



**PITTSBURGH
BUREAU OF
POLICE**

*"...accountability, integrity and
respect."*

SUBJECT:

"TASER"

ORDER NUMBER:

12-13

 PLEAC STANDARD:
NONE

PAGE 1 OF 6

 RE-ISSUE DATE:
1/3/05

 EFFECTIVE DATE:
03/10/04

 ANNUAL REVIEW DATE:
JANUARY

 RESCINDS:
ALL PREVIOUS

 AMENDS:
NONE
1.0 PURPOSE OR POLICY

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of the TASER by members of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police whether such was issued or privately purchased.
- 1.2 The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police has approved the use of the TASER to provide officers with an additional use of force option. This is a less lethal device that falls under Level 3, "Compliance Techniques," as defined in Procedural Order #12-8 "Continuum of Control" and is to be used to control actively resisting subjects, aggressive non-compliant subjects, violent or potentially violent subjects.
- 1.3 Pittsburgh Bureau of Police personnel will refer to Procedural Order #12-6, "Use of Force" which shall continue in effect as the Bureau policy regarding the utilization and reporting of force.
- 1.4 The TASER is NOT a replacement for the officer's duty firearm. In those incidents where the officer reasonably believes the actions of another constitute an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or a third party, the TASER should not be used without firearm back-up.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **TASER** – A less lethal device used to incapacitate subjects by discharging an electronic current into the subject. The TASER is an Electro-Muscular Disruption (EMD) system and uses propelled wires to conduct energy to a remote target, thereby controlling and affecting the central nervous system. The TASER can also be used in touch application without shooting the probes. Upon impact with the body (skin or up to 2 inches of clothing) the electrical pulses of the TASER then override the central nervous system and take direct control of the skeletal muscles.
- 2.2 **Discharge**– To fire a TASER cartridge, display the arc, or to touch or to attempt to touch a subject with the TASER while the TASER is in the stun mode.
- 2.3 **Penetrate** – To enter or diffuse through or into (the clothing or skin).

3.0 AUTHORIZATION

- 3.1 Only officers who have completed the prescribed course of instruction at the Pittsburgh Police Training Academy are authorized to carry the TASER or another make and/or model as approved by the Chief of Police.
- 3.1.1 All authorized TASERs, either Bureau issued or privately purchased, shall be registered with the Bureau of Police Training Academy.
- 3.1.2 It will be the responsibility of the Training Academy to maintain a database, which contains information pertaining to the registered TASER's such as model and serial number of authorized TASER's.
- 3.2 TASER's and cartridges approved and authorized by the Chief of Police through written order are the only models that will be carried.
- 3.3 The TASER will only be carried in holsters approved and authorized by the Chief of Police.

- 3.4 Once authorized, officers must re-certify in the use of the TASER biennially at the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Training Academy.
- 3.5 The Training Academy Commander shall ensure that a current list of those officers who have been issued and are qualified to carry/use the TASER is forwarded to each duty location each year. This list will be posted and maintained by the shift supervisors at each duty location.

4.0 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Officers authorized to carry a TASER are responsible for maintaining the device's operational readiness. As such, officers will:
- 4.1.1 Inspect the TASER for any obvious damage before taking it into the field. This inspection will include a check of the light, laser site, frame, trigger housing, and safety switch for functionality. If a TASER is determined to be functioning improperly, it should be taken out of service and sent to the Training Academy for repair along with a special explaining the repair needed.
- 4.1.2 Check the TASER's battery strength to ensure adequate battery charge.
- 4.1.2.1 Officers will remove the cartridge from the TASER prior to checking the battery strength or changing batteries in the unit.
- 4.1.2.2 Officers may test battery strength by firing an unloaded TASER at the start of their shift in the designated area of the officer's duty location. This test firing shall be recorded on the officer's Daily Activity Report, PBP Form #1.1.
- 4.1.2.3 In the event that the unit's battery strength is not sufficient and the rechargeable batteries will no longer take a charge, the officer will replace the batteries with batteries specifically approved for use in the TASER. These batteries are supplied by the Academy.
- 4.1.3 When on duty, carry the TASER in the approved holster, loaded with a cartridge with the safety in the 'ON' position and ensure that the stopper is in the data port.
- 4.1.4 Wear the TASER holstered on the opposite side of the officer's handgun.
- 4.1.5 Carry at least two cartridges with the TASER.
- 4.1.5.1 Officers will also check the expiration date and condition of the TASER cartridges. Cartridges should be inspected for damaged or loose doors. Expired and/or damaged cartridges will be turned in to the Academy for replacement.
- 4.1.6 Store the TASER and extra cartridges in the issued holster or case when not in use.
- 4.1.7 Avoid dropping the TASER and exposing it to water.
- 4.1.8 Avoid direct sunlight exposure and static electricity.

