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## Conducted Energy Device

### 303.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

### 303.2 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.

### 303.3 ISSUANCE AND CARRYING TASER DEVICES

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. Uniformed officers who have been issued the TASER device shall wear the device in an approved holster on their person or shall keep it secure and readily available in their vehicle. In an emergency, it is permissible for an officer to temporarily store the Taser and associated cartridges in a cargo pocket until the scene is stable.

To confirm proper functioning of the TASER device, members carrying the TASER device should remove the cartridge and cycle the weapon for 5 seconds prior to every shift.

When carried while in uniform officers shall carry the TASER device in a weak-side holster on the side opposite the duty weapon or on the gun side requiring the officer's non-handgun hand to draw the Taser (cross draw).

- (a) Whenever practicable, officers should carry two or more cartridges on their person when carrying the TASER device.
- (b) Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that their issued TASER device is properly maintained and in good working order.
- (c) Officers should not hold both a firearm and the TASER device at the same time.

### 303.4 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.

After providing verbal warning to the subject, and prior to firing the Taser at the person, the officer using the Taser should loudly announce "Taser" to other officers at the scene in order to minimize

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the possibility of the Taser use being mistaken for the discharge of a firearm. The aiming laser should never be intentionally directed into the eyes of another as it may permanently impair his/her vision.

The fact that a verbal or other warning was given or the reasons it was not given shall be documented by the officer deploying the TASER device in the related report.

#### **303.5 USE OF THE TASER DEVICE**

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.

##### **303.5.1 APPLICATION OF THE TASER DEVICE**

The TASER device may be used in any of the following circumstances when the circumstances perceived by the officer at the time indicate that 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.

##### **303.5.2 SPECIAL DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

The use of the TASER device on certain individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates that other available options reasonably appear ineffective or would present a greater danger to the officer, the subject or others, and the officer reasonably believes that 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 pre-adolescent 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.
- (e) Individuals whose position or activity may result in collateral injury (e.g., falls from height, falls into a body of water, and operating vehicles/machinery).

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 generally should be limited to supplementing the probe-mode to complete the circuit, or as a distraction technique

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to gain separation between officers and the subject, thereby giving officers time and distance to consider other force options or actions.

The TASER device shall not be used to psychologically torment, elicit statements or to punish any individual. Furthermore, the Taser shall not be used on passively resisting subjects, such as protestors, who are not complying with a lawful order but do not meet the application of the TASER device criteria.

#### 303.5.3 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 paramedics or other medical personnel.

#### 303.5.4 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS OF THE TASER DEVICE

Officers should apply the TASER device for only one standard cycle and then 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 that 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.

#### 303.5.5 ACTIONS FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENTS

Officers shall notify a supervisor of all TASER device discharges. AFID tags should be collected and the expended cartridge, along with both probes and wire, should be submitted into evidence. The cartridge serial number should be noted and documented on the evidence paperwork. The evidence packaging should be marked "Biohazard" if the probes penetrated the subject's skin.

#### 303.5.6 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.

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#### 303.5.7 OFF-DUTY CONSIDERATIONS

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

#### **303.6 DOCUMENTATION**

Officers shall document all TASER device discharges in the related arrest/crime report. Notification shall also be made to a supervisor in compliance with the Use of Force Policy.

##### 303.6.1 TASER DEVICE FORM

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

- (a) The type and brand of TASER device and cartridge and cartridge serial number.
- (b) Date, time and location of the incident.
- (c) Whether any display, laser or arc deterred a subject and gained compliance.
- (d) The number of TASER device activations, the duration of each cycle, the duration between activations, and (as best as can be determined) the duration that the subject received applications.
- (e) The range at which the TASER device was used.
- (f) The type of mode used (probe or drive-stun).
- (g) Location of any probe impact.
- (h) Location of contact in drive-stun mode.
- (i) Description of where missed probes went.
- (j) Whether medical care was provided to the subject.
- (k) Whether the subject sustained any injuries.
- (l) Whether any officers sustained any injuries.

The Taser Program Supervisor should periodically analyze the report forms to identify trends, including deterrence and effectiveness. The Taser Program Supervisor or his designee should also conduct audits of data downloads and reconcile TASER device report forms with recorded activations.

##### 303.6.2 REPORTS

The officer should include the following in the arrest/crime report:

- (a) Identification of all personnel firing TASER devices
- (b) Identification of all witnesses
- (c) Medical care provided to the subject and the name of the Doctor who provided medical clearance for booking.
- (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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- (f) Document the name of the correctional deputy who was advised of the Taser use at the time of booking into the County Jail.

#### **303.7 MEDICAL TREATMENT**

Probes that appear to be embedded in a person's skin may be removed by a trained officer to prevent further injury to the suspect or involved personnel. Any probe that is clearly embedded in sensitive areas, i.e., head, neck groin shall be removed by medical personnel. Any probe that is clearly embedded in clothing and not skin can be removed by an officer in the field. Used TASER device probes shall be treated as a sharps biohazard, similar to a used hypodermic needle, and handled appropriately. Universal precautions should be taken.

All persons who have been struck by TASER device probes or who have been subjected to the electric discharge of the device shall be medically assessed prior to booking. Additionally, any such individual who falls under any of the following categories should, as soon as practicable, be examined by paramedics or other qualified medical personnel:

- (a) The person is suspected of being under the influence of controlled substances and/or alcohol.
- (b) The person may be pregnant.
- (c) The person reasonably appears to be in need of medical attention.
- (d) The TASER device probes are lodged in a sensitive area (e.g., groin, female breast, head, face, neck).
- (e) The person requests medical treatment.

Any individual exhibiting signs of distress or who is exposed to multiple or prolonged applications (i.e., more than 15 seconds) shall be transported to a medical facility for examination or medically evaluated prior to booking.

The transporting officer shall inform any person providing medical care or receiving custody that the individual has been subjected to the application of the TASER device.

#### **303.8 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

When possible, supervisors should respond to calls when they reasonably believe there is a likelihood the TASER device may be used. 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. Photographs of probe sites should be taken and witnesses interviewed.

#### **303.9 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

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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 Training Sergeant. All training and proficiency for TASER devices will be documented in the officer's training file.

Officers who do not carry TASER devices should receive training that is sufficient to familiarize them with the device and with working with officers who use the device.

The Training Sergeant is responsible for ensuring that all members who carry TASER devices have received initial and annual proficiency training.

Application of TASER devices during training could result in injury to personnel and should not be mandatory for certification.

The Training Sergeant should ensure that all training includes:

- (a) A review of this policy.
- (b) A review of the Use of Force 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.
- (f) De-escalation techniques.
- (g) Restraint techniques that do not impair respiration following the application of the TASER device.

#### **303.10 TASER MAINTENANCE**

Officers are required to ensure all their equipment is in good and working order. Only department authorized TASER armorers are permitted to perform maintenance on the TASER device.

The TASER Program Supervisor or designated TASER instructor/armorer shall have responsibility for the annual inventory, acquisition, maintenance, and storage of TASERS, munitions, and related supplies and equipment. The TASER Program Supervisor or his/her designee shall regularly inspect the weapons and storage cases.

The TASER Program Supervisor or designee(s), with the assistance of Information Technology staff, shall be responsible for downloading use data from all Department TASER's once a year or when directed to do by the Chief of Police, a Division Commander, or a Watch Commander.