

Tasers

304.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the issuance and use of TASER® devices.

304.2 POLICY

The TASER device is intended to control a violent or potentially violent individual, while minimizing the risk of serious injury. The appropriate use of such a device should result in fewer serious injuries to officers and suspects.

304.3 ISSUANCE AND CARRYING OF TASERS

Only members who have successfully completed department-approved training may be issued and carry the TASER device.

Officers shall only use the TASER device and cartridges that have been issued by the department. Sworn officers while in full uniform who have been issued the TASER device shall wear the device in an approved holster on their person. Non-uniformed officers may carry or otherwise be issued a Taser as needed or as determined by a command officer or supervisor.

While in uniform, officers shall carry the TASER device in a holster on the side opposite their duty weapon.

- (a) Officers shall be responsible for ensuring their issued TASER is properly maintained and in good working order.
- (b) It is recommended that officers spark test their issued TASER prior to the start of each work shift. The spark test shall be conducted in a manner consistent with their department approved training.

304.4 VERBAL AND VISUAL WARNINGS

A verbal warning of the intended use of the TASER device should precede its application, unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of officers, or when it is not practicable due to the circumstances. The purpose of the warning is to:

- (a) Provide the individual with a reasonable opportunity to voluntarily comply.
- (b) Provide other officers and individuals with a warning that the TASER device may be deployed.

304.5 USE OF THE TASER

The TASER device has limitations and restrictions requiring consideration before its use. The TASER device should only be used when its operator can safely approach the subject within the operational range of the device. Although the TASER device is generally effective in controlling most individuals, officers should be aware that the device may not achieve the intended results and be prepared with other options.

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304.5.1 APPLICATION OF THE TASER

The TASER device may be used in any of the following circumstances, when the circumstances perceived by the officer at the time indicate such application is reasonably necessary to control a person:

- (a) The subject is violent or is physically resisting.
- (b) The subject has demonstrated, by words or action, an intention to be violent or to physically resist, and reasonably appears to present the potential to harm officers, him/herself or others.

Mere flight from a pursuing officer, without other known circumstances or factors, is not good cause for the use of the TASER device to apprehend an individual.

Officers are prohibited from using a TASER device upon any person as a general “pain-compliance” technique.

304.5.2 SPECIAL DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The use of the TASER device on certain individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates other available options reasonably appear ineffective or would present a greater danger to the officer, the subject or others, and the officer reasonably believes the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of using the device. This includes:

- (a) Individuals who are known to be pregnant.
- (b) Elderly individuals or obviously young children.
- (c) Individuals who are handcuffed or otherwise restrained.
- (d) Individuals who have been recently sprayed with a flammable chemical agent or who are otherwise in close proximity to any known combustible vapor or flammable material, including alcohol-based oleoresin capicum (OC) spray.
- (e) Individuals whose position or activity may result in collateral injury (e.g., falls from height, operating vehicles).

Because the application of the TASER device in the drive-stun mode (i.e., direct contact without probes) relies primarily on pain compliance, the use of the drive-stun mode should be limited to supplementing the probe-mode to complete the circuit.

304.5.3 TARGETING CONSIDERATIONS

Reasonable efforts should be made to target lower center mass and avoid the head, neck, chest and groin. If the dynamics of a situation or officer safety do not permit the officer to limit the application of the TASER device probes to a precise target area, officers should monitor the condition of the subject if one or more probes strikes the head, neck, chest or groin until the subject is examined by medical personnel.

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304.5.4 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS OF THE TASER

Officers should apply the TASER device for only one standard cycle and evaluate the situation before applying any subsequent cycles. Multiple applications of the TASER device against a single individual are generally not recommended and should be avoided unless the officer reasonably believes the need to control the individual outweighs the potentially increased risk posed by multiple applications.

If the first application of the TASER device appears to be ineffective in gaining control of an individual, the officer should consider certain factors before additional applications of the TASER device, including:

- (a) Whether the probes are making proper contact.
- (b) Whether the individual has the ability and has been given a reasonable opportunity to comply.
- (c) Whether verbal commands, other options or tactics may be more effective.

Officers should not intentionally apply more than one TASER device at a time against a single subject. If multiple TASERS are deployed, each deployment is considered an additional Response to Resistance.

