted in the disarmament of the suspect.

REPORTING THE USE OF THE SIDE HANDLE BATON

A reportable use of force incident is defined as an incident in which any on-duty Department employee, or off-duty employee whose occupation as a Department employee is a factor, uses a non-lethal control device or any physical force to:

- * Compel a person to comply with the employee's directions; or
- * Overcome resistance by a suspect during an arrest or a detention; or

- * Defend any person from an aggressive action by a suspect.

NOTE: A Use of Force Report would not be required if an officer strikes at a suspect with the baton and does not make contact.

An employee who becomes involved in a reportable use of force incident should:

- * Notify a supervisor as soon as feasible;
- * Complete a Use of Force Report, Form 1.67.2;
- * Use an Employee's Report, Form 15.7, to report the full details of the use of force incident when a crime or arrest report is not required;
- * Ensure that each page of all copies of the related report has the words "Use of Force" in the left margin;
- * When off-duty, notify their supervisor or watch commander without unnecessary delay. If their location of assignment is closed, notification shall be made to Detective Headquarters Division. A copy of the necessary use of force reports shall be submitted to their supervisor no later than the next regularly scheduled tour of duty.

APPLICATION OF TECHNIQUES

The techniques described below must be practiced on a regular basis in order to optimize the potential of this baton and instill self-confidence in the officer. The self-confidence demonstrated by an officer may deter a suspect's aggressive challenge. It is important to note that the effectiveness of this baton is based more on technical proficiency than physical strength.

Officers should concentrate on striking the suspect in the following recommended areas: hands, wrists, elbows, knees, shins, chest and midsection. Due to the fluid nature of these violent confrontations, officers may be unable to effectively strike the recommended areas, however, they should attempt to avoid striking the head, neck, throat and spine of the suspect.

Throughout this Training Bulletin the terms "strong side" and "weak side" are used. The strong side is the side where the officer carries his/her revolver. The baton is carried on the officer's weak side or side opposite the revolver.

Officers should begin all field contacts from the interrogation position. This is accomplished by keeping the weak side turned slightly toward the suspect and the strong side, or gun hip, away from the suspect. This will protect the firearm and groin area.

Do not face the suspect directly. Based on the circumstances of the contact, the officers may or may not have their batons in the basic carry position. The basic carry position is when the handle of the baton is held in the strong hand with the short end projecting as an extension of the arm. The long end is in line with and under the forearm.



DRAWING TECHNIQUES

An officer's decision to draw or exhibit a baton should be based on the tactical situation and the officer's reasonable belief that there is a risk that the situation may escalate to bodily attack by the suspect. Learning how to draw and hold the Side Handle Baton is as important as learning any other baton techniques. The three (3) Department approved drawing techniques are the basic or cross draw, the power draw, and the rear or low-profile draw.

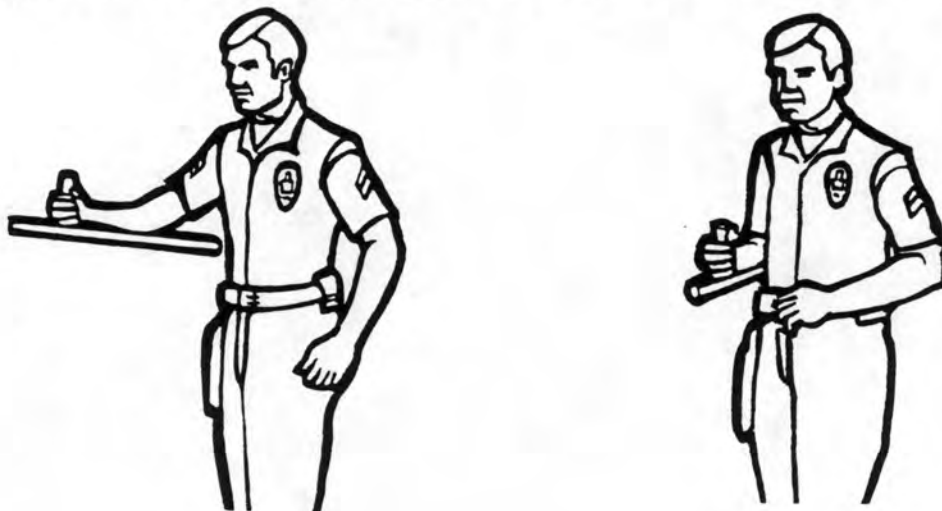
Speed and a proper stance are the two key elements in drawing the Side Handle Baton. A smooth, crisp draw coupled with good balance will prepare an officer to handle almost any physical confrontation.

