



ALBEMARLE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER

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TASER DEVICE

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I. POLICY

Consistent with the department's philosophy of utilizing the minimum amount of reasonable force to control a combative person, the use of the departmentally owned and issued M26 and X26 Tasers are approved for officers with proper training, appropriate equipment, and situational considerations.

II. PURPOSE

To outline the department's policy on the appropriate use of the Taser Device.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. TASER – Two types that our agency utilizes are the M26 and X26; both are Electronic Control Devices (ECD) that use propelled wires with two probes or direct contact (drive stun) to conduct energy to affect the sensory and motor functions of the nervous system.
 - 1. These probes are connected to the weapon by high-voltage insulated wire.

2. When the probes make contact with the subject, they transmit an electrical pulse along the wires and into the body through up to two inches of clothing. The X26 and M26 ECD's do not solely rely on pain for compliance. They affect the sensory and motor functions of the nervous system and can cause incapacitation.
3. The probes do not have to penetrate the flesh or cause bodily harm to be effective.
4. The Taser may also be discharged as a contact device or drive stun.

B. ELECTRONIC CONTROL DEVICE (ECD)/NEURO -MUSCULAR INCAPACITATION (NMI) - An electrical signal overrides the central nervous system and motor functions to incapacitate the skeletal muscles

1. The NMI effect causes an uncontrollable contraction of the muscle tissue, debilitating the subject regardless of pain tolerance or mental focus
2. The modern pacemakers and implanted cardiac defibrillators can withstand external electrical defibrillators at least 800 times stronger than the TASER conducted energy pulses. The output does not damage an implanted pacemaker and typically will not cause loss of bladder or bowel control.

C. DATAPORT - Every time the Taser both the M26 and X26 is fired, it stores the downloadable time and date in a dataport. The M26 has a data port on the back of the unit and the X26 has the dataport inside the DPM.

D. ANTI-FELON IDENTIFICATION AFID CARTRIDGE TRACKING - Every time an air cartridge is fired, up to 20-30 small confetti-like microdot ID tags called AFIDs are ejected. Each AFID is printed with the serial number of the cartridge fired, allowing for identification of which cartridge was fired.

E. JUVENILE - An individual under the age of (18) eighteen.

F. DISCHARGE - Pulse from a Taser Device measured in amperes.

G. DEPLOYMENT - The release of the probes from the Cartridge.

H. DPM - Digital Power Magazine.

I. PRISONER - A person in custody or a condition of forcible restraint.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. TASER USE

1. Training/Certification Requirements
 - a. The authorization to carry and/or use the Taser is granted by the Department only to officers who have completed a specified training course and demonstrated competency under testing that has been conducted by a certified Taser Instructor.
 - b. Officers are required to undergo refresher training at least once every calendar year.
 - c. Taser Instructors must complete the initial Taser certification course and recertify every two years to maintain certification.
 - d. The Taser is not to be issued to or used by anyone who has not successfully completed these requirements.

2. The purpose of the Taser is to provide a less-lethal alternative use of force.
 - a. The Taser is not intended to replace the use of firearms when deadly force is necessary.
 - b. Officers will comply with all of the policies and procedures specified in G.O. 4-10, Use of Force.
 - c. The Taser will be assigned to designated officers based upon duty assignment.
3. The Taser may be used to control a dangerous and/or violent subject if attempts to control the subject by other tactics have been or would be ineffective.
4. The Taser may be used to subdue individuals who pose an immediate risk to themselves or others to safely make an arrest. The Taser will be used under the same guidelines as OC spray in G.O. 4-10, Use of Force.
5. Initiation and Execution of ECO/TDO
 - a. Availability of the Taser is recommended at mental health care facilities; i.e., Region Ten or local hospitals and those facilities that may require the officer's duty weapon be secured during facility visits.
6. Interviews / Interrogations
 - a. The Investigations Division will be assigned a Taser to be available during interviews, interrogations, and arrests.
 - b. The Taser will be assigned to a supervisor in that Division who will be responsible for the maintenance of that unit.
 - c. The supervisor should conduct a spark test weekly and prior to assigning out the unit.

