

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE

DATE: February 18, 2016

NUMBER: 1.07 – ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: USE OF TASERS

RELATED POLICY: [1.04, 1.07](#)

ORIGINATING DIVISION: TRAINING/VOLUNTEER SERVICES

NEW PROCEDURE:

PROCEDURAL CHANGE:

SUPERSEDES: DP 1.07 – 3/1/2013

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for the proper use of Tasers.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all sworn members of the Department.

III. BACKGROUND

The Taser is a force option that is intended to temporarily incapacitate subjects to enable officers to gain control over them. The Taser is an electronic conducted energy device that affects a person's sensory and motor nervous systems.

The Taser fires two probes from a replaceable cartridge. A compressed nitrogen capsule located inside the cartridge propels both cartridge probes. These probes are connected to the Taser by thin insulated copper-clad steel wires. When the probes make contact with the target, approximately 1200-2500 volts of electricity pass between the probes affecting the person's sensory and motor nervous systems, capable of causing temporary incapacitation. The Taser is equipped with a laser sight to allow for greater accuracy in both daylight and darkness.

NEW

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. Taser Use

1. Probes Fired - probes are fired at a subject while being discharged.
2. Drive Stun - the device is placed in contact with the subject.

B. A subject is to be considered “Tasered” when electricity from the Taser, however slight, is delivered into their person via probes or drive stun. A single Taser probe penetrating skin, however slightly, is to be considered “Tasered” and is to receive medical care as described in section VI., B.

C. Full Cycle - A full cycle of Taser deployment is five seconds.

V. APPROVED TASERS

The following Tasers have been approved for Department use:

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A. The Taser International Model X-26 and X-26P - hand-held remote stun systems that are operated by digital power magazines.

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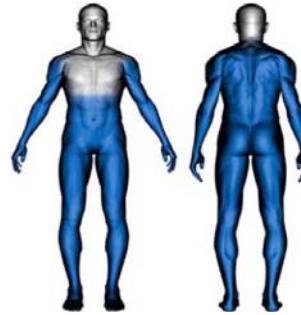
Both the X-26 and X-26P use a silver cartridge, which is effective from point blank to 21 feet, with the optimal range being 7-15 feet.

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Taser use includes either drive stun mode or probes fired. Generally the cartridge should remain on the Taser when delivering a drive stun. A drive stun is more effective after deploying the probes onto a subject. The following are guidelines for the use of the Taser:

1. The Taser may be used on subjects exhibiting assaultive behavior or life-threatening behavior, as defined in Department Procedure 1.04, Use of Force. The Taser may also be used to control actively resisting subjects reasonably believed to possess or have immediate access to a deadly weapon. Commands and warnings should normally be given, if feasible, prior to using the Taser.
2. Officers should evaluate whether the use of the Taser is reasonable based upon all the circumstances, including the subject’s age or physical condition. In some cases, other control techniques may be more appropriate, as determined by the subject’s threat level to others.

3. The Taser may be used more than once on a subject if reasonable to gain control over the subject. If the officer is unable to gain and maintain control of the subject after two cycles, officers should consider other appropriate force options to respond to the threat level presented. Repeated, prolonged, and/or continuous exposure(s) should generally be avoided.
4. Cover officers should be prepared to take control of the subject while the Taser is cycling. Officers may make contact with the subject while the Taser is activated, as long as caution is taken not to touch the subject between the locations of the two probes.
5. The Taser shall not be used on a handcuffed subject, unless the subject displays life-threatening behavior.
6. The Taser should not be used when the subject is in danger of falling from a significant height, unless the subject displays life-threatening behavior.
7. When possible, the Taser should be aimed at the lower center mass of a subject during frontal deployments. Back shots are still very effective and should be targeted when available. The device may be aimed at any part of the body if the subject displays life-threatening behavior. The following silhouette depicts the shaded, preferred targeting area.



8. The spark from a Taser can ignite flammable liquids, vapors, or sensitive explosives. For fire safety reasons, officers should consider the immediate environment when choosing to use the Taser. The Taser should not be fired at anyone sprayed with an alcohol-based chemical spray, including alcohol-based pepper sprays, as the fumes could ignite. The San Diego Police Department only issues water based OC Spray that will not be ignited by the Taser. The Taser will not ignite standard solids or black gunpowder.
9. Uniformed officers issued a Model X-26 or X-26P Taser shall carry it on their duty belt in a Department-approved holster at all times while on duty. Tasers will be carried on the opposite side from the firearm.
10. Non-uniformed officers carrying a Model X-26 or X-26P Taser will carry it in a Department-approved holster on the opposite side from the firearm.

