

Boca Council OKs stun guns for police

City will be first in county to use electric devices to immobilize attackers

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If Capt. James Kirk were commander of the Boca Raton Police Department, he might be moved to remark, "Set your TASERS on stun."

But that would be redundant, since TASERS are, in fact, stun guns.

And it appears Boca Raton's law enforcement officers will be the first in Palm Beach County to carry the weapons that deliver an electric shock to stun violent offenders.

The Boca Raton City Council

voted Tuesday night to purchase 85 of the stun guns from DGG Taser Inc. at a total cost of \$60,790.

Police Chief Andrew Scott said the TASERS will be carried by all uniformed officers on the force, and will also be placed in cruisers.

He said TASERS can immobilize people from 20 to 30 feet away



Scott

and will be used in place of a baton, asp or pepper spray to halt violent offenders.

With a TASER, he said, "we can subdue a violent subject with minimal harm."

The city is purchasing the M26 advanced model of the TASER.

"The M26 presents a safer alternative to older versions of the TASER by providing sufficient knockdown power to end a confrontation before it escalates to lethal force," said Rick Smith, president of TASER International.

Smith said older TASERS,

which delivered a blow of 5 watts to 7 watts, often did not totally immobilize an attacker. He recalled an incident in Hempstead, N.Y., in 1998 in which a baseball bat-wielding assailant continued to swing at officers despite being hit twice with a shock from the low-power TASER. As a result, Smith said, one officer was hospitalized, and the other had to retire with a disability.

According to Smith, the advanced TASER "leaves no injuries even under extreme conditions."

He also said that Dr. Paul Hendry, co-director of the Pacemaker Clinic at the University of Ottawa, Canada, "concluded that the advanced TASER should pose no increase in risk even to patients with a pacemaker or implantable defibrillator."

Chief Scott said local police would take an eight-hour course in proper use of TASERS before being assigned to carry one.

He said the weapons "should arrive in a couple of months."