

IN FOCUS

ICE PLAN TO ACQUIRE ELECTRIC SHOCK GLOVES RAISES SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER RISK OF TORTURE

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**Omega
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**UNITED
AGAINST
TORTURE**

On August 12th 2026 it was reported that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are planning a major purchase of electric shock gloves designed to inflict pain through direct contact with a person's skin.

According to the Associated Press, ICE plans to spend between \$10 million and \$20 million purchasing potentially thousands of CTG-5 G.L.O.V.E. devices from Kentucky-based Compliant Technologies LLC^[1]. The equipment is expected to be issued to officers and agents from Homeland Security Investigations and Enforcement and Removal Operations.

At the time of writing, the procurement of the devices has not been completed. Nevertheless, Omega is deeply concerned by the proposed acquisition. Omega considers the G.L.O.V.E. to be an inherently abusive direct contact electric shock weapon whose purpose is solely to cause pain and whose use is incompatible with international human rights standards. Over the years, research by Omega, other human rights organisations, and the media has repeatedly exposed the use of direct contact electric shock devices for torture and ill-treatment around the world^[2], and more recently has highlighted of the reported misuse of the G.L.O.V.E. itself in custodial settings in the United States^[3].

What is the G.L.O.V.E.?

The G.L.O.V.E. (Generated Low Output Voltage Emitter) is a device designed to be worn by a police, prison or other law enforcement officer. It looks very much like an ordinary glove, but if activated, can deliver painful electric shocks when placed directly against exposed skin. Electric shock gloves belong to a category of equipment known as direct contact electric shock weapons, which also includes electric shock batons, stun guns and electric shock shields. Unlike projectile electric shock weapons such as Taser which incapacitate the target by causing a loss of muscle control (neuro-muscular incapacitation), the purpose of direct contact electric shock weapons is to force a person to comply with an officer's instructions by inflicting intense pain.

In its User Manual, Compliant Technologies attempts to argue that the G.L.O.V.E. is not a weapon, but a "Conductive Distraction and De-escalation Device (CD3)" which, the company claims, functions by "over-stimulating the sense of touch within the Peripheral Nervous System which causes Neuro Peripheral Interference (NPI)"^[4]. It should be noted, however, that NPI does not appear to be a recognised medical term, nor does there appear to be any independent technical or medical evidence to substantiate the company's claims. Furthermore, while Compliant Technologies currently insists that "a CD3 is not a weapon," earlier user manuals published by the company classified the G.L.O.V.E. as a "Conducted Electric Weapon (CEW)"^[5].

The ability of direct contact electric shock weapons to administer extremely painful shocks repeatedly, for prolonged periods of time including to vulnerable areas of the body, often without leaving lasting physical traces, makes them particularly susceptible to abuse. Research by Omega and Amnesty International has documented the widespread use of direct contact electric shock equipment for punishment, intimidation, coercion and torture in places of detention and on the street around the world^[6].



Credit: Compliant Technologies Inc

The use of direct contact electric shock weapons by law enforcement officials has been internationally condemned over many years. In 2023, the previous UN Special Rapporteur on Torture published a thematic report on the global trade in law enforcement weapons and equipment capable of being used for torture and other ill-treatment. The report identified direct contact electric shock weapons as “Prohibited Equipment that is Inherently Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading” and stated that they “ought to be banned outright.”^[7]

Due to their design, the Special Rapporteur noted that direct contact electric shock weapons enable the easy “application of multiple or continuous extremely painful electric shocks, including to vulnerable areas of the body such as the head, neck, and genitals. The additional electric charge is unnecessarily violent and cruel, as the same ends could be achieved through less harmful means, such as standard batons and standard protective shields”^[8].

In 2024, the Special Rapporteur subsequently raised concerns about the G.L.O.V.E. with the UK government^[9], after Omega exposed its promotion to UK law enforcement by UK company Squad Group, which describes itself as Compliant Technologies’ sole partner in the UK and Ireland. In that communication, the Special Rapporteur stated that the use, development, production and marketing of direct contact electric shock gloves should be considered incompatible with international human rights law.

This position was then restated in June 2026 in a communication with Argentina regarding the reported acquisition and demonstration of the G.L.O.V.E. by the Córdoba provincial authorities^[10].

In addition to the human rights concerns associated with the use of direct contact electric shock weapons such as the G.L.O.V.E, there are also practical concerns about the effectiveness and safety of using pain to obtain compliance at such close range. UK experience with the use of Taser in ‘drive-stun’ mode – in which the device is pressed directly against the body to cause pain without incapacitating the individual (making it a de facto direct contact electric shock weapon) – has shown that this approach can be both ineffective and counterproductive. College of Policing documents obtained following a freedom of information request in 2020, for example, warn that drive-stun may fail to bring a violent encounter under control and may lead to an overall increase in the use of force^[11]. A subsequent review by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) found that, in several cases, the use of Taser in drive stun mode had failed to achieve the officer’s intended outcome and had instead caused individuals to struggle or resist further^[12].

The UK findings raise important officer-safety concerns regarding the use of electric shock gloves, since (as with the use of Taser in drive stun mode) the shocks do not incapacitate the target, but cause pain which may provoke further resistance or a violent response – while the officer remains within immediate striking range.

For these reasons, Omega has long considered that direct contact electric shock weapons are not only incompatible with international human rights and policing standards but are also ineffective, put officers at higher risk of injury and serve no legitimate law enforcement purpose that cannot be achieved through less harmful means.

