

## From France with g[love]s A story of healing in social struggles

**Warning : this article contains some pictures of wounds and information that can be very shocking.  
Acknowledge this, read carefully and take care of yourself. ♥**

**This article is written from the point of view of a street medic.  
This article does not cover all weapons used by the French police, only those that injure or kill  
and are commonly used. Please note that there are a lot more.**

Like many European states, France has seen an incredible increase in security laws and anti-social measures over the past decade. The French government is allocating more and more resources to its police and is using the context of the massive social movements of the last few years to justify increasingly violent repression.

Beyond the budget and the legal context which has evolved to the disadvantage of the people, it is on the weapons that the state provides to its internal forces that we will look here and more particularly on the injuries they cause and on the means to treat them.

If most of these weapons are specific to the French context, others are quite commonly used by other states. It is in order to share our knowledge and help people's self-defense that we share our testimonies and our techniques in this article. They will undoubtedly be useful beyond the borders of the French state.

Let us now get to the heart of the matter at hand. First, we will try, for each category, to provide some quick technical details so that the reader is aware of the type of weapon or ammunition we are dealing with. Then we will try to explain how to protect ourselves from them and how to treat the injuries they cause. Finally we wanted to relay at least one testimony per category so that the reader understands the damage, both physical and psychological, caused to peoples and may realize that they are not necessarily targeted because they are committing offenses under the law.

### Gases



Tear gas grenades with their pellets and "DPR" (Delay Propulsion Device).  
From left to right : MP3, MP7, CM6 and CM3 models.

In this category which includes half a dozen ammunition we find both hand grenades and grenades fired by two different launchers. They can reach 200m range and fire from 6 to 8 shots per minute. Another special launcher can reach up to 150m and fire from 4 to 6 shots in 4 seconds.

The active mass, inside the grenade ranging from 60 to 169 grams of CS gas and concentrated between 7 and 15%, represent between a third and a fourth of the total mass. It is important to note that inside the grenade the active agents are not contained in the form of gas but in solid particles (or liquid in the case of hand-held gas grenades projecting gel). They are the first and most commonly used weapons during "law enforcement" operations.

The injuries they cause are usually quite benign but remain dangerous. They range from suffocation (because of the gas) to open wounds (for example when the sub-munitions fall back or during a direct shot). It is quite common to encounter dizziness, disorientation, panic attacks, asthma attacks, vomiting or seizures depending on whether the person remained exposed to gas for a longer or shorter period of time.

#### How to protect yourself ?

- Wear a gas mask with proper filters or, as a minimum, a COVID mask soaked with neutralizer<sup>1</sup> or vinegar<sup>2</sup>.
- Keep breathing as calmly as possible to avoid inhaling particles too deeply. Avoid coughing or panicking.
- Do not use bronchodilators (like Ventolin) to avoid pushing particles further away in the respiratory system.
- Avoid contact lenses because particles may stay between the eye and the lens and cause more damage.

#### How to treat it ?

- Help the person get away from the area and calm down.
- Apply neutralizer<sup>1</sup> to the face, rinse nose and mouth. Spit. Do not apply water to the face or rub.
- Clean eyes if necessary with saline, gently and from nose to outside of eye. Do not use antacids or alcohol.
- In case of seizure, provide additional ventilation.
- Reduce pain with a cold pocket if burns are too severe.

!/ \ Gas toxins will be treated by the liver. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid alcohol, drugs and plants that solicit this organ for a time. !/ \

#### What material is needed ?

- Neutralizer in a spray bottle
- Saline & COVID masks (to distribute)
- Baby wipes

