



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

1 DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT PLACE
ROOM 456, CITY HALL
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102



PAUL M. MIYAMOTO
SHERIFF

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Contact: Tara Moriarty, Director of Communications, cell (628) 286-8198

SFSO TRAINING EXERCISE WITH CHEMICAL AGENTS AFFECTS STUDENTS AT A SAN BRUNO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

***Planned Public Safety Training Using Tear Gas Extends Beyond Designated Training
Areas at San Bruno Jail Grounds, Impacting Children***

San Bruno, CA – On Tuesday, May 21 at 12:45pm a routine, two-hour multi-agency tactical training class for crowd management, intervention, and control was underway inside a designated training structure on an isolated section of our San Bruno jail property. The San Francisco Sheriff's Office notified the San Bruno Police Department and Fire Department prior to the training, which involves the testing of chemical agents including CS (2-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile) gas and OC gas (oleoresin capsicum, commonly known as pepper spray). Both irritants are commonly used by law enforcement agencies as a non-lethal option for subduing combative and violent suspects.

These trainings are critical to law enforcement because they allow peace officers to test the safety of equipment for potential leaks, and they provide staff with hands-on experience with chemical agents, preparing them both physically and mentally for real-life situations.

Unfortunately, gas from inside the structure drifted outside to a nearby elementary school campus where 20 students and one adult reported experiencing symptoms including burning sensations in the eyes, nose, and throat. The San Francisco Sheriff's Office and other Bay Area law enforcement agencies have been conducting training at this site for more than 20 years. This is an unprecedented situation that we take very seriously.

We sincerely apologize to Portola Elementary School, its faculty and students, and their families for this unforeseen event which must have been especially scary for children. Members of our command staff visited the school in person to explain what happened, and to apologize for the mishap. In light of this incident, the department is pausing all future training exercises of this nature while it reviews current practices to make it safer for our neighbors and minimize any impacts on the community.

###