B. DISCHARGE CONSIDERATIONS

1. For purposes of G.O. 4-10, Use of Force, the Taser shall be considered a defensive weapon of the same type, and may be used under the same circumstances in the **Use of Force Circle**, as OC Spray.
2. When practical, use verbal commands prior to discharging the Taser.
 - a. Have a backup officer available to assist with the arrest or the use of lethal force.
 - b. Have a second cartridge or Taser ready to discharge in case the probes miss the subject or the Taser malfunctions.
 - c. The Taser shall not be aimed at the head, face, throat or groin of the subject. The preferred target area for a frontal deployment is the lower abdomen. Targeting the center of mass should be avoided.
 - d. The Taser shall not be used to conduct building searches in place of departmental issued firearm.
3. Use of the Taser near flammable liquids and fumes is strictly prohibited.
 - a. **Additionally, use of the Taser in conjunction with alcohol based OC Spray is strictly prohibited.**
 - b. **Departmentally issued OC Spray is alcohol based. DO NOT USE THE TASER AFTER USING OC SPRAY.**
4. Prior to the deployment of the Taser, the certified officer must consider the reasonableness of its use to include:
 - a. The subject's position where a secondary injury could result,
 - b. The Taser should only be used on juveniles when hands on tactics would likely result in more harm than good.

- c. The use on individuals with known heart conditions or elderly subject's
- d. Women known to be pregnant;
 - 1) Use of the Taser on known pregnant woman is prohibited except in situations where the subject's actions place the life and safety of the officer or another person in serious jeopardy.
 - 2) And when other lesser force alternatives would likely result in more harm than good.
- 5. No more than two discharges are permitted in circumstances where the Taser deployed properly but did not have the desired effect. After a second deployment, other force alternatives should be evaluated.
- 6. Multi-Officer Taser Deployment is prohibited on a suspect when the first discharge was successfully deployed.
 - a. Deployments from another officer are only authorized when it is clear that the first officer's Taser deployment was not successful.
 - b. Officers should understand that the continuous cycling of the Taser could increase the risk of death or serious injury and should be avoided if possible.
- 7. Officers shall not deploy or discharge the Taser from or into a moving vehicle.

C. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS OF X26

- 1. The X26 has a higher incapacitation rating using less power due to the efficiency of shaped pulse technology.
- 2. The X26 delivers 5,000 volts, and only has an average current of 2.1 mA.
- 3. The X26 has a digital power magazine or DPM. This has a 10 year shelf life and provides up to 195 five second cycles. **The DPM must be left in the weapon at all times to maintain system clock.**
- 4. The X26 has a digital central information display (CID) on the back of the unit. It reflects the percentage of battery left, the current date and time, current Celsius internal temperature, gives a countdown, and displays warranty expiration date.

D. DRIVE STUN USE

- 1. Probe hits are almost always more desirable than drive stuns (Neuro-Muscular Incapacitation versus pain compliance). The drive stun alone will not cause NMI. It generally acts as a pain compliance tool.
- 2. The Drive Stun method is authorized in the following circumstances:
 - a. When the person **actively resists arrest**.
 - 1) For example the officer attempts to place a person's hand behind his back and the person immediately resists by forcefully pulling his arm away and out of the officer's control.
 - b. When the person **manifests the intention to actively resist arrest**. When the person signals intent to resist arrest, Drive Stun may be employed to affect that arrest even though resistance has not actually occurred, provided the intent to resist has been clearly manifested and can be adequately articulated.
 - c. When a person **refuses to comply** with an officers lawful commands, if compliance with those commands is, under existing circumstances,
 - 1) Essential to the safety of the person, the officer or the public, and
 - 2) Other means of obtaining compliance are ineffective or not feasible.

- d. When the person **is attacking, or is about to attack** the officer, a fellow officer or some other person.
 - e. When a **prisoner becomes disorderly and**
 - 1) It becomes necessary for the officer to control this behavior to prevent
 - a) Significant destruction of property and/or
 - b) Potential injury to officers or others.
 - 2) Drive Stun is an option **only after a verbal warning has been given to the prisoner.**
3. Drive stun may be applied more than once in an area to gain compliance, but if found to be ineffective, the officer should use another form of force.
 4. The officer may use Drive Stun to subdue a disorderly prisoner whether in or out of the police vehicle. **A Taser shot with probes on a prisoner, handcuffed individuals, and/or individuals that are fleeing is prohibited.**
 5. For maximum effectiveness in drive stun mode, drive the M26 or X26 into the following areas: Brachial Plexus tie-in (upper chest), Radial (forearm), Common Peroneal (outside of thigh) and Tibial (calf muscle). **SEE BELOW WARNING.**

Warning: The drive stun mode will not be used on the Carotid (side of neck), or the Pelvic triangle (groin area).

E. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

1. SROs will attend the required training in the utilization of the Taser. Tasers will be issued only to SROs assigned to the High Schools.
 - a. SROs should consider the seriousness of the incident occurring, and if another means of force could be used.
 - b. Use of the Taser on juveniles may be used in the following situations, but not limited to;
 - 1) Active resistors.
 - 2) Juveniles that may do harm to themselves.
 - 3) When there are a large number of juveniles involved in a disorder that threatens the officer and public safety.
 - c. The SRO will follow the guidelines in G.O. 4-10, Use of Force.

F. MAINTENANCE OF THE TASER

1. The only Taser devices authorized and issued for use by departmental members is the M26 and the X26 model Tasers.
 - a. Only authorized departmental issued versions of the Taser may be used.
 - b. Subsequent models of the Taser may be authorized and issued upon approval by the Chief of Police.
2. Avoid dropping the unit; it is a sensitive electronic device. If dropped a spark test must be performed immediately to ensure weapon is operational.
3. Check batteries on a daily basis, a spark test must be conducted daily.
 - a. Investigations supervisor should conduct a spark test weekly and prior to assigning out the unit.
 - b. Use only authorized NiMh rechargeable batteries as set forth by Taser International.
 - c. The X26 needs DPM replacement only when the DPM reflects 20% or less on the CID.

4. Keep rubber dataport stopper closed while in the field (M26 only). The X26 dataport is protected inside the DPM.
5. Secure unit when not in use,
 - a. Taser should not be left in extreme cold or hot weather conditions for long periods of time.
 - b. Do not store device or cartridge in pockets.
6. Periodically wipe away dirt and dust from firing bay. Always clean firing bay upon using the Taser in drive stun mode.
7. If Taser is exposed to excessive water, *remove the Air Cartridge immediately* and give it to your immediate supervisor. The Supervisor shall give both the Taser and Air Cartridge to the Defensive Tactics Team Leader.
8. To test that the Taser is functioning properly place the Safety switch in the up (armed) position:
 - a. If the weapon discharges without pulling the trigger, place the Safety switch in the down (safe) position, remove the batteries and contact supervisor. **DO NOT reinstall the batteries or air cartridge or attempt to use the weapon.**
 - b. If the weapon does not discharge without pulling the trigger, conduct a spark test for a second and ensure a rapid pulse rate.
9. If the weapon does not operate normally, place the Safety switch in the down (safe) position, remove the battery tray only on the M26 - contact a supervisor if you have a malfunction with an X26. **DO NOT REMOVE THE DPM.**
10. The Supervisor should then send a memo to the Defensive Tactics Team Leader describing the nature of the problem and make arrangements to turn the Taser in to the Team Leader or Designee.
11. If the weapon does function normally, place the Safety switch in the down (safe) position and return to normal use.
12. A thorough inspection of a weapon should be conducted after being dropped.
 - a. Check the entire weapon for cracks, broken parts, cracked laser/flashlight lens, etc.
 - b. If any damage is found, contact supervisor.
 - c. **DO NOT use a weapon that shows obvious signs of damage.**
 - d. Conduct a Spark Test.

G. WEARING OF THE TASER HOLSTER

1. The M26 holster for carrying the Taser is the ambidextrous, drop- down thigh holster; it will be worn on the opposite leg from the duty handgun.
2. The X26 holster will be worn on the duty belt opposite from the duty handgun.

H. MEDICAL SUMMARY AND TREATMENT

1. Once in custody, probes and wires should be removed and disposed of properly.
 - a. If subject requests medical treatment, advise EMT staff of puncture sites as needed.
 - b. Only ER staff and medical doctors should remove probes embedded in sensitive tissue areas such as the neck, face and groin area.

