

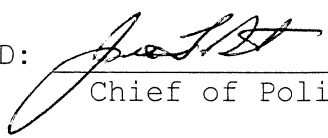
HARDWICK POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: TASER

NUMBER: 602

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07-07-2010

APPROVED:


Chief of Police

AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: New Policy

- I. PURPOSE: To establish guidelines governing the use of the Taser.
- II. POLICY: To provide sworn personnel the option to carry and deploy the Taser.
- III. SCOPE: This policy applies to all members of the Department authorized to carry the Taser.
- IV. PROCEDURE: Officers must follow current state law and use only the minimum degree of force necessary to perform their official duties to achieve safe control over a subject. Personnel who have been trained and issued a Taser will carry the Taser on the duty belt in the cross-draw position. Plain-clothes officers are authorized to carry the Taser in an inconspicuous manner.
- V. CRITERIA: The Taser is to be used as an additional law enforcement tool. It is not intended to replace firearms or other methods of self-defense. A suspect's action, including body language and verbal statements will be taken into consideration before deploying the Taser. Personnel are justified in using physical force for their protection; for protection of another from an imminent physical threat and/or assault; as well as for protection of an individual who is making an imminent threat to do bodily harm to oneself and has the apparent ability to carry out the threat. Personnel are restricted to using this device only in the performance of their official duties, including authorized off-duty police work, unless otherwise authorized by their Supervisor and/or Chief of Police.
- V. TRAINING: All sworn personnel who elect to carry a Taser will attend training that will include instruction and review of the Use of Force policy as well as experiencing the effects of the Taser. Training will be taught by a certified Taser instructor and must be completed prior to carrying the weapon. Retraining will be conducted in accordance with established guidelines.

VI. USAGE: The Taser is a less lethal weapon that, upon deploying, transmits electrical pulses into the body, creating electro-muscular disruption. The result is a temporary loss of the subject's neuromuscular control and any ability to perform coordinated action.

A. The Taser may be deployed when:

1. A subject, who the officer has authority to detain, escalates the resistance from passive to active and;
2. The subject has the apparent ability to physically threaten the officer or others and/or
3. Is preparing or attempting to flee or escape, or
4. In circumstances where the use of such device is necessary for the safety of the officer or the public.

B. The Taser will NEVER:

1. Intentionally be aimed at the face, eyes, neck or groin of a subject. The Taser should be aimed at lower center mass, unless circumstances dictate otherwise
2. Knowingly be used near flammable gases or liquids
3. Be used where the potential exists for a subject to suffer extensive harm or injury such as a fall from a roof or other hazardous situations that could cause severe injury (i.e. obvious pregnant female)
4. Be used on a handcuff/shackled subject UNLESS physical resistance has to be overcome to stop an immediate threat (of possible injury) to the officer, subject, other citizens, or property).

VII. DRIVE-STUN METHOD: The Taser functions in a stun mode after the probes have been deployed or removed. This method will affect the muscle group that is touched with the Taser. Sworn personnel will utilize this method in accordance with the training received.

VIII. AFTER-USE CARE: Once the subject is handcuffed and in custody, the Taser-trained personnel, Rescue or hospital staff will, if applicable:

- A. Remove the probes using safety gloves. Taser probes having made contact with a person's body should be treated as a bio-hazardous material and handled as such. If necessary, the area may be treated with alcohol and an adhesive strip bandage applied.
- B. Should the Taser probe strike a person in the eye, face, foot, hand or groin area, or a female in the breast, the probes will not be removed by the officer. Persons having been struck in the eye, face, breast, or groin will be transported to an appropriate medical facility. Treatment will be noted on the Use of Force report.
- C. When dealing with a combative subject who has been tased, it is recommended that the probes not be removed until the subject has reached their destination (medical facility, jail, police station). The connected probes are still effective if the officer needs to control the combative subject.

IX. REPORTING: Except for Taser deployment for demonstration/training purposes, all Taser deployments will be documented in the police report narrative. In the event an officer deploys their Taser he/she will immediately contact their supervisor. If the deployment resulted in contact by either drive stun or probe strike, the supervisor will complete a Use of Force and Taser reports. Both reports will be submitted to the Chief's Office within 72 hours.

- A. A photograph will be taken of the affected area and attached to the Use of Force report. Discretion will be used in photographing areas of a sensitive nature. The report will indicate the serial number of the Taser and cartridge used, the location of the puncture marks or red marks should the probes fail to penetrate the skin.
- B. The Taser probes and cartridge will be collected for evidence. The probes will be placed into the cartridge cavity, barbed ends first. The lead wire will be wrapped around the cartridge, and the cartridge ports will be sealed. Used gloves will be removed in a manner that will place the cartridge inside the glove. This technique will be consistent with training received. The gloves containing the cartridge will be placed in an evidence bag and labeled "biohazard",

following procedures for impounding property (i.e. case number, subject's name, and date).

- X. MAINTENANCE: Personnel authorized to carry the Taser will be responsible for its care and maintenance.
 - A. All personnel will check the batteries regularly as well as the expiration date of the cartridges.
 - B. The Taser must be stored in the holster when not in use. The Taser will be handled using the same precautions and security used for firearms. Under no circumstances will a Taser be left unattended in any vehicle, except during prisoner processing, in which case the Taser may be stored in the vehicle trunk or locked compartment.
 - C. No alterations, changes, modifications or substitutions shall be made to the Taser. No officer will be permitted to carry any cartridges that have not been authorized by the Department. All repairs will be done through an authorized dealer.
 - D. It is the responsibility of the user to report any malfunction or operation failure to their supervisor immediately.
 - E. Supervisors will have access to spare cartridges and will be responsible for their distribution and tracking.
- XI. DAILY TESTING: To assure functionality and minimize the possibility of a weapon failure during field deployment, it is necessary for officers carrying the Taser to spark test at the start of their shift.

The spark test can be done with one spark. As long as the officer sees a visible spark between the electrodes there is no need to extend the duration. In most cases this is less than one second. Shift supervisors will be responsible for officers conducting the spark test.

- XII. DOWNLOADING: The Taser stores deployment data that can be downloaded and documented.

- A. Deployments: All Tasers are subject to inspection and downloading of stored data; however, anytime a Taser is deployed, it will be immediately taken out of service and the information will be downloaded into the data port. Once the incident is downloaded, the Taser may return to service.

B. Malfunctioning: Should the Taser not pass the spark test, or, for any malfunctions, the officer must notify the supervisor immediately. The supervisor will deliver the defective Taser to the Chief to have the information downloaded prior to being sent back to the manufacturer for repair.