DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Policy Number:	**301.107**
Title:	**FN 303 Less Lethal Launcher System**
Effective Date:	**8/7/18**

PURPOSE: To outline procedures regarding the safe operation/deployment of the FN 303 less lethal launcher. The use of the FN 303 less lethal launcher is restricted to justifiable self-defense, protection of others, protection of property, and prevention of escapes.

APPLICABILITY: All adult correctional facilities (MCF)

DEFINITIONS:

FN 303 less lethal launcher system (FN 303) – a projectile launcher powered by compressed air. The compressed air is housed within a factory-specified bottle, which mounts to the side of the launcher. The FN 303 is designed to launch a fin-stabilized projectile and propels a .68 caliber fin-stabilized projectile from a rotary 15-shot capacity magazine. The launcher is semi-automatic and has a manual safety.

Less lethal force technology and equipment – those items which, when used properly, are less likely to result in death or serious physical injury than force commonly referred to as "deadly." Less lethal launchers fall into this category.

Less lethal force – force that is not likely to cause death or serious injury, but the possibility of fatality, however remote, does exist.

PROCEDURES:

A. Guidelines for use

1. The FN 303 may only be used:
   a) Under orders of the warden/designee;
   b) In emergency situations in which any lesser degree of force would clearly be ineffective, or which would subject staff/offender(s) to serious threat of injury; or
   c) When a higher level of force may be justified, but an opportunity exists to use the FN 303 before other options are deployed.
2. The FN 303 launcher must only be used by the special operations response team (SORT), special operations groups (SOG), or marksman/observer (MO) team members trained and certified to use it.

B. Training, re-certification, and practical demonstration

1. Only certified less-lethal launcher instructors may conduct FN 303 launcher training and/or equipment demonstrations.
   a) An operator certification level is not sufficient for the purpose of conducting training or demonstrations.
   b) The instructor must be certified by the DOC-approved/contracted trainer on a two-year rotational schedule.

2. No employee or civilian may be exposed to any less-lethal launcher for the purpose of a practical demonstration.

3. All tactical staff must be certified by the DOC-approved/contracted trainer prior to operating/deploying the FN 303.
   a) An officer must qualify semi-annually to maintain the officer's certification to operate less-lethal launchers.

   b) All training must be documented and retained in the approved agency electronic training system.

   c) Certification includes such examples as the following:
      (1) Describe the specifications and capabilities of the FN 303;
      (2) Describe the major components of the FN 303;
      (3) State the equipment associated with the FN 303;
      (4) Disassemble, clean, and reassemble the FN 303;
      (5) Perform an operation check before and after firing the FN 303;
      (6) Perform the refilling of the air reservoir;
      (7) Describe and select the proper FN 303 projectiles;
      (8) Describe the proper target areas on a subject when deploying the FN 303;
      (9) A written test; and
      (10) Complete an initial and semi-annual live-fire qualification course.

C. Deployment of FN 303

When deploying the FN 303, shot placement is crucial to prevention of serious injury. Therefore:

1. Based upon the distance between the operator and subject, FN 303 projectiles primarily are targeted at the thigh region.

2. Although classified as a less-lethal device, the potential exists for less-lethal projectiles to inflict potential lethal injury when they strike the face, eyes, neck, spine, and groin. Officers deploying less-lethal launchers must avoid intentionally striking those areas.

3. An operator should maintain a safe reactionary zone between the operator and the subject.

4. When deploying the FN 303, give loud verbal commands before deployment if practical.

D. Projectiles

1. The FN 303 uses various projectiles based upon operational requirements.
   a) Projectiles must remain in the projectile transport storage tube until they are loaded into the magazine.

   b) The projectile is a fin-stabilized design containing bismuth granules with the selected payload.

   c) All materials in the FN 303 projectiles are non-toxic and environmentally safe.

2. Only new rounds may be used on official call-up incident command system (ICS) situations.
   a) Never allow rounds to be stored in a cold environment.

b) Optimum room temperature guidelines must be adhered to.

3. The following FN 303 projectiles are authorized for use by the DOC:
   a) Training rounds;

   b) Marking rounds;

   c) Permanent marking round; and/or

   d) Oleoresin capsicum rounds (liquid).

