

Oakland Police Department
Controlled Equipment Impact Report



Item(s): Armored Vehicles
Applicable Use Policy: TB III-P.04, Armored Vehicles

Description and Purpose

Armored Tactical Lenco Bearcat SUV	
Description	An armored vehicle is a piece of law enforcement equipment that may allow officers to use non-force options to safely resolve incidents involving actual, threatened, or reasonably suspected violence using firearms or explosives. The protective capabilities of an armored vehicle greatly exceed those of a patrol vehicle and proper deployment of armored vehicles may increase the safety of the public, law enforcement officers, and other first responders. Armored vehicles provide improved cover for officers, are stocked with tools that might be needed during a critical incident and increase the options for rescues and safer resolutions.
Manufacturer's Product Description	The Lenco Bearcat SUV is designed to offer departments an armored rescue vehicle that is more discreet, mobile, and sometimes affordable than an APC, yet offers some of the same deployment and armor advantages. The Lenco Bearcat SUV offers a low-profile design, high ballistic protection, 6.7-liter turbo diesel V-8 engine, 4x4 transmission, designed for quick entry and egress, and modular floor plan.
How the item works	The Lenco Bearcat SUV is a low-profile high ballistic armored vehicle that sits on a Ford F-550 chassis and is accompanied by a Ford Diesel powertrain. It accomplishes most of the features of an APC. Unlike an APC, this vehicle offers a low-profile design with the goal of decreasing any negative impact on the community it serves. It can deploy up to 6 fully outfitted members of OPD's Entry Team.
Expected lifespan	With proper maintenance and care, Lenco SUV's have an expected life span of between 200,000 & 250,000 miles. Given the additional weight to the unit from the armor, this may be moderately decreased. Based on the above, we anticipate a 15-year lifespan.
Quantity	The Department would like consideration for the purchase of 2 units when financially feasible. This has been pre-approved by the Police Commission in 2025. We currently have zero units.
Purpose and intended uses and/or effects	Commanders (Lieutenants and above) shall only authorize the deployment of armored vehicles when the specific capabilities of the Armored Lenco Bearcat SUV is necessary to bring an incident to a safe conclusion. Any authorized departure from an armored vehicle's place of storage shall be considered a deployment.

Fiscal Costs

Initial Costs

☐ The Oakland Police Department (OPD) currently owns/possesses/uses the equipment. Initial costs (if known) to obtain the equipment were:

Lenco Armored Bearcat \$450,000.00 (TBD) -\$900,000.00 (TBD)
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☒ OPD proposes to obtain the equipment. Initial costs are anticipated to be: (See above)

Estimated or anticipated costs for each proposed use

Armored vehicles are stored in locked and secure facilities at the Oakland Police Department. Tactical Team and qualified members of OPD have access to Armored Vehicles and will respond to an incident with the equipment when requested or approved by an Incident Commander. Armored vehicle operators may be on duty during incidents requiring them. If they are, they may deploy as patrol officers, or as their regular duty assignment, and utilize any one of the vehicles if available. For a tactical team call-out, other SOD members will respond even if they are off-duty, resulting in overtime expenditures. The amount of the expenditure is based on the time the incident takes to resolve. Overtime deployments can be tracked utilizing an i-code through fiscal.

Each vehicle costs the Department a minimum of \$1,418 per month (2025), which is an inter departmental cost that is paid to the City's Public Works Administration for upkeep and maintenance of the vehicle. This ongoing cost covers wear and tear and repairs due to normal operation. Costs due to damage incurred as a result of misuse or the actions of others (e.g., persons ramming the vehicle) may not be covered by this cost nor reimbursed by the person responsible. The Department must store each armored vehicle in a parking area that is secured from general public access; these spaces are generally used for other Department vehicle parking, thus spreading the cost across the Department's fleet.

Estimated or anticipated costs of potential adverse impacts

Potential adverse effects are myriad, and there is no way of anticipating every possible adverse impact. Additionally, even some known possible adverse effects may be so remote that they were not assessed for the purposes of this report. Finally, costs of even likely adverse effects may vary wildly based on other circumstances which are difficult to predict and can vary from incident to incident. Keeping this in mind, some potential adverse effects and their possible costs are:

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Deliberate misuse might cause the Department to be exposed to liability, which could include monetary judgments against the City.

Unintentional misuse might cause the Department to be exposed to liability, which could include monetary judgments against the City.

Failures of the equipment might cause the Department to have to purchase additional items, at a cost per item as indicated.

Estimated or anticipated ongoing costs

Costs for operation include training, personnel, maintenance and upgrade costs.

Training and personnel costs – Currently, the Entry Team has mandatory training twice a month. This training consists of two 10-hour days and typically occurs at the OPD or any other nearby facility or location. There has not been any rental fees or associated costs to locations of training currently. Some training may either require the Entry Team members attending to be on overtime, or for overtime to backfill that respective Entry Team member position while they are at training. If an Entry Team member elects to attend a POST certified training or outside training course, there could be associated costs. Unknown yearly costs.