*Testimony of Adèle, farmer, hit by a direct shot of tear gaz grenade :*

*« The shooting that hit me took place [...] on March 28. I was wearing a black dress, city boots and a leather jacket. It was almost the end of the demonstration. The tractors had remained blocking a roundabout to avoid the cars to rush into the procession as every time. We had just finished eating together when the gendarmes passed us and cut us off from the rest of the demonstration. [...] The tractors started, [...] I decided not to get back on the tractor but to follow on foot. Several demonstrators who had not dared to go forward, find motivation by following the tractors. [...] I decide to leave. I wait for a moment of calm between the numerous gas shots on the tractors, I climb on the steps to say goodbye and to say that I am leaving so that my colleagues know where I am. I open the door, we exchange a few sentences, my left hand holds the bar to help me get on, the right hand holds the door open. I don't see anything coming, I feel something heavy hitting my arm violently above the elbow. I hear around me pedestrians saying "she's hit", one of them comes behind me, closes the door of the tractor and tells me "get out quickly, it didn't explode!"*

*We move away, I am standing but I have a violent pain in the arm which goes from the wrist to the shoulder. It throws me, I want to vomit, I feel that I turn pale, people speak to me but I do not really hear. They point to the object of the impact. It's the whole grey block of tear gas, full because it didn't explode, that hit me. Some friends are there, they accompany me for a few meters and the shooting starts again even more numerous. I hide [...] a person is next to me, it's just the two of us, all the people have moved back because the gendarmes are advancing. I decide not to move and we call the medics. We show well our hands while waiting that the medics arrive and take care of us.*

The impact is above the left elbow, the bruise is already visible. The leather jacket slowed down the impact probably a bit. It is very painful to the touch. I have some painkillers in my bag, I take one. [...] I'll be in pain the rest of the day, it will wake me up for three nights despite the medication. I still have trouble extending my arm fully and bending it, rotation is painful too. I have tensions in my cervical vertebrae. I refused the sick leave because in my profession it is difficult to stop working, the animals do not wait. »



**Appendix for Gases**

<sup>1</sup> Neutralizer recipe

Option 1	Option 2
- 50% antacid – Maalox or Gaviscon (aluminum hydroxide) or magnesium milk (magnesium hydroxide). - 50% water It is important to give the mixture a good shake.	- 10% sodium bicarbonate - 90% water It is important to filter the mixture because bicarbonate create lumps that can scratch the eyes or block the spray.



A person suffering tear gas effects being treated with neutralizer.

<sup>2</sup> CAUTION: Vinegar should only be used if there is no other neutralizing agents available, it is acetic acid which is irritant, it does not neutralize the chemical. It reduces the pain because it attaches to the same nervous receivers as the tear gas, despite its undesirable effects.

« Blast effect » grenades



"Dissection" of a GLI F4 model.

This category, also containing hand-held and fired grenades, includes two distinct munitions called "offensive grenades" and "stun grenades". Used *"as combat weapons and not as defensive means [...]* their TNT charge is designed both to injure, even kill, and to frighten" they have however some common points. For example, they produce a very noisy explosion, a "blast effect" (which gives them their name) and the projection of metal or plastic fragments.

All contain from 26 to 75 g of TNT. The "stunners", on the other hand, also contain a dose of about 10 grams of tear gas, known as "CS gas" and have a sound intensity ranging from 155 to 165 decibels. They are the second most common type of weapon used in "law enforcement" operations, along with "sting-ball grenades", which we will see later. They are categorized as war weapons.

The injuries they cause are varied : disorientation, hearing damages, burns, wounds, infections, hemorrhage, loss of an eye/part of a limb, or even death. But the most common are either due to shrapnel thrown into the body or due to the explosion and the blast. These are the most serious and dangerous injuries, which can tear off a part of a limb or cause death. These injuries are often impressive, bloody, very serious and difficult to treat for the medic teams. Note that the shrapnel is hot when it penetrates the flesh because of the explosion and it is often impossible for medics to get it out. A surgical operation is then necessary when these fragments are lodged in a dangerous place, a vein, an artery, at the junction of a joint or in an eye. Many people who do not feel any physical discomfort still have shrapnel in their bodies. Others are injured years later by shrapnel that are naturally pushed out by the body. Small parts often carry pieces of clothing or soil with them into the wound causing infections.