E. Medical attention

Whenever the FN 303 is used against an offender, the SORT or SOG team leader is responsible for having the offender and/or injured staff member examined as soon as practical by medical staff to determine extent of injuries and receive proper medical attention in accordance with Policy 500.012, "Offender Emergency Health Care."

F. Reporting

1. Staff deploying the FN 303 must report the incident to the team leader as soon as possible.

2. All staff who deploy or witness the use of the FN 303, or are present on the scene, must prepare a use of force incident report, as outlined in Policy 301.081 “Use of Force and Restraints – Adult,” Procedure C, 2(a), if the incident is of a deadly force nature, involves the discharge of a firearm, results in substantial bodily harm, results in a staff or offender death, or requires outside law enforcement participation for any other reason. OSI, in conjunction with the watch commander, may defer report writing to a later date to be determined by OSI.

3. If the FN 303 is fired during a tactical deployment, at the end of that deployment the FN 303 must be rendered safe and kept intact with remaining live rounds in the weapon; all remaining magazines and rounds must be placed into evidence. The designated SORT/ERT member who discharges an FN 303 weapon must maintain possession of the weapon until directed, either by the team commander or a representative of the OSI, as to when and to whom the weapon is surrendered (see Policy 301.035, “Evidence Management.”). An inventory check of the weapon must take place at the end of a deployment.

4. Staff deploying the FN 303 during an ICS incident in which SORT/SOG has been activated and the level of force is deemed necessary to discharge the weapon must complete the FN 303 Less Lethal Launcher Deployment Report (attached) and attach it to the incident report.

5. The SORT/SOG team leader is responsible to ensure adherence to all reporting requirements outlined in Policy 301.081, “Use of Force and Restraints - Adult,” Procedure C, 2(a), if the incident is of a deadly force nature, involves the discharge of a firearm, results in substantial bodily harm, results in a staff or offender death or requires outside law enforcement participation for any other reason; OSI in conjunction with the watch commander may defer report writing to a later date to be determined by OSI.

6. All incident and deployment reports are retained at the facility of the incident.

G. Inventory of FN 303

1. The FN 303 must be located in the armory or a secured area which is absolutely inaccessible to offenders but readily available to personnel in emergencies.

2. The armory lieutenant/area supervisor must accurately account for the FN 303, using a monthly inventory system including recording and tracing serial number and quantities of equipment and supplies. The inventory consists of the following:
   a) Accounting of the FN 303 by serial number, including officer issue log;

   b) Accounting for all projectiles; and

   c) The log total must match the actual ammunition in the armory. If a discrepancy exists, immediately notify the captain or watch commander.

3. All inventory records must be retained at the facility. Each institution is responsible for a dual person weapons annual check as per Policy 301.100, "Weapons Control."

H. Tactical applications

Tactical applications are determined by the tactical commander.

I. Authorized FN 303 specifications

1. All FN 303 used must be equipped with sight systems approved specifically by the department security committee.

2. Current approved systems are the holographic sight system and the optional green laser optic system.

3. Weapons must be sighted in before all deployment operations and uses.

4. FN 303 weapons must be transported in hard shell/soft protective cases in order to prevent damage or accident. The SOG transports all weapons in a hard case.

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. All training is documented and retained in the approved agency training system.

B. All incident and deployment reports are retained at the facility of the deployment.

C. All inventory records are retained at the facility housing the weapons.

ACA STANDARDS: 4-4203-3A, 2-CO-3A-01

REFERENCES: Minn. Stat. §§ 243.52; 609.06; 609.065; and 609.066
Policy 301.081, "Use of Force and Restraints – Adult"
Policy 301.100, "Weapons Control"
Policy 500.012, "Offender Emergency Health Care"
Policy 301.140, "Incident Command System"
Division Directive 301.105, "Facility Firearms Qualification"
Policy 301.035, "Evidence Management"

Policy 301.155, “Emergency Response Team (ERT)/Special Operations Response Team (SORT)/Communications Unit Leader (COML)”

REPLACES: Division Directive 301.107, "FN 303 Less Lethal Launcher System," 5/2/17. All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means, regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: FN303 Less Lethal Launcher Deployment Report (301.107A)

APPROVALS:
Deputy Commissioner, Facility Services
Deputy Commissioner, Community Services
Assistant Commissioner, Facility Services
Assistant Commissioner, Operations Support