BASIC OR CROSS DRAW

The basic or cross draw technique is designed to reposition the baton from the ring to the basic carry position. Place the weak hand on the long portion of the baton and tilt the short end of the baton forward and downward slightly. At the same time, reach across the midsection with the strong hand and grasp the handle, pulling the baton free of the ring.



While pulling the baton from the ring, grip the handle loosely enough so that the long end of the baton is permitted to rotate across the midsection toward the strong side and is parallel with the strong side forearm. Rotation of the baton can be regulated by tightening the grip on the handle with the strong hand. With the officer standing in the interrogation position, and the baton tucked in close to the side and parallel to the forearm, the basic carry position is achieved.

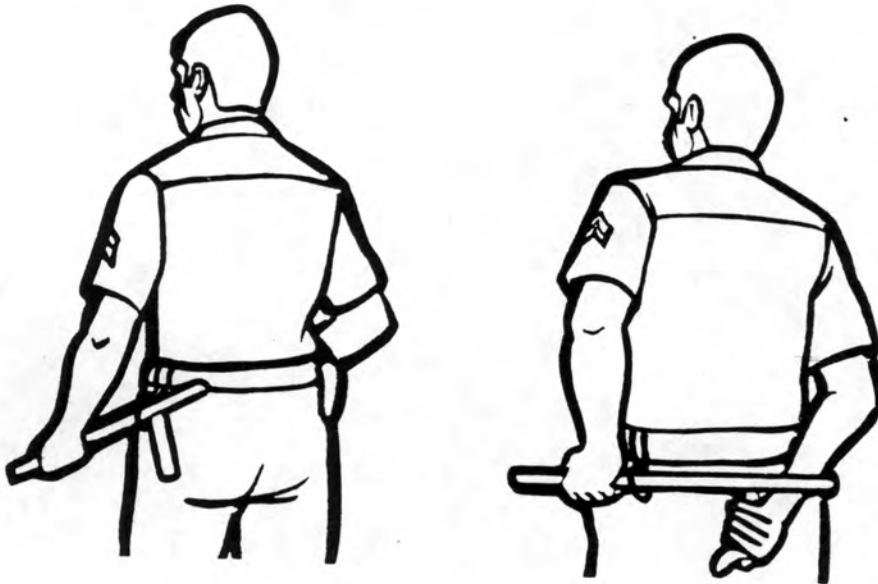


POWER DRAW

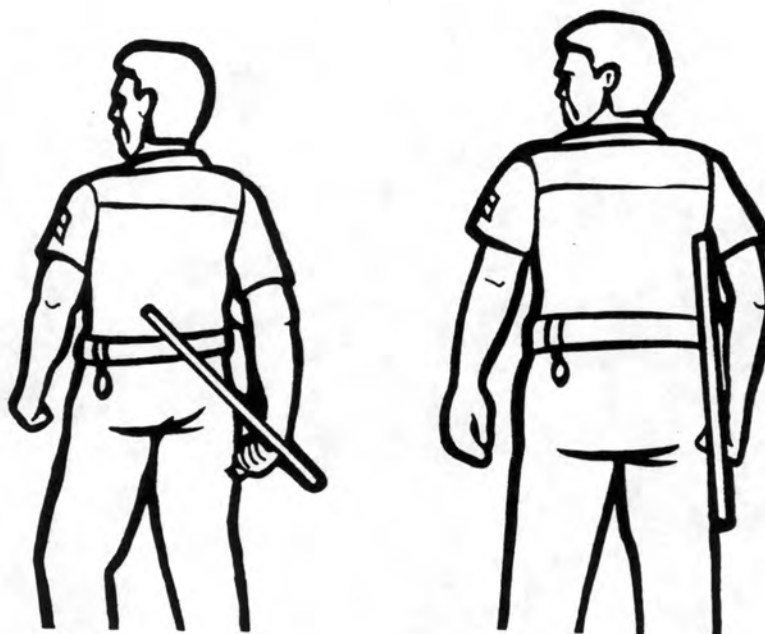
The power draw can be used as a defensive technique in response to a suspect's aggressive actions. The power draw is initiated in the same manner as the basic or cross draw, except that as the long end leaves the ring, it should be quickly swung from the weak side over to the strong side fully extending the arm at the midpoint of the swing. At the conclusion of the power draw, the strong side elbow should be away from the body with the long portion of the baton resting on the outer forearm. To generate more power, rotate the hips and shoulders as the baton is pulled from the ring.