The acquisition and use of the G.L.O.V.E in the United States

The proposed acquisition of the G.L.O.V.E. by ICE is not an isolated event, but represents only the latest expansion in proliferation of a technology that has already been acquired by a growing number of US law enforcement agencies. In May 2024, Compliant Technologies CEO Jeff Niklaus stated that the G.L.O.V.E. was being used by approximately 400 agencies across 40 US states^[13]. By June 2025, it was reported that more than 600 agencies in the United States were deploying the device^[14].

The US Army has also evaluated the G.L.O.V.E. for use in military corrections. Following trials at correctional facilities at Fort Leavenworth in October 2024, a March 2025 Army report recommended consideration of rapid fielding and obtaining National Stock Numbers to facilitate acquisition by Army units^[15].

Despite Compliant Technologies' claims about the G.L.O.V.E's safety, there have already been reports in the US of the weapon being misused. In 2024, for example, WRDB news (a Fox Television affiliate) reported that the use of G.L.O.V.E was discontinued at a US jail in Kentucky after an incident in which an inmate, whom investigators later concluded was not acting disorderly, was repeatedly shocked while already restrained with handcuffs and shackles in a prison cell. Surveillance footage of the incident shows the inmate pleading with the prison guards to stop^[16].

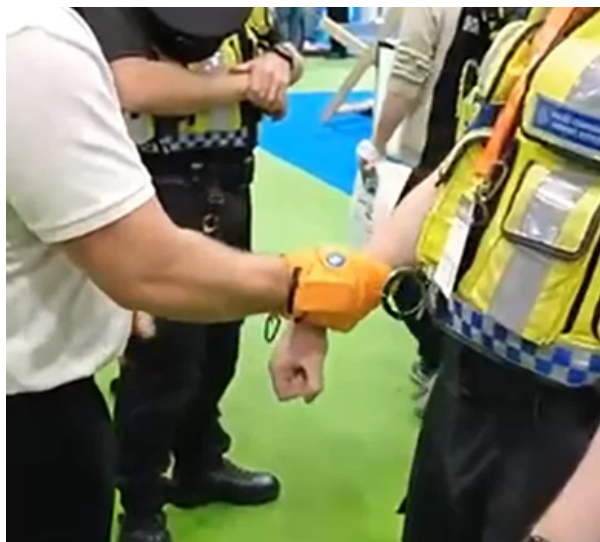
In October 2024, a 43-year-old man died at Madison County Detention Center in Kentucky following an incident in which, according to a pending wrongful-death lawsuit, he was subjected to 27 applications of the G.L.O.V.E. and a further 13 applications of a Taser^[17]. According to court documents, an internal investigation by the detention centre found that two applications of the G.L.O.V.E. lasted 45 and 99 seconds^[18] – significantly longer than the manufacturer's recommended maximum exposure of 15 seconds, which is itself three times longer than the standard five-second Taser discharge cycle in the UK^[19].

The allegations remain the subject of litigation, but the case illustrates both the ease with which a direct contact electric shock device can be repeatedly or excessively applied as well as the risks inherent in relying on the operator – rather than an automatic safety mechanism as is the case with the latest Taser models – to limit the duration of exposure. This is in addition to the underlying basic concern that both the G.L.O.V.E. and the Taser when used in drive stun mode are used to inflict pain for compliance.

A growing international market for abusive direct contact electric shock weapons

The growing use of the G.L.O.V.E. in the United States is illustrative of a broader trend of the acquisition of direct contact electric shock weapons by law enforcement.

In its marketing, Compliant Technologies has repeatedly claimed that the G.L.O.V.E. itself is already being used in nine countries worldwide, including Saudi Arabia^[20], Singapore^[21] and Argentina, where in February 2026, the Córdoba Police received ten pairs of G.L.O.V.E. devices for a trial/evaluation supplied by Argentine company Bersa S.A.^[22]



Screenshot from a video showing the demonstration of a training version of the G.L.O.V.E to a UK police officer attending the ESS trade fair in September 2024, Credit: Robin Ballantyne

In addition to countries where use or testing has been confirmed, Compliant Technologies also has a wider international network of representatives, distributors and commercial partners promoting the adoption of the G.L.O.V.E. by law enforcement and security agencies, in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Ireland^[23].

Omega's research has also identified several other manufacturers of electric shock gloves, including the French company NETFORCE/Nexstun, which markets its E-Stunglove for law enforcement and security use, and claims to have an international distribution network covering more than 50 countries^[24].

Furthermore, research published in 2025 by Omega and Amnesty International identified at least 197 companies worldwide that manufacture or promote other forms of direct contact electric shock equipment for law enforcement such as stun batons or stun shields^[25]. Companies were identified across all regions, with particularly significant numbers in China, India and the United States.

Direct contact electric shock weapons should be prohibited

Omega believes that all direct contact electric shock weapons – including electric shock gloves – are inherently abusive, counterproductive and incompatible with international human rights standards.

Despite manufacturers' claims about their operation and safety, better training or tighter regulation cannot change the fact that these devices are fundamentally designed to inflict severe pain in order to secure compliance in circumstances where less harmful methods are available.

For these reasons, Omega believes that the manufacture, promotion, trade and use of direct contact electric shock weapons should be prohibited, and that existing stocks should be removed from service and destroyed.

Omega is calling on the US authorities not to proceed with the proposed ICE procurement.

More broadly, this latest development reinforces the urgent need for internationally binding rules governing the trade in law enforcement equipment. Omega and a wider coalition of civil society organisations – the Torture Free Trade Network – are calling for a Torture-Free Trade Treaty that would prohibit inherently abusive equipment, including direct contact electric shock weapons, and establish effective human rights controls over other law enforcement weapons that can be misused for torture and other ill-treatment.

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