

Logan Police investing in new less-lethal device, focused on de-escalation practices

LOCAL NEWS

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(ABC4) – According to the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah, officer-involved shootings led to 19 fatalities in 2018 across the Beehive State, making it the deadliest year on record.

According to Logan Police Department Chief Gary Jensen, they haven't had an officer-involved shooting in about six years. Nonetheless, the department is investing in technology to keep the streak going.

"This just gives us one more option to use so that we can either deescalate, or if we have to use force, this would be the minimal force that we would use," Chief Jensen tells ABC4 while holding a small, yellow device. It's a gadget that looks like it was created for spies and it's making its way into more than 500 police departments across the United States. It's the BolaWrap from Wrap Technologies.

Chief Jensen says the BolaWrap is "a device that gives us hope that we can deescalate and/or use different tactics beyond that escalation of force to potentially deadly force."

Jensen tells ABC4 the department started looking into the device about a year ago, and just recently purchased about half a dozen to be used by the department's sergeants. He says if it proves to work well in the field, all officers may soon find one on their utility belt.

The chief explains that about a decade ago, they started looking into body cameras for the officers. The cameras, he says, have continuously proven to be useful in helping the department evolve. Now, the BolaWrap may be the newest tool to help the department improve.

He adds, "We have to be open to new opportunities and new notions as we try to become better at what we do and serve our public in the safest manner possible."

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How does the BolaWrap work?

It shoots a Kevlar cord with hooks at both ends. This rope wraps around a person to immobilize them temporarily. The device makes a loud bang when fired, and this noise may also distract the suspect from noticing officers who are moving in to make an arrest. Chief Jensen believes this device will help the department, "Do our job effectively with minimal risk to us as police officers, but also subjects that are potentially under arrest."

According to Wrap Technologies, the BolaWrap is classified as a less-lethal weapon.

Chief Jensen says it may replace devices such as the police baton or taser.

“I’ve been shot with this,” Chief Jensen says while holding a discharged Kevlar cord. “I’ve been shot with a taser. I’ll take this every day of the week.”

Cheif Jensen tells ABC4 the police deparmtent spent about the same amount of money on the BolaWrap as it would on a taser.