REAR OR LOW-PROFILE DRAW



The low-profile draw can be used to draw the baton casually, without attracting undue attention. Grasp the long portion of the baton with the weak hand and push the baton up and almost out of the baton ring with the handle pointing downward. Then reach across the back with the strong hand, with the thumb close to the back and pointing downward. Now grasp the handle with the strong hand and pull the baton out of the baton ring. The baton may now be kept behind the back, or brought into partial view in the basic carry position.



DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

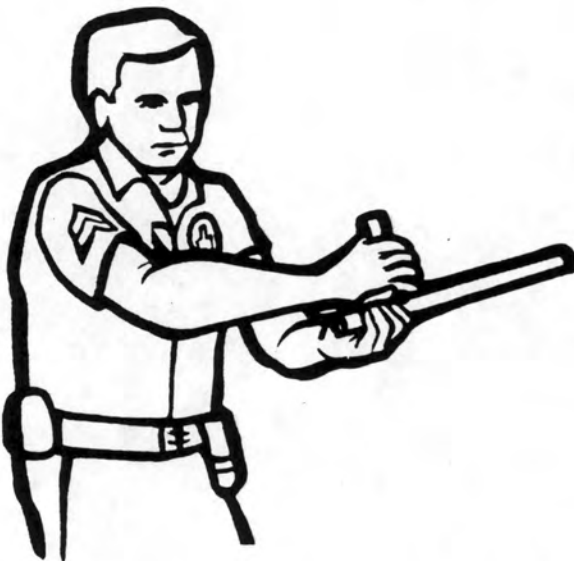
The quickness and speed which can be generated by jabs or spinning techniques with the Side Handle Baton gives it a shocking power much greater than that of the conventional straight baton.

POWER STROKE

The power stroke is the most powerful technique available to officers using the Side Handle Baton. Begin in the interrogation position with the baton in the basic carry position. At the start of this movement the weak hand comes across and grasps the short end of the baton palm down.



With the long portion of the baton pressed firmly against the forearm, step forward with the weak foot and swing the baton forward into the suspect. Keep the baton waist-high and horizontal to the ground. Upon impact, follow through with the swing to the weak side. Once in this position, the power stroke can be reversed if required.



FORWARD-REVERSE SPIN

The forward-reverse spin is the basic striking technique. It can also be used to block a suspect's fist or other threatening object. Begin in the interrogation position with the baton in the basic carry position. Swing the baton outward and forward, allowing the long end of the baton to spin in a horizontal arc from the strong side to the weak side.



The weak arm should be raised to allow the baton to travel beneath it. In order to prevent the baton from striking the rib cage on the weak side, allow the strong hand to come in contact with the weak side. Once the forward spin is completed, the baton will be in a position to complete a reverse spin if necessary. The reverse spin is basically the opposite of the forward spin. To minimize baton impact to the rib cage when spinning the baton from the weak side to the strong, stop the baton with the strong hand as close to the side as possible.



FRONT PUNCH

The front punch is designed to be used in the same manner that a fist is used to deliver a punch.

Begin by holding the baton in the basic carry position with the long portion of the baton pressed firmly against the underside of the forearm. While taking a half step forward with the weak foot, drive the short end of the baton forward. When driving the baton forward, rotate the handle toward the strong side. The long end of the baton should not extend past the side of the body. To generate more power keep the baton horizontal to the ground.



