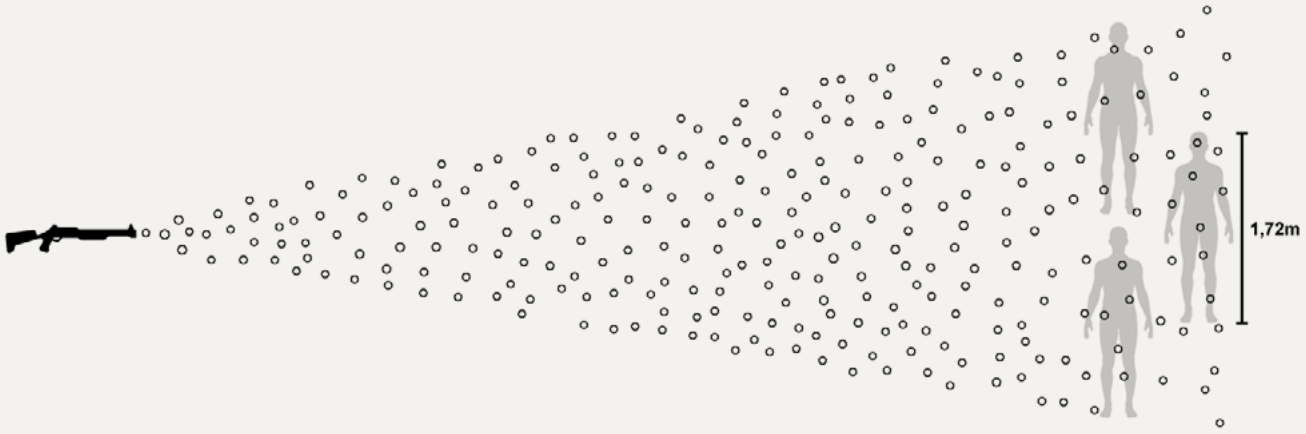
SCATTERSHOT IMPACT PROJECTILES

Multiple projectile rounds, or scattershot kinetic impact projectiles (KIPs), fire multiple projectiles simultaneously in an expanding, aerodynamically unpredictable dispersal pattern. Unlike single projectile KIPs, the "cloud" of projectiles produced by these weapons makes selective targeting of individuals impossible and injury to bystanders more likely. Many forms of multiple projectile weapons (scattershot, pellets) are used globally. **Our research and analysis conclude that scattershot munitions have no legitimate role in crowd management and must be prohibited in crowd management settings.** Please see the Kinetic Impact Projectile factsheet for more information on all crowd control projectiles.



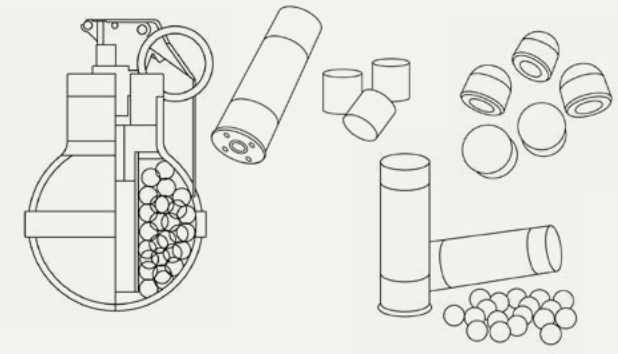
DISPERSAL PATTERN OF SCATTERSHOT IMPACT PROJECTILES

How they work

KIPs are designed to inflict pain through the transfer of kinetic energy from a projectile to a person. Scattershot munitions discharge multiple sub-projectiles simultaneously, often from a shotgun or grenade launcher.

Upon leaving the muzzle, the projectiles are aerodynamically unstable and quickly disperse in large clouds, depending on the type and quantity of propellent, the number of projectiles, their composition, and environmental conditions.

Some protocols specify that these weapons are meant to be fired at the ground in front of a target (skip fired) to ricochet upwards in a more unpredictable pattern, while others direct that they may be fired directly at individuals.



EXAMPLES OF A HAND-HELD GRENADE AND LAUNCHER MUNITIONS

Types

COMPOSITION
Plastic, rubber, PVC, and other materials are used as projectiles by law enforcement around the world. So-called "rubber" or "foam" projectiles are often made of a much denser composite material. Metal pellets made of steel or lead (also known as birdshot and buckshot, in reference to their use in hunting) have been used in Iran, Kashmir, Egypt, and Bahrain in recent years.

FORM
"Birdshot" pellet rounds are smaller (0.2-0.5cm in diameter) than buckshot (0.6-1cm); cylinders or ball rounds are typically larger (1-4cm diameter).

QUANTITY PER ROUND
The number varies from two to hundreds of projectiles. For example, "double ball" rounds used in South Africa fire two 12ga balls, "Multi-Foam" rounds from the US fire five 37mm cylinders, "Rubber buckshot" from Chile contains 12 8mm pellets, while typical no. 6 birdshot used in Indian-controlled Kashmir contains up to 300 pellets.

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SCATTERSHOT IMPACT PROJECTILES

Health risks

Because the trajectory of each sub-projectile cannot be controlled, it is exceedingly difficult to avoid impacts on bystanders or vulnerable body parts. In our global report, we found that 82 percent of all recorded KIP injuries came from scattershot munitions, and 96 percent of all ocular injuries from KIPs originated from scattershot rounds.

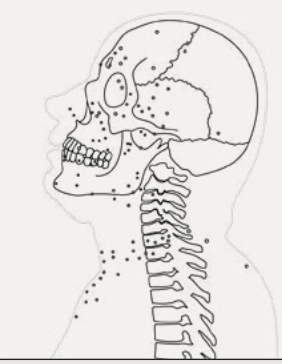


Injuries range widely

SKIN
Bruising and lacerations to penetrating trauma.

INTERNAL INJURIES
Bone fractures, internal bleeding, and damage to organs and arteries at closer ranges.

HEAD INJURIES
Impacts to the head, neck, and face carry risks of blindness, traumatic brain injury, permanent disability, and death.



Variables that can exacerbate injuries

SKIP-FIRING
exacerbates these risks, as projectiles that ricochet can bounce high, consistently threatening the genitalia, heads, and other most vulnerable parts of the body, and disperse widely.

PELLET ROUNDS
concentrate impact energy over a small area and can more readily penetrate the skin and eyes.

PELLETS MADE OF DENSE MATERIALS
such as metal or weighted composites, are even more likely to cause serious injury.

Policy recommendations

Scattershot munitions are inherently imprecise yet pose similar, if not greater, health risks than single-shot KIPs when they hit vulnerable parts of the body. As the trajectory of each projectile cannot be controlled by the shooter, hitting vulnerable body parts cannot be reliably avoided.

- Because of their inherently indiscriminate nature, scattershot KIPs ultimately act to collectively punish assemblies. Impact weapons should never be authorized for use against crowds as a whole.
- Scatter shot munitions must be prohibited in all protest and crowd-management settings.
- Skip-firing protocols for scattershot munitions must be banned. While this tactic moderates projectile speed, it also increases imprecision and compounds existing hazards.
- Metal shot, rubber-coated metal bullets, or any projectile with a metallic component are fundamentally unsafe and should be prohibited.
- Law enforcement agencies must publish lists of their full arsenal of less-lethal munitions, use-of-force directives, and purchasing data as a matter of public safety.