

**Regions**

- [north coast](#)
- [central valley](#)
- [north bay](#)
- [east bay](#)
- [south bay](#)
- [san francisco](#)
- [peninsula](#)
- [santa cruz](#)
- [california](#)
- [us](#)
- [international](#)

[printable version](#)**[East Bay Area](#) | [Police State](#)****Oakland's New Crowd Control Policy**

by Jennifer Hansen ([renejen11 \[at\] yahoo.com](mailto:renejen11[at]yahoo.com))
 Friday Nov 12th, 2004 8:00 PM

On November 5, 2004, the Oakland Police Department agreed to enact a crowd control policy, which will establish, for the first time, a uniform protocol for the OPD to use in handling crowds. The policy will apply equally to protests or spontaneous celebrations.

On November 5, 2004, the Oakland Police Department agreed to enact a crowd control policy, which will establish, for the first time, a uniform protocol for the OPD to use in handling crowds. The policy will apply equally to protests or spontaneous celebrations.

Topics

- [animal lib](#)
- [anti-war](#)
- [arts + action](#)
- [drug war](#)
- [education](#)
- [en español](#)
- [environment](#)
- [global justice](#)
- [government](#)
- [health/housing](#)
- [immigrant](#)
- [media](#)
- [labor](#)
- [lgbt / queer](#)
- [police state](#)
- [racial justice](#)
- [womyn](#)

The wording of the policy favors and protects crowd members and their right to assemble. As Michael Haddad, a civil rights lawyer who helped implement the guidelines stated, it is most important because prior to this, the OPD "had no policy. Their policy was anything goes."

The new policy was created by the ACLU, the National Lawyer's Guild, civil rights lawyers, city officials, and Oakland Police Chief Richard Word.

Efforts to implement this policy were inspired by the incident on April 7, 2003, where police indiscriminately fired wooden bullets, sting ball grenades and shot-filled bean bags at hundreds of non-violent anti war activists during an organized demonstration at The Port of Oakland. The protesters were expressing their opposition to Iraq war profiteering by Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) and American President's Line (APL). Protesters were not given adequate warning to disperse before being fired at.

The OPD's use of overwhelming force resulted in at least 58 people being injured by various projectiles. Among the victims were several legal observers and nine dock workers who had shown up for work. Many serious injuries occurred as a result, some of which required hospitalization.

International

- [americas](#)
- [haiti](#)
- [iraq](#)
- [palestine](#)
- [afghanistan](#)

Willow Rosenthal of Oakland was hit in the back of her calf with a wooden bullet. She required several surgeries, including skin grafts due to internal bleeding. At a press conference on Tuesday announcing the new crowd control policy, Rosenthal said that she is still not able to attend protests because she does not trust what the cops may do. "They can never take away what they did to me and what they did to us." Rosenthal stated.

The new Crowd Management Policy includes the following guidelines...

More

- [make media get involved](#)
- [calendar](#)
- [gallery](#)
- [archives](#)
- [chat](#)
- [links](#)

- o Strict limits on the use of force and mandates protecting the right to assemble and demonstrate must be a primary goal of the OPD in their planning for and management of demonstrations;
- o Crowd dispersal methods that create risk of injury to crowd members and bystanders are prohibited, including skip fired wooden bullets, stinger grenades, tasers, stun guns, motorcycle bumps, and dogs;
- o Indiscriminate use of bean bags, aerosol pepper spray and batons against crowds or passive resisters is prohibited;
- o When crowd members break the law, OPD will attempt to negotiate with leaders, and will give clear and audible orders to the crowd, allowing time for individuals to comply before taking enforcement action;
- o OPD will arrest individuals who refuse to follow valid police orders, rather than using weapons or other force to move them.

Scott Bohning of Oakland was at the docks on April 7. He was hit five times by projectiles, including

Donate

- [Help support grassroots independent](#)

media.