304.5.5 ACTIONS FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENTS

- (a) Officers shall notify a supervisor of all TASER device discharges. An officer who utilizes a TASER upon a person in the performance of their duties shall comply with the following in addition to completing all other reporting requirements as described within this policy:
- (b) Immediately seek medical attention for the person a TASER device was used upon, regardless of which mode (probe deployment or drive stun) was utilized. The officer using the TASER device shall ensure the attending physician or other attending medical professional is aware of the TASER use and any evident or claimed injury the person who the TASER device was used upon may have.
- (c) When applicable, notify the attending correctional facility personnel that a TASER device was used upon the person brought into the facility and any evident or claimed injury the person who the TASER device was used upon may have.
- (d) When practical and safe to do so, and in accordance with the training provided by the department, the officer using a TASER device shall remove any of the TASER probes embedded in the body of the person. In the event a probe is embedded in any of the following areas; a person's face, ear, groin, or breast (female only), the officer will have the probe removed by a medical professional. Any removed probes will be discarded in an appropriate bio-hazard container.
- (e) As soon as it is practical to do so following the use of a TASER device, the officer using the TASER device shall ensure the TASER "use-data" is stored electronically by a duly designated department employee. The department employee recording the TASER "use-data" information shall notify the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) of the date, time, and completion of the TASER "use-data" recording.

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304.5.6 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

The TASER device may be deployed against an animal as part of a plan to deal with a potentially dangerous animal, such as a dog, if the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety, and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

304.5.7 OFF-DUTY CONSIDERATIONS

Officers are not authorized to carry department TASER devices while off-duty.

Officers shall ensure that TASER devices are secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control, in a manner that will keep the device inaccessible to others.

304.6 DOCUMENTATION

Officers shall document all TASER device discharges in the related case report and the TASER device Use Report Form (Attached). Notification shall also be made to a supervisor in compliance with the Response to Resistance Policy. Unintentional discharges shall be reported immediately to an on-duty supervisor.

304.6.1 TASER USE REPORT FORM

Items that shall be included in the TASER device report form include:

- (a) Officer name, date, case number and serial number of the TASER device.
- (b) Subject name and date of birth.
- (c) The number of TASER cycles and/or cycle length in seconds if not full cycles.
- (d) The type of mode used (probe, drive-stun and/or a combination).
- (e) Location of any probe impact and whether the probes penetrated the skin.
- (f) Location of contact in drive-stun mode.

The Administrative Training Lieutenant or their designee should periodically analyze the report forms to identify trends, including deterrence and effectiveness. The Administrative Training Lieutenant or their designee should also conduct audits of data downloads and reconcile TASER device report forms with recorded activations.

304.6.2 REPORTS

The officer should include the following in the case report:

- (a) Identification of all personnel firing TASER devices
- (b) Identification of all witnesses
- (c) Medical care provided to the subject
- (d) Observations of the subject's physical and physiological actions
- (e) Any known or suspected drug use, intoxication or other medical problems

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304.7 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When possible a supervisor should respond to all incidents where the TASER device was activated.

A supervisor should review each incident where a person has been exposed to an activation of the TASER device. The supervisor should determine which Response to Resistance Report Form is applicable based on the circumstances surrounding the discharge. Photographs of probe sites should be taken and witnesses interviewed.

304.8 TRAINING

Personnel who are authorized to carry the TASER device shall be permitted to do so only after successfully completing the initial department-approved training. Any personnel who have not carried the TASER device as a part of their assignment for a period of six months or more shall be recertified by a department-approved TASER device instructor prior to again carrying or using the device.

Proficiency training for personnel who have been issued TASER devices should occur every year. A reassessment of an officer's knowledge and/or practical skill may be required at any time if deemed appropriate by the Administrative Training Lieutenant or designee. All training and proficiency for TASER devices will be documented in the officer's training file.

The Administrative Training Lieutenant or their designee are responsible for ensuring that all members who carry TASER devices have received initial and annual proficiency training.

The Administrative Training Lieutenant or their designee should ensure that all training includes:

- (a) A review of this policy.
- (b) A review of the Response to Resistance Policy.
- (c) Performing weak-hand draws or cross-draws to reduce the possibility of unintentionally drawing and firing a firearm.
- (d) Target area considerations, to include techniques or options to reduce the unintentional application of probes near the head, neck, chest and groin.
- (e) Handcuffing a subject during the application of the TASER device and transitioning to other force options.