

	<b>GREENWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>SOP-40</b>
	<b>Standard Operating Procedure SOP-40</b>	
	<b>TITLE:</b> Taser Use	
	<b>First Issued Date:</b> 5/1/2005 <b>Last Revision Date:</b> 6/3/2008	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> <b>May 10, 2012</b>

This policy is intended to provide general guidelines for the use of the M26, and X26 Advanced Taser, hereinafter Taser (hereinafter, collectively referred to as, the "Taser"). The Taser will be used as a supplementary police tool and is not intended to replace firearms or other self-defense techniques. The Taser may reduce the need for other types of physical force by the officer. This policy will also stress the importance of proper training with the Taser.

**I. POLICY:**

The Taser is a less-than-lethal electronic control devise that uses propelled wires to conduct energy to a remote target, thereby controlling and overriding the body's nervous system. It uses neuro-muscular incapacitation (NMI) to stimulate the peripheral nervous system by causing direct stimulation of motor nerves contracting muscles. This causes an uncontrollable contraction of the muscle tissue, allowing the Taser to physically debilitate a target regardless of pain tolerance or mental focus. At a high level, stun systems affect the sensory nervous system whereas the NMI systems affect the motor nervous system and muscles causing direct physical incapacitation.

The Taser fires two (2) probes up to a distance of thirty-five (35) feet from a replaceable cartridge. These probes are connected to the weapon by high voltage insulated wire. When the probe makes contact with the target, the Taser transmits electrical pulses along the wires into the body of the target, through up to two (2) inches of clothing.

The Taser also has contact probes at the front of the unit that allows a back-up drive stun. The Taser has a data port that stores the time and date when it was fired. This data protects the officers from claims of excessive use of force by providing complete and accurate documentation of each firing.

The Taser is a defensive weapon listed in the Use of Force policy after "Verbal and Physical Directions or Commands", and before "Chemical Agents". The decision to use the Taser depends on the actions and the critical distance of the threat.

The use of the Taser gives police officers an alternative to lethal force when involved in cases, including but not limited to:

- Individuals threatening others who are aggressive, uncooperative, and not responding to verbal commands.
- Individuals that pose a threat to themselves or others.
- Disarming individuals armed with weapons i.e. knives, clubs or other items, which are used in a threatening manner.

- Violent subjects.
- Civil disobedience.
- Civil riot situations.
- Correctional facility riot.
- Correctional facility disobedience.
- Aggressive animals.
- Other circumstances, where the officer by virtue of his/her specialized training with Taser, deem it appropriate.

**II. PROCEDURE:**

**A. Authority to Carry and Use:**

1. The Taser shall be issued to and worn by sworn personnel who have completed the Taser-training program.
2. Only properly functioning and charged Taser's shall be used.
3. Each officer carrying an M26 or X26 Taser should check the device before the beginning of each shift for battery strength and to ensure that the device is functioning properly. A spark test of the M-26 or X-26 is also recommended prior to starting each shift.

**B. Operation of the Taser:**

1. Keep hands away from the front of the unit at all times unless the safety slide is forward and the Taser is deactivated. Never place your hands in front of the cartridge at any time after placement on the weapon.
2. Prior to the use of the Taser, if practical, notify other officers on scene of the imminent deployment of the Taser to prevent officer surprise and sympathetic shootings. Recommended notification is shouting "TASER".
3. Use verbal commands and point laser light at subject prior to firing.
4. Have a second air cartridge present or a second Taser ready to fire in case of a miss or malfunction.
5. Unless the situation requires the immediate use of force to protect the officer or a third party, always have a backup officer present in any direct confrontation.
6. Use available distance to ensure officer safety. Optimum range is seven (7) to fifteen (15) feet.
7. Aim for the lower torso. Never aim the Taser at the suspect's face or head area, unless a higher level of force is needed.
8. The Taser is programmed to give a 5-second electrical charge. While the charge is being applied, do not touch the probes; make contact within two inches of the probe, or between the probes in order to avoid receiving the same "electrical current" as the target. Avoid stepping on or tripping over the wires.
9. **Do not fire the Taser near flammable liquids or fumes.** The Taser can ignite gasoline or other flammable liquids. Do not utilize the Taser in a suspected meth lab. Some self-defense sprays are flammable and would be extremely dangerous to use

in conjunction with the Taser. **NOTE: The current oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray issued by the Greenwood Police Department is non-flammable.**

10. The Taser is very effective on suspects in the water or in wet environments, but use with extreme caution on targets in the water as they may become incapacitated and possibly drown. Do not deploy the Taser at a suspect in deep water.
11. Watch for thick and/or loose clothing. If probes hit clothing, the electrical current can only penetrate a maximum of two (2) inches.
12. Once you have used the Taser do not re-fire the weapon unless the suspect continues to resist. The Taser documents each time the weapon is discharged. Your engaging the weapon after the suspect has been subdued may be mistaken for mistreatment of the offender.
13. The Taser will automatically introduce five-second energy current with each single pull of the trigger. The operator can extend the time length by holding down the trigger, or shorten the time by turning off the weapon via the safety lever.
14. The arrest team **can touch** and handcuff the suspect **while the Taser is being fired**. The incapacitation caused by the Taser greatly enhances the officer's ability to control the suspect.
15. The Taser **should not** be used on a suspect being engaged by a K-9 (Police Dog).
16. Following the use of a Taser, the employing officer must complete a Use of Force Report.

