

City of
Bellevue



POLICE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

Bellevue Police Department

James Montgomery – Chief of Police

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CONTACT: Officer Marcia Harnden 425-452-4129 Pager (206) 541-0534

Police successfully use ADVANCED TASER to disable mentally ill man in 5-hour standoff.

Bellevue, Washington; August 1, 2001: On June 24th, 2001 at about 9:20 AM, Bellevue Police responded to a suspicious man call at 1056 108th Ave NE. After a 5-hour stand off, the mentally ill man was taken into custody with very minor injuries. He was taken to Harborview Medical Center for evaluation.

The call began with a 911 call from a neighbor stating that the man was throwing water around and had been displaying a hatchet. When Bellevue Police officers arrived on the call and tried to contact the man, he failed to comply. He seemed incoherent and agitated. Officers stayed back and continued to try to communicate with the male. He did not respond to their requests. The man armed himself at various times with a knife and other sharp objects. There was no one else in the apartment. Bellevue Police Hostage Negotiators responded and tried unsuccessfully for a few hours to establish contact with the 50-year-old male. A family member told police that he had just been put on some new medication. King County Mental Health Professionals called to the scene by police advised that the medication was not working and they doubted that his mental state would improve. He was becoming an increasing danger to himself.

At 2:15PM, an audible siren was used to distract the man and officers entered the apartment with a master key. The male was ordered to lie down. He was highly agitated and did not comply. Officers then fired an ADVANCED TASER M26 to disable the man. He was again ordered to comply. He did not. The ADVANCED TASER was applied again. Again the male did not comply. After using it a third time, the male got on the ground as instructed. He was then taken into custody. He was transported by Bellevue Fire Aid 1 to Harborview Medical Center for evaluation. He suffered scrapes and bruises incurred during the entire incident.

This is the first application where the ADVANCED TASER M26 was fired at a suspect. The ADVANCED TASER was highly successful in disabling the suspect without injuring him or officers.

KING COUNTY JOURNAL

Tasers help subdue agitated man - Nonlethal weapon used by Bellevue police for first time during standoff

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by Noel S. Brady

Journal Reporter

BELLEVUE -- Newly acquired nonlethal weapons helped subdue a mentally ill man yesterday who held police off from inside his downtown Bellevue apartment for more than five hours.

Bellevue officers fired electrically charged Taser guns at a 50-year-old Bellevue man three times after he ignored commands to lay down, police spokeswoman Marcia Harnden said.

With the third 26-volt jolt, the man dropped to the ground. He was taken to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

It was the first time Bellevue officers fired their new Taser guns.

The standoff began shortly after 9:20 a.m., when a neighbor called 911 to report the man was throwing water and brandishing a hatchet at his Bellevue Villa apartment located at 1065 108th Ave. N.E., across the street from the Rosalie Whyel Museum of Doll Art.

No one reported the man ever making direct threats, but they said he was clearly agitated and incoherent.

Police arrived at the apartment building and evacuated it, while negotiators tried to contact the man in person and over the telephone.

Harnden said the man ignored police and SWAT-team negotiators for five hours. During that time, officers observed the man inside his apartment, at times holding the hatchet, a butcher knife and an open pocket knife.

For nearly two hours, negotiators used a loud repetitive siren in an attempt to wear the man down and encourage him to give himself up.

Meanwhile, Harnden said, King County mental health professionals arrived and assessed the situation. Family members of the holed-up man told them he recently had started new medication, and his actions may have resulted from an adverse reaction.

The mental health experts then surmised that the man's condition most likely wouldn't improve any time soon. With that information, Harnden said, officers entered the man's apartment about 2:30 p.m. using a master key provided by the building manager.

Harnden said the man, who has a history of mental illness, was loaded into an aid car after he collapsed from the Taser gun shots.

"The Taser worked exactly as it should have," she said.

In October, the Bellevue Police Department purchased eight \$400 M26 Taser guns to use as a nonlethal alternative for subduing potentially violent suspects. More than 30 Bellevue officers have since been trained to use the guns on violent suspects who aren't wielding firearms.

The Tasers fire two small darts attached to copper wires that can travel up to 20 yards. The electrical shock is capable of disabling subjects long enough for officers to restrain them without seriously injuring them.

The man in yesterday's standoff was taken away with only a few minor scrapes and bruises, Harnden said. He was admitted into the Harborview psychiatric ward for observation.

Most likely, she said, he will not face any criminal charges.

"The whole approach or strategy was to wait him out and wear him down," Harnden said. "The Taser allowed us to apprehend him without serious injury to him or any officers."

Noel Brady can be reached at noel.brady@eastsidejournal.com or 425-453-4252.

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PRESS CLIPPINGS

BRIEFS

Tasers used to subdue disturbed Eastside man

BELLEVUE - Bellevue police yesterday for the first time used tasers to subdue a suspect, ending a five-hour standoff with a 50-year-old mentally disturbed man who had holed up in his apartment with a knife.

The incident began about 9:20 a.m., when a resident at the apartment building at 1056 108th Ave. E. reported that a neighbor was throwing water around and brandishing a hatchet.

Appearing agitated and incoherent, the man ignored officers' attempts to contact him in the apartment, and at times, armed himself with a knife and other objects, police said. Police finally used a siren to distract the man, while officers entered his apartment with a master key.

When the man refused to comply with their orders, officers fired and stuck him several times with a taser - prongs attached to copper wire that are shot from a gunlike instrument and emit electrical shocks.

After the third strike, the man complied and was taken into custody, police said.

Police reported no injuries, but the man was taken to Harborview Medical Center for observation. The man had recently been put on new medication.