\$4083.50 donated in past month

IMC Network

indymedia.org

africa

- ambazonia
- canarias
- estrecho / madiac
- nigeria
- south africa

canada

- hamilton
- maritimes
- montreal
- ontario
- ottawa
- quebec
- thunder bay
- vancouver
- victoria
- windsor
- winnipeg

east asia

- burma
- jakarta
- japan
- manila
- qc

europa

- alacant
- andorra
- antwerpen
- armenia
- athens
- austria
- barcelona
- belarus
- belgium
- belgrade
- bristol
- bulgaria
- croatia
- cyprus
- estrecho / madiac
- euskal herria
- galiza
- germany
- grenoble
- hungary
- ireland
- istanbul
- italy
- la plana
- liege
- lille
- madrid
- malta
- marseille
- nantes
- netherlands
- nice
- norway
- oost-vlaanderen
- paris/île-de-france
- poland
- portugal
- romania
- russia
- scotland

one shot, which hit him in his nose. In response to the new crowd control policy, Bohning said, "I think I will feel safer going to demonstrations." He added, "I hope that this policy can set examples for other cities."

Bohning also has his reservations about the guidelines. The policy states that verbal commands by officers must be used on passively-resisting protestors before force can be used, but only with the approval of a supervisor. The methods may include, lifting and carrying, using dollies or stretchers and/or control holds, which should be used only after other methods of arrest have failed or are not feasible under the circumstances. "I don't think there is sufficient protection for people doing civil disobedience, as the commanding officer could simply decide that 'circumstances' require the use of pain holds. And since their use is sanctioned, and can't be monitored for every individual, it is still likely that pain holds will be abused," Bohning said.

There is also concern as to whether the OPD will adhere to the new policies. Word, the acting police chief, leaves the force later in the month and a new chief is yet to be named. Activists, as well as lawyers who worked on the policy hope that Word's replacement will honor the spirit of the policy.

Haddad said the Federal Court will oversee the implementation of the policy guidelines for several years to ensure that they are followed. "We intend to hold them to it." Haddad stated.

For more information, you can visit <http://aclunc.org/pressrel/041109-opd.html>

[Add Your Comments](#)

LATEST COMMENTS ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Listed below are the 10 latest comments posted about this article. These comments are anonymously submitted by website visitors.

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE
riot	cp	Wednesday Dec 1st, 2004 11:42 AM
new guidelines	Superman	Wednesday Dec 1st, 2004 10:09 AM
OPD is already fighting this...	bonus	Thursday Nov 25th, 2004 12:16 PM
Laws never stopped them before	pc	Saturday Nov 13th, 2004 9:24 AM

sverige
switzerland
thessaloniki
toulouse
ukraine
united kingdom
valencia
west vlaanderen

latin america

argentina
bolivia
brasil
chiapas
chile
chile sur
colombia
ecuador
mexico
peru
puerto rico
qollasuyu
rosario
santiago
tijuana
uruguay
valparaiso

oceania

adelaide
aotearoa
brisbane
burma
darwin
jakarta
manila
melbourne
perth
qc
sydney

south asia

india
mumbai

united states

arizona
arkansas
atlanta
austin
baltimore
big muddy
binghamton
boston
buffalo
charlottesville
chicago
cleveland
colorado
columbus
danbury, ct
dc
hawaii
houston
hudson mohawk
idaho
ithaca
kansas city
la
madison
maine
miami
michigan
milwaukee
minneapolis/st.
paul
new hampshire
new jersey

new mexico
new orleans
north carolina
north texas
nyc
oklahoma
omaha
philadelphia
pittsburgh
portland
richmond
rochester
rogue valley
saint louis
san diego
san francisco
san francisco bay
area
santa barbara
santa cruz, ca
seattle
tallahassee-red
hills
tampa bay
tennessee
urbana-champaign
utah
vermont
virginia beach
western mass
worcester

west asia

armenia
beirut
israel
palestine
ukraine

process

discussion
fbi/legal updates
indymedia faq
mailing lists
process & imc
docs
tech
volunteer

projects

print
radio
satellite tv
video

regions

oceania
united states

topics

biotech