

The **S**exual
Harassment
Assault
Rape
Prevention

Course For Women
Instructor Outline

SHOULD I USE A GUN, TEAR GAS,
MACE, OR CHEMICAL SPRAY

SHOULD I USE A GUN, TEAR GAS, MACE, OR CHEMICAL SPRAYS? These are the questions that are probably asked by women the most at the rape seminars, more than any other question. Of course everyone wants to feel secure and does not want to live in fear. I would also like life to be this way. Life must go on and we have to live as normal a life as is possible. We can neither deny that rape occurs only to someone else and could never happen to us nor that we are so vulnerable to being raped that we dare not leave our homes, because we know that we will be assaulted. No one could live a healthy life this way but unfortunately some people do live in this manner. They feel by having a gun or other miracle weapons such as mace or chemical agents that they are fully protected and this is very wrong. Ask any experienced officer what happens to even him; when he is excited and his adrenaline begins to flow. It is a proven fact that under traumatic situations that the eyes constrict. An officer must learn to fire his weapons an extension of himself, at a moments notice. Unfortunately, few officers have this type of training at night. Even the ones who do will tell you the same trauma exists. It would be next to impossible for any one who does not face this type of situation on a daily basis to even get to a weapon or most of all, to hit someone who is attacking them. Even though they can shoot targets or hunt well, targets do not shoot back or attack you and most animals are fleeing away from you.

In most cases when a gun is attempted to be used, it does not work out for the victim. Ask your local Rape Crisis Center or Victim Services or Law Enforcement agency concerning this. The IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) reports on using chemicals in December of 1979. The report states that even using large amounts of chemicals if a person is wearing glasses, is on drugs or alcohol, or can tolerate a great deal of pain that in 329 cases tests, chemicals did not do the job. They will not stop someone completely. I ask you, if the amount allowed by law in most states is under one half ounce and the defense to using chemicals is so easy (the mere throwing of a coat or jacket over your hand stops the use of it) Then what do you do? The rapist is not dumb, he can see something in your hand or dangling from your key chain; not to mention the accidents that can happen when a child gets hold of it (and they do). In many cases the chemical will blow back on you.

In the meantime - are you wearing a name tag with your real name on it? Getting the mail at the same time every day? Emptying the trash at the same time? Change your habits. Do you have a peep hole in your door or do you have to open it every time someone is there. Even a chain does not offer much protection, but it certainly helps.

Captain James A. Smith