Explosion of a GLI-F4.

What history tells us is that every time one of these ammunition kills or mutilates the population very seriously the state hastens to ban or reduce its use to calm public opinion but immediately replaces the incriminated weapons with other similar or even worse. This was the case with the OF-F1 grenade replaced by the GLI-F4 after it killed a demonstrator, then the GLI-F4 itself was gradually replaced by the GM2L after several hands torn off. Beyond the low maneuvers of the Ministry of the Interior and the police services these weapons raise the question of the degree of violence employed and its legitimacy. Used supposedly to protect law enforcement officers, these weapons are actually used to attack demonstrations and rallies, creating a resentment towards these same forces that they use to justify the use of new grenades to “defend themselves”. It is a vicious circle that leads only to the escalation of violence and hatred.



*GM2L ammunition and the explosion it creates. The tear gas cloud is noticed by the difference in smoke density.*



*Shrapnel of a GLI-F4 “blast effect” grenade in a foot.*

#### How to protect yourself ?

- Wear protections. Safety glasses/goggles, ballistic if possible. A helmet.
- NEVER pick up that ammunition or kick it. That’s how people got their hands or feet ripped off.
- Move away quickly to avoid debris and blast.
- Turn your back on the blast to protect your vital organs and face.
- Cover your ears and open your mouth to avoid pressure build-up.

#### How to treat it ?

- Wear gloves to avoid any contact between body fluids of the medic and the injured person.
- Help the person get away from the area and calm down.
- Identify the injury. Treatment will be different if:
  1. It's a small to medium wound with or without visible shrapnel. In general, it is enough to disinfect, apply a dressing and keep it in place with medical tape without tightening the dressing too much.

!\\ Caution: no visible shrapnel do not mean there are none. Debris may have penetrated too deep into the tissue and simply not be visible. You will also have to be very careful to remove the shrapnel so as not to create hemorrhage. Never remove a splinter in an eye. !\\

2. It's a large wound, no hemorrhage. Moderate pressure should be applied with gauze to keep it closed.
3. It's part of a limb that is torn off. In this case there is probably massive bleeding. Water the wound with saline and apply gauze to hold the tissues together without pressing.
4. It is a torn limb. In this case too there will almost certainly be an hemorrhage. Apply a garrot as high as possible to the affected limb, tighten with strength to stop the bleeding.

!\\ Do not use cotton, do not remove any bone/muscle/cartilage parts or foreign body, do not let the person fall asleep. A garrot, which purpose is to tighten the artery against the bone, must always be placed on the upper part of a limb in which there is only one bone. The lower part of a limb, with two bones, would cause more harm than good. Call for a medevac as soon as possible. !\\

#### What material is needed ?

- Gloves
- Saline
- Antiseptic
- Dressings, gauze
- Medical tape
- Garrot. It is possible to improvise one with shoe laces and something solid that won't break when you'll turn.



Part of a hand torn off due to a GLI F4.

#### Testimony of Alex, bike fixer, hit by shrapnels of a "stun grenade" :

*I was injured by deafening grenade fragments, type GM-2L or similar, on the site of the basin of Ste Soline on Saturday 29 October 2022 around 3pm.*

*At several points in the demonstration, the use of explosive grenades was completely delusional and oversized. Before I was wounded, I had seen several explode in the air above the procession or at head height. Many others were thrown into an opaque fog of tear gas, without anyone being able to judge their trajectory. I had already had 2 tinnitus following detonations much too close, which raised clods of earth under the effect of the blast. At the time of the incident, I turned my back to the line of law enforcement to reach the place where the procession had managed to rush into the basin. So I was absolutely not offensive or any threat to them. However, the explosions around were very numerous and close (in time and distance).*

*The grenade exploded right next to my right foot, throwing at least four shrapnel. One hit me in the calf of my left leg without going through my pants, but hurt my skin from the shock. A second struck me at the*