**C. Supervisor Responsibility:**

The immediate supervisor of any officer using the Taser in the line of duty shall, upon notification or observation of use, ensure that:

1. The officer who uses the Taser completes the Use of Force Report. This report will be submitted to the Training Director, and Assistant Chief.
2. Medical treatment is provided to all subjects and noted on all reports.
3. The spent air cartridge and probes shall be submitted into the property room as evidence. The probes should be treated as a hazardous material. The cartridge shall be entered into the Spillman property as follows:

**Item= cartridge**  
**Brand= Taser**  
**Model= 35' (or the length of the cartridge being entered)**  
**Serial number= serial number on back of Taser cartridge**



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Word document with a 'Property/Tables' form. The form is titled 'TASER CARTRIDGE' and contains the following information:

- Property Num: G06P02276
- Item: CARTRIDGE
- Brand: TASER
- Model: 21
- Serial Nbr: T05932232
- Color: [Redacted]
- Owner: [Redacted]
- Agency: GPD (Greenwood Police De...)
- Officer: Rodriguez J
- Incident: G61008896
- Local Status: EIS (Evidence in Storage)
- Status Date: 04/28/06
- Date RecovRcvd: 04/28/06
- Amt Recovered: 0.00
- Accum Amt Recov: 0.00
- Storage Location: GPD Property
- Tag Number: [Redacted]
- Crime Lab Number: [Redacted]
- Date Released: [Redacted]
- Released By: [Redacted]
- Released To: [Redacted]
- Dhlist: [Redacted]

#### D. Medical Treatment:

- Once the target is under control, the officer shall advise communications that a person has been subjected to the Taser.
- If the probes penetrate the skin, then removal should be by a trained officer or medical staff. Officers should wear gloves when removing the probes from the subject and observe universal precautions when dealing with potential blood exposure. Medics should clean and bandage the wounds if necessary.
- If the probes are embedded in soft tissue areas such as the neck, face, and groin, removal shall be by medical staff only. A sample probe will go with the subject to the hospital or emergency room to be shown to the staff treating the subject.
- Always seek medical attention for the affected subject after any use of the Taser. This can be conducted by an ambulance crew or fire rescue. After examining the affected subject, the medics will make the determination if the subject should or should not be transported to the hospital for evaluation. This determination should not be made by the officer.
- When the Taser is used, secondary injuries can occur and are usually caused by falling to the ground. These types of impact injuries may require transportation to the nearest hospital for treatment. Evaluation by a medic is the proper method of determining whether such injuries exist, officers should not attempt to make this determination.

#### E. Care of the Taser:

The Taser is a sensitive electronic product and costly device that should be stored in its protective case when not in use. Care should be taken to avoid dropping the unit and to

assure that it is adequately secured at all times. Defective Taser's and Taser cartridges should be turned into Taser Coordinator.

Spark test recommended prior to start of shift for both M-26 and X-26.

Always replace air cartridges by their expiration date and use expired cartridges for training purposes only.

**F. Training:**

All Taser instructors are required to complete re-training every two years to remain eligible to instruct on the Taser. All officers authorized to use the Taser must successfully complete re-training and receive certification with the device at least once every two (2) years to remain eligible to use the device.

All officers will attend training on the M-26 or X-26 Taser. Each of these employees must take one (1) hit from the device to understand the temporary incapacitation qualities of the weapon. The Chief of Police may waive this requirement due to medical conditions. Once you have complied you will not be required to take any additional hits in future training, unless you so desire.

**G. Tactical Considerations and Limitations:**

**DO NOT USE THE TASER IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:**

- a. Any known or obviously pregnant female. (danger of secondary fetal injury due to fall), unless deadly force is the only other option.
- b. Any subject who is saturated with or in the presence of a highly flammable or combustible atmosphere, material and liquid.
- c. Any subject who may receive a secondary injury resulting from a fall from its use, I.E. standing on a roof ledge, a high elevation, bridge, etc. unless deadly force is the only other option.
- d. As a tool of coercion, punishment or any other unjustified use not necessary for the officer or other's safety or to subdue and restrain the subject.
- e. When a prisoner is handcuffed, unless such use would prevent the prisoner from inflicting serious bodily injuries to another person or escape of the suspect.
- f. Excessive use of the Taser in subduing a subject is forbidden.
- g. To escort or jab individuals
- h. To awaken unconscious or intoxicated individuals

**THE TASER SHOULD NOT BE USED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS UNLESS THERE ARE COMPELLING, ARTICULABLE REASONS TO DO SO:**

- a. When the subject is operating a moving motor vehicle.
- b. When the subject is holding a firearm.
- c. When the subject is at the extremes of age or physical disability..
- d. In a situation where deadly force is clearly justifiable unless another officer is present and capable of providing deadly force to protect the TASER officers and/or civilians as necessary.

**NOTE:** This directive shall be considered conclusive on all matters herein discussed, however, the above lists in Section G are not meant to be all inclusive. With respect to situations not specifically described in Section G, Taser use may be justified, and officers would be authorized to employ such tactics, in situations similar to those described above if where the use of deadly force is justified, and due to the unique circumstances at the time of the situation the officer opts to try the less than lethal Taser alternative.

By order of the Chief of Police