LONG EXTENDED FRONT PUNCH

The long extended front punch is executed in the same manner as the front punch, except that this technique requires the long end of the baton to be extended past the body. To prevent the baton from turning and being driven backwards into the chest, place the weak hand on the long portion of the baton, thumb up holding the baton against the forearm..



REAR PUNCH

Begin in the interrogation position with the baton in the basic carry position. Place the weak hand on the short end of the baton, palm downward. Turn the handle outward from the strong side and look over the strong side shoulder to locate the suspect. Take a step backwards with the strong foot while driving the long end of the baton into the suspect. After contact is made, recover to the interrogation position.



FLAT CHOP

Begin in the basic carry position. Pull the baton up to a vertical position as the weak hand grasps the long portion of the baton. The thumb of the weak hand should be extended pressing the baton firmly against the forearm. The execution of the movement is done by striking downward or in a "chopping" motion.



This technique is designed to be executed using a two-handed technique, however, an officer may be required to use a flat chop unsupported by the weak hand should a suspect attempt to grab the officer's weapon.



YAWARA STRIKE

The Yawara strike is utilized when an officer is attacked from the rear. Begin in the basic carry position. The weak hand is then placed on the long end of the baton, thumb up, to keep the baton firmly against the underside of the forearm. As the officer looks back over his/her shoulder, the baton is pivoted at the elbow, raising it in an up and back over the shoulder motion. The knob of the handle is used to stike the suspect.



BLOCKING TECHNIQUES

The Side Handle Baton has been proved far superior to the straight baton for blocking a bodily attack. Nevertheless, officers when blocking heavy objects should realize that injury is possible. When there is a choice between blocking or backing away, officers should back away and place themselves in a better position to respond to an offensive attack.

The four (4) Department approved methods for blocking with the Side Handle Baton are the high block, the strong side block, the weak side block, and the low block from either the basic carry or the long extended position.

NOTE: When using these blocks, emphasis should be placed on rotating the handle slightly away from the officer's face so that a blow to the baton does not force the handle into the officer's face.

HIGH BLOCK

The high block is used to defend against strikes or attacks from overhead. With the long portion of the baton pressed tightly against the underside of the strong side forearm, raise the arm so that the bicep of the strong arm is alongside the head, and the elbow is bent at about 90 degrees. The bicep should make contact with the head. Insure that the handle is positioned to the side of the officer's head. Place the weak side hand, palm up, behind the short portion of the baton for additional support.



STRONG SIDE BLOCK

To execute a block to the strong side, crouch in the interrogation position with the baton in the basic carry position, and pivot slightly towards the strong side. While pivoting, in the crouched position, raise the baton to a vertical position, keeping the handle pointed to the strong side of the head. The short end of the baton may be supported with the weak hand.



WEAK SIDE BLOCK

To execute a block to the weak side, maintain the interrogation position with the baton in the basic carry position, and pivot on the toe of the strong foot, moving the weak foot slightly to the rear. Rotate the strong shoulder towards the weak side at the same time raise the baton to a vertical position, keeping the handle pointed to the strong side of the head. The short end of the baton may be supported with the weak hand.



LOW BLOCK

The low block can be used to guard against kicks or strikes to the shins, knees, or groin. Begin in the interrogation position with the long portion of the baton pressed tightly against the underside of the strong side forearm. Next, bend at the knees and lower the baton to knee level, keeping the short end of the baton slightly lower than the long end and the handle pointed upward.



LONG EXTENDED POSITION

To assume the long extended position from the basic carry position, execute a slow forward spin, but stop the long extended end with the weak hand (palm down) when the baton rotates in front of the chest. Expose approximately two to three inches of the extended end.



POWER CHOP

The power chop is initiated from the long extended position on the officer's strong side. Swing the handle back to shoulder height and step forward toward the suspect with the weak foot. Swing the baton down and around, directing the short end at the suspect.



HIGH BLOCK

From the long extended position, raise the baton over the head with the weak hand supporting the long portion of the baton. The baton should be at a 45 degree angle, fingers of the weak hand behind the baton and the handle positioned away from the side of the head. The angle of the baton will direct the force toward the strong side.

LOW BLOCK

To execute a low block, bend the knees enough to allow the baton to be lowered to knee level and at a 45 degree angle. Place the weak hand behind the long portion for support and attempt to deflect the blow toward the strong side.