*calf of the right leg, crossing my overalls and trousers, penetrating the flesh deeply, leaving a small crater with burnt edges. The other two splinters went through my shoe. One on top of my foot, stuck through the tongue and causing a slow burn. The other crossing the sole under the little toe, chewing on the skin and flesh. So, four simultaneous injuries, including one deep and loss of substance.*

*[...]*

*I was able to join the camp. I was taken care of by 2 activists nurse & doctor, in the space provided for the (many) wounded under a tent. A welcome and a management of a human quality that I had never known with any caregiver before. An immense gratitude for these people and those who set up this emergency care space.*



#### **« Sting-ball » grenades**

This category includes two hand grenades meant to be thrown on the ground when the agents are circled to open a way out but are in fact very rarely used as they should be.

Their sound intensity ranges from 144 to 160 decibels, they have a radius of 10 to 15 meters and are composed of 18 rubber blocks of 10 grams each propelled between 342 and 472 km/h according to the model. As we saw earlier they are the second most common type of weapon used in "law enforcement" operations with "blast effect" grenades. They are categorized as war weapons.

The injuries they cause are quite similar to those caused by "blast effect" grenades but in general without shrapnel. The explosion can stun, disorient, create hearing damage, torn off all or part of a limb. The projection of the rubber blocks can cause the loss of an eye, wounds, fractures and hemorrhages. These weapons are also responsible for many deaths in recent years.



Man blinded by rubber block of a “sting-ball” grenade.

#### How to protect yourself ?

- Wear protections. Safety glasses/goggles, ballistic if possible. A helmet.
- NEVER pick up that ammunition or kick it. That’s how people got their hands or feet ripped off.
- Move away quickly to avoid rubber blocks, debris and blast.
- Turn your back on the blast to protect your vital organs and face.
- Cover your ears and open your mouth to avoid pressure build-up.

#### How to treat it ?

- Wear gloves to avoid any contact between body fluids of the medic and the injured person.
- Help the person get away from the area and calm down.
- Identify the injury. Treatment will be different if:
  - 1, 2, 3 and 4. It will be the same as for “blast effect” grenades.
  5. The eye is wounded. Then there are several cases possible.

5.1. There is a cut, scratch, bump. Apply cold to the swelling.

**!/ \ Do not apply pressure or rub. Do not remove contact lenses or small splinter. Do not use cotton or pliers on the eye itself. Call for a medevac as soon as possible. !/ \**

5.2. There is a shrapnel, projectile, object. Cover both eyes with eye-free protection and hold in place with medical tape.

**!/ \ Do not apply pressure or rub. Do not remove the object. Covering both yours prevents eye movement and aggravates the injury. Call for a medevac as soon as possible. !/ \**

#### What material is needed ?

- Gloves
- Saline
- Antiseptic
- Dressings, gauze
- Medical tape
- Garrot. Improvise one with shoe laces and something solid that won’t break when you’ll turn.
- Eyeshield. Improvise one with a plastic/paper glass.

### *Flashballs and « Defense Ball Launchers »*





*From left to right : Flashball Superpro 1, BDLR80 ammunition and LBD40 GL-06.*

This category includes two different types of weapons : the Flashballs and the “LBD” (“Defense Ball Launchers”. Each of these two types of launchers includes several different weapons firing 44mm ammunition. The Flashballs have a range of 3 to 30m for a power ranging from 150 to 200 joules. The weight of the ammunition ranges from just under 30 grams to 70 grams and is propelled from 250 to 430 km/h. The LBD have a range of 25 to 50m for a power of 220 joules. The ammunition weighs around 50g and is propelled at 324km/h. They are the third most common type of weapon used in "law enforcement" operations.

