



N4288

LUCE PRESS CLIPPINGS

Hamilton police add tasers to arsenal

By David Gilligan
Journal-News

HAMILTON

Crime suspects may be in for a shock when the Hamilton Police Department unveils the most recent addition to its nonlethal arsenal of weapons — tasers.

"There are times when lethal force is necessary for the safety of an officer or the general public," said Sgt. Ed Buns, training supervisor. "The tasers allow us to incapacitate a victim through electric shock, without compromising the safety of the officer or the suspect."

The M26 air taser delivers 26 watts of electricity to the suspect through two tiny needles that can be shot from 21 feet away, Buns said. The current is transported over two electric wires connecting the power source inside the gun and the needles, he said. The 1.5-second shock disrupts the muscular movements of its target, disabling the suspect, he said.

"Conventional stun guns require you to be in close contact with the suspect, so any number of things can go wrong," Buns said. "The tasers allow us to keep our distance, decreasing the chances of something going wrong in a nonlethal way."

The gun is powered by eight AA batteries and even has a data port that can transmit firing information to a computer. The weapon also has clearly marked yellow and black stripes down the barrel, so officers can determine what weapon another officer is using.

Buns on Friday demonstrated the weapon's capabilities by firing at a metallic shooting target. The blue light of electricity crackled throughout the entire target as the needles slammed dead-into its center.

Buns said there have been



Submitted photo

Hamilton police Sgt. Steve Ebbing shows the M26 air taser to Officer Carla Holzhauser recently. The 40 tasers the department purchased deliver 26 watts of electricity to a suspect from up to 21 feet away, providing a nonlethal alternative to suppress a dangerous subject.

no reports of death or severe injury associated with the use of the M26 from any law enforcement agency that deploys the weapon.

Other nonlethal weapons include bean bag rounds fired from a shotgun, but those can still injure a suspect, he said.

"Tasers are just another less lethal option in the officer's equipment to reduce the risk of injury to both officer and suspect," said Capt. Steve

Poulemans.

The department spent \$31,000 from the federal local law enforcement block grant to purchase 40 tasers and 1,500 cartridges, Buns said. Each cartridge fires one round.

Section supervisors will be subject to an eight-hour training course on the use of the M26, while the remaining officers will receive instruction at their mandatory bian-

nual in-service training in September, he said.

Said Chief Neil Ferdeman, "We thought this was a tremendous purchase, particularly for our taxpayers because it all comes from federal grant money."

"In light of the increased awareness across the country on use of force tactics, the tasers prevent lethal force and keep the officer, suspect and the public free from danger."