



# REGENT UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## PEPPER SPRAY

Starting in the 2022 spring semester, Regent University has made a change in its weapons policy (insert link) authorizing the use of pepper spray by students, faculty, and staff. Before purchasing and carrying personal defense pepper spray, you should be aware that it comes with a significant personal responsibility to the user. Please be aware that when you use pepper spray you are liable for your actions and their results. Please familiarize yourself with these facts. Also, refer to the manufacturers' product warnings and usage, found on packaging or as an insert, for information related to your particular product.

### A. Know the law!

Although pepper spray is currently legal in all 50 states there are some laws and regulations that govern possession and usage. The following will help you while staying at Regent University but remember the laws may differ from your home state.

#### 1. Federal:

- a. Pepper spray cannot be brought into Federal and State buildings. This includes Courthouses, jails and detention centers, IRS, Social security, Post office, et al.
- b. TSA airline rules place the following limitations on pepper spray and airline travel:
  - Must be in checked luggage; no carry on (it is also a wise measure to advise security that it is in luggage)
  - Limited to 4 oz.
  - No more than 2% CS
  - Must have a safety feature for accidental discharge

#### 2. Virginia:

In addition to Virginia's self-defense laws there are two laws specifically addressing usage of gas propelled caustic substances.

**§ 18.2-312.** Illegal use of tear gas, phosgene, and other gases.

If any person maliciously release or cause or procure to be released in any private home, place of business or place of public gathering any tear gas, mustard gas, phosgene gas or other noxious or nauseating gases or mixtures of chemicals designed to, and capable of, producing vile or injurious

or nauseating odors or gases, and bodily injury results to any person from such gas or odor, the offending person shall be guilty of a Class 3 felony.

If such act be done unlawfully, but not maliciously, the offending person shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony.

Nothing herein contained shall prevent the use of tear gas or other gases by police officers or other peace officers in the proper performance of their duties, or by any person or persons in the protection of person, life, or property.

Code 1950, § 18.1-70; 1960, c. 358; 1975, cc. 14, 15.

**§ 18.2-52.** Malicious bodily injury by means of any caustic substance or agent or use of any explosive or fire.

If any person maliciously causes any other person bodily injury by means of any acid, lye or other caustic substance or agent or use of any explosive or fire, he shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by confinement in a state correctional facility for a period of not less than five years nor more than thirty years. If such act is done unlawfully but not maliciously, the offender shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony.

Code 1950, § 18.1-67; 1960, c. 358; 1975, cc. 14, 15, 604; 1995, c. [439](#).

## **B. Research before you buy/carry**

There are many spray types to choose from and each one works better for different circumstances. In addition, there are numerous manufacturers to review.

## **C. Practice (safely)!**

Remember: only practice with inert training versions of the spray you carry!

1. When you encounter a dangerous, threatening situation is **NOT** the first time you want to be using your pepper spray. Use a size appropriate inert, water-based practice spray to become proficient with your device. The inert spray will simulate the feeling, distance, and volume of spray available in a real pepper spray product of equal volume.
2. When you practice, make sure you carry the pepper spray in the same manor you do on the street; purse, keychain, pocket etc.

## **D. Check the expiration**

If pepper spray is expired, it can affect the potency of the product. All reputable pepper spray products include a manufacturer expiration that is generally 3-4 years from the time of purchase. This date identifies when the active ingredients expire. Since pepper spray comes in an aerosol-based canister, it can lose pressure and spray distance over time. This is especially true for canisters stored in less-than-optimal environments. Older, expired pepper spray may result in you essentially spraying water in an attacker's face.

## **E. Store properly**

- Store securely when not carrying to avoid others misusing

- Do not store in vehicle or other areas that can generate extreme temperatures
- Do not store in areas that risk puncturing the canister

#### **F. Learn proper techniques**

Some manufacturers have URL links for videos or manuals explaining proper usage techniques for their particular product.

#### **G. Know how to handle being exposed to pepper spray:**

There are a number of situations that can result in you being unintentionally exposed to pepper spray. Whether a strong wind blows the spray in your direction, you have contact with a person you've sprayed, you're an innocent bystander when someone else uses pepper spray or you unintentionally discharge your own pepper spray, if you come in contact with pepper spray, you need to take immediate action to decontaminate yourself.

- Get out of contaminated area
- Immediately apply water to the affected area
- Do not rub your eyes
- Remove contact lenses (hard lenses should be cleaned and soaked for 24 hours before reinserting. Soft lenses should be discarded)
- Use a decontamination spray after area is flushed (if you do not have decontamination spray, alternate blotting eyes with dry and wet towels)
- Be patient (it may take up to 40 minutes for the effects to subside)
- If in a dorm room, close the doors and do not allow entry. Notify an RA or campus police immediately
- Always seek medical attention after exposure

#### **H. Remember, it is only a tool.**

Don't become overly reliant on pepper spray for self-defense. Remember that it is simply one item in your toolbox for protection. An unhealthy reliance on any self-defense tool could lead to disastrous consequences should it fail to work the way you planned.

Use at your own risk.

If you ever find yourself in a dangerous situation and need to or have already deployed your cannister of pepper spray, please contact your local authorities (911) or Campus Police (757-226-2911 or 757-226-2075).