The injuries they cause range from a hematomas to the loss of an eye, including fractures, internal hemorrhages or even open wounds. Head injuries are common even though direct fire to the head is supposed to be prohibited, unfortunately it is not uncommon for people to be blinded or seriously injured to the skull because of this weapon. These injuries are often the worse because the medic team cannot do much to help the person if it's not an open wound or an eye that is touched. Studies by ophthalmologists and surgeons have denounced the grave danger posed by these weapons and called for their ban.



*From left to right : person wounded on the lower leg by a LDB, person hit on the breast by a LBD or a Flashball and person hit in the mouth.*

#### How to protect yourself ?

- Wear protections. Safety glasses/goggles, ballistic if possible. A helmet. Horse-riding or motorbike protections.

#### How to treat it ?

- Wear gloves to avoid any contact between body fluids of the medic and the injured person.
- Help the person get away from the area and calm down.
- Identify the injury. Treatment will be different if:
  - 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. It will be the same as for “blast effect” and “sting-ball” grenades.
  6. There is a hematoma, apply cold and ensure that the wound does not bruise (become bluish or black) within minutes which would indicate a potential internal hemorrhage.

#### What material is needed ?

- Gloves
- Saline
- Antiseptic
- Dressings, gauze
- Medical tape
- Eyeshield. Improvise one with a plastic/paper glass.



*Man blinded by a direct shot of LBD.*

### ***Material and protections***

What to wear ?

- A solid helmet, prefer a model that covers the head well.
- Ballistic goggles.
- Earplugs.

Some medics opt for horse-riding or motorcycle protections to wear on the upper body but it is up to each medic to equip themselves as they want to feel safe and be free of their movements.

What material to pack ?

- Gloves without latex. To put before each intervention on an injured person.
- Water. A lot. For cleaning, drinking.
- Neutralizer in spray bottle. To clean and stop the burns caused by gases.
- Baby wipes. To clean gas particles.
- Saline serum in pods. To clean eyes, wounds or distribute to people in gases.
- Antiseptic. Prefer a large bottle to cover more casualties.
- Gauze compresses.
- Steri strip
- Dressings, bandages.
- Medical scotch
- Scissors
- Cold spray
- Survival blanket
- Compression bandage
- Trash bag

To distribute:

- Saline serum in pods.
- Covid masks

### ***Conclusion***

As a conclusion we can observe that the doctrine of French law enforcement has led to the militarization of the police, using more and more lethal or so-called "semi-lethal" weapons to keep the crowds at a distance. These weapons of war cause dozens of bruises, mutilations and deaths every year. Their use is supposed to be strictly regulated by the principles of proportionality and gradation that require officers to use force according to the degree of violence that is opposed to them. But in practice these principles are never respected and often it is these same agents who create chaos by shooting in the crowd.

Beyond these weapons of war and their dangerous use it is in the psychological preparation of the agents who use them that the greatest danger is hidden. Indeed, since the appearance of Flashball launchers, it has become normal for them to pull the trigger in the direction of unarmed bodies. This act in itself shows that another barrier has fallen and that the taboos of the post-war period have given way to unbridled state violence. It also recalls that in other European countries the internal security forces are already firing live ammunition on certain demonstrations.

As street medics or health practitioners in solidarity with social movements it is important to remember that to protect others it is essential to protect yourself. Let us also recall that the practice of militant care is incompatible with sexist, racist, validist, transphobic, virilist behaviors. Snitching is also unacceptable and the choice of anonymity must be left to the injured persons.

Facing state violence, care is a political tool of self-defense and empowerment.

Let us take care of each other and respect our comrades, their choices and their bodies.

We live to walk on the heads of kings.

Many quotes, recipes, information are taken from a french website : <https://desarmons.net/>  
They are a collective compiling information about french police weapons, peoples wounded or killed by the police and means of protection and treatment of those wounds. They made several brochures about police weapons, injuries treatment, wounded peoples support : <https://desarmons.net/ressources/brochures-desarmons/>

Others come from : <http://lemurjaune.fr/>

A collective who gathered informations and pictures of injured peoples during the Yellow Vests movement.

Go to visit them, they are doing great job.