Storage costs – Armored Vehicles are housed at secured OPD facilities and there are no associated costs.

Maintenance and upgrade costs – A Lenco Bearcat SUV has an expected life expectancy from 200,000 to 250,000 miles. With the additional weight added on armor and equipment we can infer this will impact the armored vehicles' life expectancy. However, with proper care we do not anticipate a significant reduction. Normal wear and tear can take place and will require replacement of parts. The City of Oakland Corp Yard will maintain the vehicle's repair and all scheduled maintenance at current 2025 annual minimum cost \$3,000.00 2025 estimated costs for replacement, maintenance and repairs are listed below:

Date	Equipment	Summary of Repair/ Maintenance and/or Replacement	Total Cost
2025	Lenco B	Oil changes, tires, brakes, and routine maintenance	~ \$3000.00

Impacts

Reasonably anticipated impacts

Deliberate misuse.

Though unlikely, it is possible that Armored Vehicles may be deliberately misused by employees. Some of the ways that the Department attempts to prevent deliberate misuse is through background checks of prospective employees, supervision and training, strict policy guidelines, robust reporting and accountability practices, and discipline for deliberate misconduct up to and including termination. Suspected criminal misuse of equipment may also be forwarded to the District Attorney's office or other appropriate prosecuting agency for charging consideration.

Unintentional misuse.

Unintentional misuse of Armored Vehicles may come in many forms, from unfamiliarity or lack of training to the encountering of a scenario that was not anticipated in training or policy. The Department attempts to prevent unintentional misuse through thorough training, clear policy prescriptions, and robust review processes such as force reports, force review boards, and pursuit review boards.

Perception of militarization or exacerbation of a police/community divide.

While it is not the intent of the Department that this occur, the Department does recognize the possibility that its use of Armored Vehicles may lead to a perception of militarization of the Department, or an exacerbation of any existing divides between the Department and the community it serves and is a part of. The Department attempts to overcome challenges such as this by taking full advantage of community forums required by policy and law (see for instance the mandated community engagement meeting in DGO K-07 and CA Government Code § 7072(b)), by completing full and robust reports such as this one, and by collaborating with the Police Commission in the creation of use policies and procedural safeguards surrounding this equipment.

Impact on persons.

There is an inherent possibility that an injury can be caused when deploying an Armored SUV when a person is nearby. This possibility exists and is remedied by training; All Armored Vehicle operators must be trained prior to the use and operation of the vehicle.

Mitigations

Use of force and de-escalation policy – [DGO K-03](#)

Controlled and military equipment frequently takes the form of a force option, or else is often used during high-risk situations where force may be used. OPD, in concert with the Police Commission, created a state-of-the-art use of force policy that centers the Department's mission, purpose, and core principles, provides clear guidance that force is only allowed when reasonable, necessary, and proportional, and makes clear the consequences of unreasonable force. Additionally, OPD's use of force policy incorporates a robust de-escalation policy (Section C), which mandates that officers use de-escalation tactics and techniques in order to reduce the need for force when safe and feasible.

The entirety of this policy – which encapsulates OPD's values surrounding force and commitment to de-escalation – is a clear general procedural mitigation to the possible adverse impacts of the use of this equipment.

Force reporting and review policy and practice – DGOs [K-04](#) and [K-04.1](#)

Though the Department expects that every use of this equipment will be within the boundaries of policy and law, the Department also has clear procedures regarding force reporting and review in place. DGO K-04 and its attendant special orders require that force by officers – including force where controlled equipment was used – be properly reported and reviewed, with the level of review commensurate to the severity of the force incident. Additionally, for severe uses of force or where a use of force had severe outcomes, the Department utilizes Force Review Boards, led by top Department command staff and often attended and observed by Community Police Review Agency staff or Police Commission Chairs, to review every part of a force incident. These boards not only determine whether the force was proper but also have wide latitude to suggest changes in policy, training, or practice, including with controlled equipment.

OPD's force reporting and review policies and practices serve as important procedural mitigations to the possible adverse impacts of the use of this equipment.

Complaint receipt and investigation procedures – [DGO M-03](#)

The use of controlled equipment, as with any use of police powers, is subject to the rules and laws that govern the Department and its employees. Complaints and allegations that the Department or its employees have violated these rules or laws are treated with the utmost seriousness, including proper intake in the Internal Affairs Division and investigation by the appropriate investigative individual. Where allegations are found to be substantiated, the Department uses a progressive discipline structure to serve both deterrent and rehabilitative functions. Finally, deliberate misconduct or actions contrary to the Department's values are not tolerated and can lead to termination of employment.

OPD's complaint receipt and investigation procedures serve as important procedural mitigations to the possible adverse impacts of the use of this equipment.