2. Probes that have penetrated the body should be treated as contaminated needles. Universal Precautions will be taken prior to removing the probes.
3. Persons who have been subjected to a Taser activation will be monitored regularly while in police custody, even after medical attention is rendered.
4. **Officers should be aware that there is a higher risk of sudden death in persons exposed to prolonged applications that are under the influence of drugs and/or health crises associated with excited delirium and acidosis. Excited delirium is defined as an in custody death in which the person exhibits violent or bizarre behavior, insensitivity to pain, elevated body temperature or increased strength. Acidosis is defined as the accumulation of acid from the depletion of alkaline reserves.**

I. DISCHARGING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Ensure the batteries of the Taser are properly charged or the X26 has more than 20% displayed on the CID. The cartridges must be removed prior to checking the power in each Taser.
2. When practical, the officer shall announce "Taser" to the other officers on the scene prior to discharging the Taser.
3. Officers will report the discharging, including accidental discharges, of the Taser to their supervisor as soon as practical.
4. The discharging officer will visually inspect the contact site.
 - a. Probes penetrating the skin will be removed by the discharging officer or another officer and first aid provided.
 - b. If sensitive tissue areas are involved only ER staff or a medical doctor should remove the probe.
 - c. Once the probes have been removed, from tissue, they will be treated as biohazard sharps.
 - d. Officers shall also inspect skin areas after using the Taser in drive stun mode.
5. The discharging officer will enter the expended cartridge with probes and a limited number of microdots into evidence.

J. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Ensure that only certified officers carry the department-issued Tasers. Exposure to the Taser for certification is now voluntary and is not required for user certification.
2. Respond to the scene of each Taser discharge or to another location where the arrestee has been moved.
3. Conduct an initial review of each Taser activation.
4. Ensure that photographs are taken of the probe penetration sites, drive stun sites and any secondary injuries caused by falling to the ground, etc.
5. Ensure that all Officer Incident Reporting requirements have been completed.
6. Ensure that a spark test is completed by assigned officer prior to beginning each shift.

7. Each Patrol shift supervisor will be given an inventory number for each Taser battery cartridge that has been issued to their shift.
8. Supervisors are required to keep a running maintenance log of when the Taser batteries that have been assigned to their shift were charged and reconditioned.
9. If batteries are inoperable they should be returned to the Defensive Tactics Team Leader or Designee for replacement or maintenance.
10. Only Supervisors will remove the DPM from the X26.
11. Complete M26 Battery Initial Charge and Reconditioning Once Every Six Months on all batteries assigned to their shift (Does not apply to the X26).
 - a. Plug in the battery charger and ensure that the yellow power light is illuminated.
 - b. Insert the battery tray in the charger, or connect the data port charger adapter and CHARGE FOR A MINIMUM OF 12 HOURS. The red light will extinguish and the green light will illuminate to indicate a full charge, however it is critical to continue to charge the batteries for a MINIMUM of 12 hours during the initial cycle.
 - c. After the 12-hour cycle, remove the batteries from the charger for approximately 10 seconds (either remove the battery pack or unplug the data port adapter). When the green light extinguishes, reinsert the batteries and allow them to charge until the green light illuminates.
 - d. Repeat step 3 one additional time to ensure three complete charging cycles.
 - e. Normal recharging requires only one normal recharging cycle (until the green light illuminates). The above procedure is only required once every six months.
 - f. The only valid indicator of adequate battery strength is a spark test.
 - g. It is not recommended to charge two sets of batteries (one in the charger, and one in the M26). Only charge one set of batteries at a time to ensure a proper charge.

K. M26 TASER SOFTWARE AND DOWNLOAD DATA

1. In a Use of Force incident, the supervisor shall take the used taser and follow the below listed instructions.
 - a. Go to the computer in Patrol nearest to the Printer/Copier.
 - b. Open the Taser Data Download V2 Icon on the desktop.
 - c. Click the Select Comm. Port button in the software and select COM1 PORT.
 - d. Click the Enter Password Button and enter 231943787.
 - e. Click the Upload Device Data Button and wait approx 45 seconds for the information to be displayed on the screen.
 - f. Click the Save Data to File Button and name it taser(Unit Number).txt
Example: Taser022.txt
 - g. You can then open the file from the My Documents Folder for printing or e-mail it yourself.
2. The supervisor will also attach a print out of the downloaded sheet to the OIR report

L. X26 SOFTWARE AND DOWNLOAD DATA

The X26 has more specific instructions for downloading; each division will be issued a manual related to downloading procedures to assure that this action will take place correctly and without incident.