

## **Baton Rounds - General**

The decision to authorise baton rounds as an available tactical option ahead of a pre-planned event or protest is one that can only be taken by an Assistant Commissioner.

It is primarily a preparatory step that provides the operational commander for the event with the ability to consider authorising where a situation involving a risk of either loss of life or serious injury develops, and after conventional methods had been tried and failed (or would in all of the circumstances not succeed).

While authorisations have been given ahead of a very limited number of events and protests in recent years, baton rounds have never actually been used by the Met in a public order situation.

Decisions on the tactical options appropriate ahead of any event are carefully considered and take into account a full intelligence, threat and risk assessment.

In recent years, authorisation has been given to operational commanders to consider baton rounds as a tactical option for Notting Hill Carnival and for three days during protests in central London in 2020.

## **Notting Hill Carnival**

Around one million people attend Notting Hill Carnival each year and most have a fantastic experience. We recognise its significance to communities across London as a celebration of the city's cultural diversity and history.

But it is that same unrivalled scale, the fact it takes place in a built up residential area rather than a dedicated event venue and the convergence of groups – in particular groups of young men – from across London and beyond, that makes Carnival such a unique policing challenge.

Each year thousands of officers are deployed to police the event, and while we work closely with the community, organisers and partners to ensure it can take place as safely as possible, we do have to acknowledge that the likelihood of violence and disorder is higher than at other events we police.

Last year, 74 officers were injured, there were a number of serious assaults on members of the public and tragically, a young man was murdered.

It is in this context that the decision has been taken, on a number of occasions, to authorise the availability of baton rounds as a tactical option to the officer in overall command of the policing operation.

Again, this is a preparatory step to ensure officers have the resources available to intervene quickly in the most serious circumstances. It is not the same as authorising their use.

## **Protests in central London in 2020**

In the summer of 2020, the death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer in Minneapolis prompted significant protests, first in the United States and then in other cities around the world, including London.

While the majority of protests in London were peaceful, there had been outbreaks of disorder and by 10 June, more than 40 officers had been injured.

As part of a wider policing plan, authorisation was given for baton rounds to be available to the overall policing commander, as a tactical option, between 12 June and 15 June.

This was prompted by serious concerns about a further escalation in disorder with large numbers of people anticipated and an indication that counter protesters could travel to London leading to potential confrontations between groups.

While baton rounds were available as an option, there was no eventual need for their use to be authorised.