
Conducted Electrical Weapon

305.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the issuance and use of "Conducted Electrical Weapons" also known as the TASER Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW).

305.2 POLICY

The CEW/TASER is used to control a violent or potentially violent individual. The appropriate use of such a device should result in fewer serious injuries to officers and suspects.

The primary purpose for employing the TASER is to save human lives. The TASER is viewed as "intermediate" on the continuum of non-lethal force and is authorized as an alternative to the use of deadly physical force in situations where time and circumstances exist for the use of the TASER.

The TASER is not intended to be used as a general substitute for other non-lethal force options.

305.3 ISSUANCE AND CARRYING TASER DEVICES

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

TASER devices are issued for use during a member's current assignment. Those leaving a particular assignment may be required to return the device to the department inventory.

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. Non-uniformed officers may secure the TASER device in the driver's compartment of their vehicles.

Members carrying the TASER device should perform a spark test 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.

- (a) All TASER devices shall be clearly and distinctly marked to differentiate them from the duty weapon and any other device.
- (b) Whenever practicable, officers should carry two or more cartridges on their person when carrying the TASER device.
- (c) Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that the issued TASER device is properly maintained and in good working order.
- (d) Officers should not hold a firearm and the TASER device at the same time.

TASERS will be stored in the shot gun locker. Each TASER will be fully equipped with two cartridges at all times. A supply or reserve cartridges will be maintained in the shot gun locker.

Mount Hope Police Department

Policy Manual

Conducted Electrical Weapon

Officers removing a TASER for use on patrol will indicate the TASER serial number and cartridge serial numbers on the daily equipment sign-out sheet. Additionally, officers should conduct a "spark test" of a TASER unit, prior to putting the TASER into service.

Spark tests are intended to verify that the TASER is working, to verify that the Digital Power Magazine (DPM) is adequately charged and to energize the components in the high voltage section of the TASER. A spark test should be conducted at least once every twenty-four (24) hours.

A spark test is an activation of a of the TASER **WITHOUT** a cartridge in a firing position. It is not necessary to spark test for an entire five second cycle. As long as a visible arc is observed between electrodes, the unit is functional.

Spark tests should be conducted as follows:

- (a) Point the TASER in a safe direction;
- (b) Ensure that the safety switch is in a SAFE position;
- (c) Ensure that the TASER cartridge is removed. A spark test should never be conducted with a cartridge in the TASER;
- (d) Ensure that no part of your body, including fingers, is in front of the TASER electrodes;
- (e) Shift the safety switch to ARMED;
- (f) Pull the trigger and visually confirm arcing across the unit's electrodes. View the arcing from the top or side of the TASER. do not point the unit at your face to view;
- (g) Shift the safety switch to SAFE.

305.4 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.

If, after a verbal warning, an individual fails to voluntarily comply with an officer's lawful orders and it appears both reasonable and feasible under the circumstances, the officer may, but is not required, to display the electrical arc (provided that a cartridge has not been loaded into the device) or the laser in a further attempt to gain compliance prior to the application of the TASER device. The aiming laser should not be intentionally directed into anyone's eyes.

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.

Mount Hope Police Department

Policy Manual

Conducted Electrical Weapon

305.5 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 effective in controlling most individuals, officers should be aware that the device may not achieve the intended results and be prepared with other options.

305.5.1 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. The TASER device shall not be used to psychologically torment, to elicit statements or to punish any individual.

305.5.2 SPECIAL DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The use of the TASER device on certain individuals should 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 obvious juveniles.
- (c) Individuals with obviously low body mass.
- (d) Individuals who are handcuffed or otherwise restrained.
- (e) 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.
- (f) Individuals whose position or activity may result in collateral injury (e.g., falls from height, operating vehicles).
- (g) Persons with known heart conditions.
- (h) Persons with known neuromuscular disorders such as Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy or Epilepsy.
- (i) Subject in handcuffs or in custody unless use of the CEW is justifiable as a means to prevent injury to the individual or officers or to prevent escape by the individual.

Mount Hope Police Department

Policy Manual

Conducted Electrical Weapon

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

305.5.3 TARGETING CONSIDERATIONS

The preferred targeting areas include the individual's back or front lower-center mass. The head, neck, chest and groin should be avoided when reasonably practicable. 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.

305.5.4 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. Officers should not intentionally apply more than one TASER device at a time against a single individual.