STRONG SIDE BLOCK

To execute a strong side block, pivot a quarter turn toward the strong side. The weak side hand should release the long extended end while the handle is raised to a vertical position. The weak hand should then be placed palm forward behind the long portion for support. The handle should be at eye level. The baton should also be kept vertical when blocking. If the long end of the baton is allowed to point in toward the leg, the blocked object will be directed toward that area.



WEAK SIDE BLOCK

To execute a weak side block, step back with the weak foot and pivot a quarter turn toward the weak side. Raise the baton to a vertical position, handle at eye level and have the palm of the weak hand support the long portion. Point the handle slightly toward the strong side to avoid a blocked strike from pushing the handle into the face.



SHORT END STRIKE

The short end strike is a technique that can be used to direct or strike a suspect in a crowd control situation.

Begin with the interrogation position and the baton in the long extended position. Pull the long end of the baton back toward the weak side of the body, while at the same time snapping the short end into the suspect's waist area. Keep the handle up and the baton horizontal to the ground.



WEAK SIDE REAR STRIKE

This technique can be used to defend against an attack to the officer's weak side.

While in the interrogation position and the baton in the long extended position, look over the weak side shoulder to locate the suspect. Next, step back into the suspect with the weak foot and thrust the long end of the baton into the suspect.



POOL-CUE JAB

The pool-cue jab was designed as a crowd control technique. It can also function as a technique to direct or position a suspect. Begin in the interrogation position with the handle in the strong hand and the long end pointed at the suspect. The weak hand, palm down, forms as a guide on the long end and will assist in keeping the baton horizontal to the ground. Loosen the grip with the weak hand to allow the baton to slide through freely. Maintain a stationary position with the weak hand in front of the body and drive the baton forward into the suspect with the strong hand. After impact, quickly retract the baton so the suspect does not have an opportunity to grab it. To use the pool-cue jab as a crowd control technique, take a step forward while driving the long end forward into the suspect.



PR-18 SIDE HANDLE BATON

The PR-18 Side Handle Baton was designed for use by plain clothes officers. This concealable baton provides these officers with an additional option when confronted with a use of force situation. Officers should be aware that due to the reduced length of this baton it may be less effective than the PR-24 during certain movements.

CARRYING AND DRAWING OF THE PR-18

The baton is carried either in the belt line or in a baton shoulder holster. There is no formalized method of getting the baton out and into the basic carry position due to the variations in carrying methods.

The PR-18 can perform all the movements previously described in the PR-24 section. However, some of these movements are not effective when performed with a PR-18 and should be avoided.

RECOMMENDED MOVEMENTS

Blocking movements*
 Front Punch
 Flat Chop
 Power Stroke**
 Yawara Strike
 Short End Strike

MOVEMENTS WHICH SHOULDN'T BE ATTEMPTED

Spins
 Long Extended Front Punch
 Rear Punch
 Pool Cue Jab
 Weak Side Rear Jab
 Power Chop

*Blocking movements can be executed from either the basic carry or long extended position. When blocking from the basic carry position, officers should be aware that the baton does not cover their elbow.

**The Power Stroke will produce only fair results because the reduced length does not generate as much force as the PR-24.

CONCLUSION

The degree or amount of force that is necessary to overcome a suspect's resistance is dependent on a variety of factors. Baton movements effectively employed can be instrumental in preventing serious injury to the officer and decrease the opportunity for a situation to escalate. Officers' self-confidence in their baton skills can also be a de-escalating factor which can contribute to a successful field contact.

Officers are strongly encouraged to practice these techniques in order to maximize their ability to control a situation requiring the use of force. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of assuming a well-balanced interrogation position, for it is the keystone to most of the baton movements.

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1. When would an officer be required to report the use of the Side Handle Baton on the Use of Force Report, Form 1.67.2?
2. What baton movement is the basic striking technique?
3. Describe the interrogation position with the baton in the basic carry position?
4. When verbalization appears to be ineffective, an officer may use the Side Handle Baton as a _____ prior to utilizing baton techniques.
5. Name five variables that may dictate the amount of force an officer uses to control an uncooperative or combative suspect?