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11. When used in drive stun mode, the unit shall not intentionally be placed on the subject's face, neck, head, or groin, unless the subject displays life-threatening behavior. Caution should be exercised by the officer when using the "drive-stun" mode, as the unit could be used to incapacitate the officer if the subject were to gain control of the unit.
12. Although the Taser will normally immobilize a subject within two to three seconds, officers should allow the Taser to activate for a full cycle unless it appears the subject is in medical distress.
13. Only officers who have successfully completed Department-approved Taser training are authorized to carry and use a Taser.

B. Medical Treatment and Transportation

1. As soon as the subject stops resisting and is handcuffed, an officer should immediately monitor the subject's vital signs. The following first aid should normally be administered to subjects who have been tasered:
 - a. Roll the subject onto his/her side or into a sitting position;
 - b. Monitor breathing, and if necessary, establish an airway;
 - c. Check the pulse at the wrist;
 - d. Check the subject's facial skin color (gray or blue tint is a sign of severe medical distress); and,
 - e. Determine if the subject is functionally conscious (exhibiting voluntary movement, ability to converse and awareness of place, time and date).

Officers should make every effort to avoid contacting the probes when administering first aid to a person who has been tasered.

2. Tasered subjects, whether by probes or drive-stun, shall be transported to a contract hospital for a medical examination prior to booking or final disposition. The decision to transport a subject by police vehicle or to request paramedics should be based on the officer's judgment as to which option will provide the fastest access to professional medical care, based on the circumstances. A subject tasered more than once, whether by probes or drive stun, shall be transported by paramedics.
3. After the subject has been handcuffed and is secure, officers should sever the wires and leave the probes imbedded in the skin. Only qualified medical personnel may remove probes imbedded in the skin.

4. If paramedics transport the subject, at least one officer shall accompany the paramedics during transport to assist in the event the subject becomes violent.
5. Tasered subjects who are also suspected of being under the influence of any drug shall be transported to a contract hospital in the following manner:
 - a. Two officers shall make the transport with the passenger officer continually monitoring the subject's respiration, skin tone, and level of consciousness.
 - b. If, during transport, a medical problem arises, officers shall either request paramedics and administer appropriate first aid until they arrive, or administer appropriate first aid and transport the subject to the nearest emergency medical facility.

VII. REPORTS

- A. Officers shall document the circumstances surrounding the use of the Taser in accordance with Department Procedure 1.04, Use of Force, and complete the required Force Effectiveness Form. Reports shall include the serial numbers of the Taser and the cartridge used.

VIII. MAINTENANCE/ACCOUNTABILITY

- A. The Operational Support Administration will maintain Tasers.
- B. All requests for repairs or replacement of inoperative or damaged units shall be forwarded to the Operational Support Administration.
- C. Officers needing a replacement for an expended Taser cartridge shall bring a copy of all reports relating to the discharge (e.g. arrest report or ARJIS-9) to the Operational Support Administration. The Operational Support staff will ensure all required information is listed prior to issuing a new cartridge. Officers needing to replace a defective or expired cartridge must bring the cartridge to the Operational Support staff in order to get a replacement.
 1. In the case of an officer needing a replacement Taser cartridge as a result of an unintentional discharge, a supervisor must bring the expended cartridge to the Operational Support Administration. The Operational Support staff will ensure all required information is listed prior to issuing a new cartridge.

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- D. Lost Tasers or cartridges will require an ARJIS-9 signed and reviewed by the officer's supervisor in order to receive replacement. Employees who lose or damage equipment through abuse or negligence will be held financially responsible for the replacement or repair costs of the item.
- E. All Tasers shall be inspected pursuant to the Police Department Inspections Guide.

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IX FUNCTION TESTING

- A. Officers shall conduct a daily spark test prior to their shift to ensure the devices are in proper operating condition.
 - 1. The following is the procedure for conducting a spark test on the Taser Model X-26 and X-26P:
 - a. Prior to performing the spark test remove the Taser cartridge from the cartridge bay (the cartridge needs to be more than 2 inches from the Taser to avoid the possibility of static discharge inadvertently firing the cartridge). Point the Taser in a safe direction, then pull the trigger and let it cycle for a full five seconds. Each subsequent spark test conducted during the officer's remaining work week can be one second or less.
 - b. Prior to reloading the Taser for duty use, ensure the safety is in the on position.
 - c. Officers should note if there is a delay between the trigger pull and the first spark. If the spark does not occur immediately upon full compression of the trigger, the device may be unreliable. In those circumstances, officers shall take the device to Operational Support Administration and exchange it at the earliest possible time.

X. TRAINING

- A. The Training Division is responsible for all aspects of Taser training and certification. The Training Division will maintain a list of certified Taser instructors and certified Taser operators.