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

- (a) Whether it is reasonable to believe that the need to control the individual outweighs the potentially increased risk posed by multiple applications.
- (b) Whether the probes are making proper contact.
- (c) Whether the individual has the ability and has been given a reasonable opportunity to comply.
- (d) Whether verbal commands or other options or tactics may be more effective.

305.5.5 ACTIONS FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENTS

Officers should take appropriate actions to control and restrain the individual to minimize the need for longer or multiple exposures to the TASER device.

- (a) It is important to minimize the duration of the physical struggle. Officers engaging subjects in a physical struggle or in an exhaustive state should develop a plan to capture and restrain the subject as expeditiously as possible to minimize the duration of struggle and the adverse physiological effects.
- (b) Whenever possible, a subject should be taken into custody during the five second TASER cycle, though the lack of presence of assisting officers, probe placement effecting safe approach and rigidity of a subjects arms due to Neuro Muscular Incapacitation may make it difficult or impossible to safely take a subject into custody.

As soon as practicable, officers shall notify a supervisor any time the TASER device has been discharged. When possible, AFIDs (Anti-Felon Identification) tags, which resemble confetti, should

Mount Hope Police Department

Policy Manual

Conducted Electrical Weapon

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.

305.5.6 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.

305.5.7 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.

305.6 DOCUMENTATION

Officers shall document all TASER device discharges in the related arrest/crime reports and the TASER device report forms. Notification shall also be made to a supervisor in compliance with the Use of Force Policy. Unintentional discharges, pointing the device at a person, laser activation and arcing the device, other than for testing purposes, will also be documented on the report form.

305.6.1 TASER DEVICE REPORTING

Use of the TASER is considered a use of force and is subject to the same reporting requirements required by this agency for other uses of force. With the exception of training, all instances of TASER usage, including accidental discharge, shall be reported on a "Subject Resistance Report" in addition to reporting in an incident report.

Items that shall be included in an incident report in which the TASER device has been deployed 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, and as best can be determined; the duration of each cycle, the duration between activations, and 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.

Mount Hope Police Department

Policy Manual

Conducted Electrical Weapon

- (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 Administrator should periodically analyze the report forms to identify trends, including deterrence and effectiveness. The TASER Administrator should also conduct audits of data downloads and reconcile TASER device report forms with recorded activations. TASER device information and statistics, with identifying information removed, should periodically be made available to the public if requested.

305.6.2 ADDITIONAL TASER REPORTING

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
- (d) Observations of the subject's physical and physiological actions
- (e) Any known or suspected drug use, intoxication or other medical problems

305.7 MEDICAL TREATMENT

Officers trained in the proper manner in which to remove TASER device probes from a person's body may remove probes except as noted below in sub-section d. Officers shall photograph the area of probe contact, regardless of whether or not penetration of the probes occurred. 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.

Officers removing probes from a person's body should exercise due caution and should utilize proper personal protective equipment, i.e., latex or Nitrile gloves.

All persons who have been struck by TASER device probes or who have been subjected to the electric discharge of the device or who sustained direct exposure of the laser to the eyes 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.

Mount Hope Police Department

Policy Manual

Conducted Electrical Weapon

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 be medically evaluated prior to booking. If any individual refuses medical attention, such a refusal should be witnessed by another officer and/or medical personnel and shall be fully documented in related reports. If an audio recording is made of the contact or an interview with the individual, any refusal should be included, if possible.

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 (see the Medical Aid and Response Policy).

305.8 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When possible, supervisors should respond to calls when they reasonably believe there is a likelihood the TASER device may be used. When available to do so, 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 device's onboard memory should be downloaded through the data port by a supervisor or Rangemaster and saved with the related arrest/crime report. Photographs of probe sites should be taken and witnesses interviewed.

305.9 TASER ADMINISTRATOR

The department shall designate a TASER Administrator who's responsibilities shall include:

- (a) Downloading of information from the CEW.
- (b) Retention of all records and downloaded information.
- (c) Developing a testing and maintenance schedule for all agency TASERs and their component parts.

305.10 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.

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

Certified TASER Instructors should be re-certified once every two (2) years.

Command staff and supervisors should receive TASER device training as appropriate for the investigations they conduct and review.

Mount Hope Police Department

Policy Manual

Conducted Electrical Weapon

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 Deputy Chief is responsible for ensuring that all members who carry TASER devices have received initial and annual proficiency training. Periodic audits should be used for verification.

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

The Chief of Police 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.