5.0 TASER USAGE CRITERIA

- 5.1 Discharge of the TASER constitutes physical force under the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, Section 508 (Use of Force in Law Enforcement). The discharge of the TASER is authorized when used in accordance with the Rules & Regulations of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, in particular, policies on use of force and use of TASER and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America, in particular the Constitution of the United States.

5.2 Situations in which the use of the TASER may be authorized include, but are not limited, to the following:

- When presented with a mentally ill individual who is exhibiting behavior that would lead an officer to use the TASER as a reasonable force option.
- Warrant service when the individual who is exhibiting behavior that would lead an officer to use the TASER as a reasonable force option.
- Persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol who are exhibiting behavior that would lead an officer to use the TASER as a reasonable force option.
- Persons expressing the intent and having the means to commit suicide and who are exhibiting behavior that would lead an officer to use the TASER as a reasonable force option.

5.3 Under no circumstances shall an officer resort to the use of the TASER where such a use of force is in violation of General Order #12-6, "Use of Force" policy. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict with or replace the provisions of the "Use of Force" policy.

5.4 It is also the policy of this Bureau that personnel will not necessarily or unreasonably endanger themselves in applying these guidelines. Furthermore, it is policy of this Bureau that the TASER is not intended to be used as a substitute when the officer is justified in the use of deadly force in accordance with the policy outlined in the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Manual of Procedural Orders, General Order #12-6.

6.0 INTENTIONAL TASER DISCHARGE

6.1 Upon encountering an incident in which it is determined that the TASER may be required, the officer shall broadcast a request for "Code Zebra." This code will represent to the dispatcher/communications the request to have the TASER on scene.

6.1.1 Shift supervisors will notify communications which officers have TASERS by writing "TASER officer" after the unit number on the rundown that is faxed to communication.

6.2 When reasonable, prior to firing the TASER, the officer discharging the TASER shall loudly announce that the TASER is going to be discharged.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS AFTER TASER DISCHARGE

7.1 Following the discharge of the TASER, the officer shall secure the subject and the scene ensuring officer safety.

7.2 A medical release from a hospital will be obtained for all subjects exposed to the discharge of the TASER, either by contact stun or probes.

7.3 If the officer observes any objective sign indicating that the subject requires **IMMEDIATE** medical treatment following exposure to the discharge of the TASER, either by contact stun or by probes, an EMS Unit shall be summoned to the scene immediately.

7.4 The following grid shall be consulted to determine the appropriate probe removal procedure to be taken after a TASER probe discharge:

	TASER Probes Successfully Discharged?	Yes	No
1.	Did the probes penetrate the subject?	Go to Step #2	No further action.
2.	If the probes penetrated the subject, was a Supervisor called?	Go to Step #3	Call a Supervisor and Go to Step #3
3.	Did the probes penetrate the subject's clothing ONLY?	An officer trained in probe removal may immediately remove the probes and transport the subject to the hospital for a medical release (see 7.5)	(Probes penetrated subject's body) Go to Step #4
4.	Did penetration of the probes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Render the subject unconscious ▪ Cause him/her to exhibit signs of a serious medical condition ▪ Cause a secondary injury as a result of a fall ▪ Cause penetration in sensitive tissue areas (i.e. face, neck, breast or groin)? 	Request EMS Unit. Wait for the EMS unit to arrive for probe removal. Transport the subject to the hospital for treatment and/or release. (see 7.5) Go to Step #5	Although discharge resulted in penetration, an officer trained in probe removal may immediately remove the probes if none of these conditions resulted. The subject shall then be transported to the hospital for a medical release. Go to Step #5.
5.	Subject transported to Hospital	See 7.5 (below)	Transport to hospital for medical release. See 7.5 (below)

7.5 In those circumstances when the probes are removed from the subject by means other than professional medical personnel, the subject will be transported to a medical facility for a medical release prior to being released from custody or prior to transferring custody to the Allegheny County Jail or any other detention or medical facility.

7.6 Ensure that any discharged cartridges, probes, and a sampling of Anti-Felon Identification (AFID) "microdots" that are discharged with the probes are collected and booked as evidence.