Community outreach and specific inquiry pathways – DGO K-07

Use of controlled equipment, especially equipment that may have analogues used by militaries or quasi-military federal law enforcement, can drive perceptions of a militarized police force that is pre-disposed to the use of force as opposed to thoughtful, deliberate resolutions to incidents using de-escalation and minimizing the use of force. An important procedural mitigation to this type of perception is regularly communicating with the community served, as a way for information to be shared in both directions. This serves to dispel common misconceptions as well as provide valuable perspective for the Department and its employees. OPD uses community outreach, such as social media, community events, and a specific, annual community forum as required by DGO K-07. Additionally, OPD's overarching controlled equipment policy sets forth processes for inquiries about the equipment.

Equipment-specific use policy and Police Commission oversight – OMC 9.65

While almost every law enforcement agency is bound by state law (Government Code § 7070 et. seq.), the very nature of police oversight in Oakland provides one of the most powerful procedural mitigations of potentially adverse impacts. For instance, state law requires that most agencies have their controlled equipment use policies approved by their governing body (e.g., City Council, or Board of Supervisors). In the case of OPD, however, there is an additional layer of oversight in the Police Commission, which must review any controlled equipment use policy prior to it being approved by the City Council. This requirement, set forth in Oakland's municipal code section 9.65, is a procedural mitigation to the possible adverse impacts of the use of this equipment.

Technical safeguards

While not a specifically requested aspect of the design, armored vehicles (as a consequence of the weight of the armor) typically cannot reach the same top speed as the commercially available vehicles upon which they are based. Since speed is often a factor in vehicle collisions, this technical limitation of armored vehicles also serves as a de-facto safeguard against high-speed collisions.

Procedural safeguards

OPD's armored vehicle policy includes several procedural safeguards. These include prohibitions against utilization of the armored vehicles for routine patrol or crowd control, as

well as prohibitions against attachments of weapons (at any time) or rams (outside of extremely limited life-threatening emergencies) to the vehicle. In addition, OPD's policy requires the approval of a command officer at the rank of Lieutenant or above for impromptu field deployments, and at the rank of Captain or above for pre-planned deployments. The policy also requires training for operators. Finally, OPD's policy requires the use of video recording devices that are assigned to the armored vehicles during deployments, as a means of capturing the circumstances during the use of these vehicles.

Alternatives

De-escalation and alternative strategies

As mentioned in the Mitigations section, above, OPD officers are mandated to use de-escalation strategies and tactics when safe and feasible. These strategies and tactics, which are predicated on de-escalation best practices around communication, containment, positioning, and time/distance/cover, reflect the Department's commitment to de-escalation over the reliance on force to compel compliance.

However, even during de-escalation strategies and actions, controlled equipment may be used or ready to further a safe outcome to the event for the engaged person, the community, and the officers. Generally, a built-in alternative to the actual use of controlled equipment – especially as a force option – is its use as a tool to provide safety, information, or containment to an incident so that officers can bring the situation under control and hopefully encourage a peaceful outcome. This, in conjunction with other de-escalation or alternative strategies, provides a baseline for OPD officers in the conduct of their duties when using or contemplating the use of this controlled equipment.

It is also instructive to consider the possible adverse costs of not possessing this equipment. For instance, the unavailability of a particular tool may adversely impact the safety of police personnel and the community by limiting de-escalation strategies, exposing personnel to greater risk, or limiting the options available to safely resolve situations.

A specific alternative to armored vehicles is to completely for-go their use. While this would result in lower direct expenditures, the alternative would necessarily increase the risk to Department personnel when confronting situations where engaged persons are armed with firearms. Other vehicles within the Department fleet do not have any ballistic protection-built in.

Location

Armored Vehicles will typically be used within the areas that OPD has jurisdiction or in areas of the State of California where OPD is specifically conducting critical incident operations or investigations. This includes the entirety of the City of Oakland and may include neighboring jurisdictions or other areas within the State.

Third Party Dependence

- ☒ This item does not require third-party actors for operation.
- ☐ This item does require third-part actors for operation:

Track Record

Many other agencies use armored vehicles to protect their employees during the course of their duties. Throughout the United States, agencies increasingly either have their own armored vehicle or cooperatively share a vehicle with surrounding agencies through memoranda of understanding (MOUs). Santa Rosa Police Department reports that they have an MOU with a nearby agency and refer to a tactical procedures manual in lieu of policy for their use of the armored vehicle. Other nearby agencies, such as San Francisco Police Department, Alameda County Sheriff's Office, and San Leandro Police Department, all utilize various types of armored vehicles.

While most agencies limit the use of their armored vehicles in a manner similar to Oakland (i.e., requiring supervisory approval, limiting deployment to circumstances where weapons or violence are involved or possible), some high-profile instances of controversial deployments have occurred. The most visible of these were the use of armored vehicles during crowd control by the Ferguson Police Department (MO) after the death of Michael Brown and, in the Bay Area, the use of an armored vehicle by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office during an eviction of a group of housing protestors. These types of uses are not authorized by OPD's Armored Vehicle policy.