

San Francisco Police Officers Assaulted with Caustic Chemicals 20-124

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On Saturday, October 17, 2020, at 1:00 PM, a permitted free speech rally began in United Nations Plaza. In attendance were individuals in opposition to the free speech rally. Within minutes of the rally beginning opposition demonstrators began throwing glass bottles, plastic bottles filled with an unknown liquid, metal cans, and eggs at free speech rally participants and law enforcement personnel. Opposing demonstrators rushed the established barricade line in an attempt to knock it over thereby putting the safety of participants and officers at risk. One free speech rally participant was assaulted during the incident. The rally became so violent in nature it was declared a public safety hazard and was shut down. The rally organizer and participants were escorted from the area. As officers escorted rally participants from the area, opposition protesters continued to act aggressively. Several rally participants sustained non-life-threatening-injuries. Two San Francisco Police officers were injured when they were assaulted with caustic chemicals.

At approximately 1:40 PM, near the intersection of McAllister and Leavenworth Streets, the crowd began throwing various projectiles at officers. One of the projectiles contained caustic chemicals that became airborne once exposed to the environment. Two officers began feeling the effects of exposure to the chemicals. The exposure caused the officers' eyes to tear-up and close. The officers had trouble breathing and felt burning in their lungs, throat, and on their skin. The officers observed an unknown fluid leaking from a broken container.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health was requested to the scene to conduct a chemical analysis of the liquid. Several chemicals were found in the liquid. The effects of some of the chemicals include neurological harm, flammability, eye and skin irritation, headaches dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and chemical burns.

The San Francisco Police Department is committed to facilitating the public's right to peaceful expression of their First Amendment rights. The Department does not tolerate violence against police officers or any member of the community. We ask that everyone exercising their First Amendment rights be considerate, respectful, and mindful of the safety of others.

No arrests have been made, this remains an open investigation. Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the SFPD 24-hour tip line at [1-415-575-4444](tel:1-415-575-4444). Language access services are available through this phone number. You may also Text a Tip to [TIP411](text:TIP411) and begin the text message with SFPD. Callers may remain anonymous.

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