8.0 THE HANDLING OF PROBES FROM THE TASER

8.1 Probes that have penetrated the body should be treated as bio-hazardous "sharps."

8.2 Probes are to be carefully placed sharp tip first into the spent cartridge wire pockets and secured in place with a strip of tape, i.e. evidence tape.

8.3 Probes are to be treated as evidence. Once the probes are secured into the spent cartridge they are to be packaged and sent to the property room.

9.0 REPORTING USAGE OF THE TASER

9.1 All intentional discharges of the TASER are to be reported by the discharging officer. Any discharge, whether resulting in physical contact with an individual or not, shall be reported on the PBP Form #10.1 "Subject Resistance Report Form" along with any other related reports and submitted to the officer's supervisor for review. Officers will include the serial number of the TASER and cartridge(s) in their report.

9.2 All unintentional discharges will be reported through a PBP Form #54 "Special Report" outlining the specific circumstances of the discharge. This Special Report shall then be forwarded through the shift supervisor, along with any other related reports, through the chain of command to the Chief of Police the discharged cartridge shall be forwarded by the officer to the Training Academy.

9.2.1 The Training Academy's Defensive Tactics Section will conduct a debriefing on all unintentional discharges. This debriefing is to be scheduled by the duty location commander as soon as is practical. The TASER unit will be taken out of service and inspected at the Training Academy and will not be returned to the officer until the debriefing is conducted.

9.3 All required reports will be completed and submitted before the end of the affected officer's tour of duty.

9.4 If the discharging officer is not able to make the necessary reports immediately following the usage incident, the shift supervisor will complete and submit all of the required reports prior to the end of the supervisor's tour of duty.

10.0 TACTICAL FORMATIONS

10.1 Under the direct supervision of a Supervisor, the TASER may be utilized as a means of crowd control through the use of formations and display of the TASER's arc. In these situations, a supervisor shall document the TASER discharges by completing an Investigative Report Form 3.0 listing all officers in the formation and noting the times the discharges occurred.

10.1.1 Any officer who discharges a TASER and makes contact with a subject during a tactical formation shall complete the appropriate forms as directed by Section 9.0 of this order.

11.0 PROHIBITED USAGE OF THE TASER

11.1 The City of Pittsburgh forbids the discharge of the TASER in anyway that is deemed "excessive force." All intentional discharges of the TASER must fall within the "reasonable officer standard."

11.2 While the TASER is a less lethal weapon meant to gain compliance from a subject, it is not a deadly force weapon and therefore should not be used as a substitute for deadly force.

11.3 The TASER should not be discharged in the proximity of flammable liquids, gases, or any other highly combustible materials that may be ignited by the device including any individual that may have been exposed to combustible substances or liquids such as gasoline.

11.4 The TASER is not to be discharged if the officer has knowledge that any member of another police department, agency, or a civilian has sprayed the subject with OC Spray or any type of other chemical agent because of the potential for combustion.

11.5 The TASER is not to be discharged if it or the air cartridge is submerged in water.

11.6 The TASER is not to be used on individuals who have expressed the intent and have the means to commit suicide and any incapacitation resulting from the discharge of the TASER would present a real threat of danger to public safety or a high risk of serious bodily injury to him or herself or another.

11.7 Officers should avoid using the TASER on obviously pregnant females and those individuals under the age of 7 or over the age of 70, unless the encounter rises to the level of a deadly force situation. This restriction is based on the potential for these individuals to fall when incapacitated by the TASER.

12.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SHIFT SUPERVISORS

12.1 Shift supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:

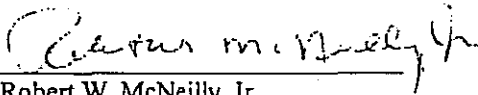
12.1.1 All incidents involving any discharge of the TASER are appropriately documented and proper procedure is followed.

12.1.2 All reports of incidents involving the use of the TASER are forwarded through the Chain of Command.

13.0 DOWNLOADING OF TASER DATA CHIPS/DATA RECONCILIATION

- 13.1 Duty location commanders will ensure that a TASER deployment data report is downloaded quarterly for each TASER assigned to their unit. This report may be generated more often if necessary.
- 13.2 The TASER deployment data sheet for each TASER will be compared to documentation in the TASER file at the Training Academy to ensure that every deployment has been appropriately documented. Lack of documentation for any recorded use will be investigated.

Approved By:



Robert W. McNeilly, Jr.
Chief of Police