



— MILITARY

"The Alternative" puts the brakes on bullets fired from police sidearms

- DAVID SZONDY



The Alternative mounts onto a standard semiautomatic pistol to reduce the velocity of a fired round

Aiming for a leg or shooting a weapon from a criminal's hands may be an option for cops in the movies, but real police officers are trained to shoot for the center of mass,

not necessarily to kill, but to stop – although the end result can often be one and the same. "The Alternative" is designed to give officers a less lethal option in the form of a clip-on "air bag" for semiautomatic pistols that reduces the velocity of a standard round to make it less lethal.



Developed by Alternative Ballistics of Poway, California, the Alternative is designed to improve the chances of imparting a stopping force on the target without penetrating or causing lethal damage.

Based in part on feedback from law enforcement and special forces, the Alternative consists of a plastic carrier that normally sits in a belt pouch. It's designed to fit over the muzzle of a semiautomatic pistol, with installation a one-handed operation that doesn't require the officer to look away from the situation. The carrier is designed not to interfere with the pistol's sights or under-barrel rail, which may carry a torch or laser sight.

At the front of the bright orange carrier is a hollow sphere made of a proprietary alloy that catches the bullet and firmly embeds it as it leaves the barrel. The ball and bullet fuse, slowing the round by 80 percent. At this speed, the ball-encased round is less likely to penetrate flesh, but it will transfer enough kinetic energy across a wide surface to knock a suspect down with less chance of a lethal outcome. Essentially, it's like a small, powerful bean-bag round, which Alternative Ballistics claims is as accurate as a standard pistol round.

After firing, the carrier is ejected as the pistol chambers another round, which allows the police officer to immediately fire a second, lethal round if needed. If the Alternative ends up not being required, it's easily removed and returned to its pouch.

Alternative Ballistics not only provides the less-lethal rounds, but also a two-day instructor course in the product, its use, history, and legal implications.