

## **Morgan County Sheriff Department**

### **TASER Policy**

**Introduction:** The ADVANCED TASER Model M26, is not a substitute for deadly force. However, there are many situations where the perpetrator will not follow verbal direction from the officer or is actively resisting and the use of the M26 will prevent many of these situations from escalating to higher levels, including deadly force.

The ADVANCED TASER is a less lethal, Conducted Energy Weapon, that uses propelled wires to conduct energy to a remote target, thereby controlling and overriding the central nervous system of the body.

The probes are launched from the M26 using compressed and inert nitrogen capsules (1800 psi) located within the air cartridge which will propel the probes a maximum range of 21' and effectively penetrate up to 2" of clothing. Due to the design of the probe, it will not penetrate the perpetrator by more than 1/4", even at Point Blank range.

The ADVANCED TASER, Model M26, is a brand name and is manufactured by TASER International, Scottsdale, AZ. 85260-9913 USA. (480) 991-0797.

**Why it works:** Conducted Energy weapons are effective because they override the central nervous system of the human body. The human nervous system communicates by means of simple electrical impulses. The M26 sends out short duration, high voltage electrical waves or TASER-Waves, or T-Waves that overpower the normal electrical signals within the nerve fibers. As a result of using TASER technology, the officer gains control of the situation with minimum injuries to the suspect and minimum risk to the officer while maintaining a safe distance of up to 21 feet.

**STUN vs. Electro-Muscular-Disruption (EMD):** *Stun* systems only affect the sensory nervous system, i.e. ...stun systems cause a tremendous amount of "noise" to be fed to the brain – sensations which can be overwhelming to most people. But stun systems do not cause a direct physical effect. Stun systems generally have a power range of 5-15 watts. **EMD (Electro-Muscular-Disruption)** systems override the central nervous system and take direct control of the skeletal muscles. The ADVANCED TASER, M26 is an EMD system and affects the sensory and motor nervous system. Like a stun system, EMD systems flood the nervous system with signals. However, these systems go one step further by directly causing the muscles to contract. Hence, even someone whose sensory nervous system is impaired by drugs will have involuntary muscle contractions. The ADVANCED TASER, produces 26 watts of power at 50,000volts.

**Medical Safety and Findings:** It is not the voltage that is dangerous; it is the amperage. The electrical output of the ADVANCED TASER is 50,000 volts. The voltage may seem high, however, the amperage (amps) is well below safe limits. The ADVANCED TASER M26 is 162mA Irms. (162 mA = 0.162 Amps) Irms is Root mean Square Body Current. 162mA Irms = 162 milliamps root mean square body current.

Testing has concluded that the ADVANCED TASER has no effect on heart rhythms (animal testing). Testing has also been conducted on over 700 human volunteers with no injury and resulted in over 99% incapacitation in less than one second. There may be a minor skin irritation, similar to sunburn, present as a result of use, but this will disappear in a few hours. The designs of modern pacemakers will withstand the electrical defibrillators, which are several hundred times more powerful than TASER pulses from the ADVANCED TASER M26. *Note: Further information available in the TASER International lesson plan for certification.*

**CASE LAW:** There has been no litigation against TASER International for product liability. No existing case law concerning TASER International as of 9/2000. There have been no deaths contributed solely to the use of the TASER.

### **POLICY ON USE OF THE ADVANCED TASER M26**

*Force Continuum:* The following force continuum is to be used as a guide for the deployment of the M26.

(Lowest level of force to highest)

**Officer presence**

**Verbal Direction**

**Use of OC spray or TASER**

**Empty Hand Control Tactics (non-pain and pain compliance)**

**Impact Weapons (ASP Baton and Bean Bag)**

**Deadly Force**

Any time that a TASER is to be deployed in a tactical setting, the officer using the TASER shall announce that he is about to deploy by saying "TASER!" in a clear and audible tone, so that other officers will be aware that the shot is from a TASER and not a firearm. Thus lowering the probability of an accidental discharge of a firearm by fellow officers serving as backup who could mistake the TASER shot for a gunshot. Surrounding agencies to The Morgan County Sheriff Department shall be contacted and those agencies may be given a short presentation of the TASER and demonstrate it's function whenever feasible. This will further decrease the likelihood of an accidental discharge of a backup officer should he/she be present at the time of the TASER's utilization and deployment. A written statement should be forwarded to the Chief of each agency informing them of the Morgan County Sheriff Department's adoption of the ADVANCED TASER.

**Deployment of the M26:** All officers who are issued the M26 ADVANCED TASER Shall be certified as an end user by a TASER International, Certified Instructor prior to deployment in the field. This consists of 4 hours of instruction (minimum) and will require annual in-service to remain certified. A copy of all initial certification training shall be kept on file with the department training officer and TASER International. The Morgan County Sheriff Department shall keep all annual in-service training records.

**Considerations:** The M26 should only be used to stop a threat. This would include, but is not limited to, Threats to officer safety, Threats to others, and includes the threat of a suspect injuring himself. ***The M26 Shall never be used as a tool for coercion.*** The M26 that is fielded by the Morgan County Sheriff Department has a built in "Data Port" which enables the Department Instructor to download the last 585 uses of the M26 and it will show the mm/dd/yy and time of use. This will be done for each deployment in the field (non-training) and a copy of the record will be retained as evidence along with the spent air cartridge. *Any time the M26 is utilized, including visual presentation to a suspect, Laser illumination, sparking, contact stun and firing the air cartridge during a non-training situation, the officer responsible will forward a USE OF FORCE REPORT to the Department TASER Instructor to place in the usage file and to forward to TASER International.* Any puncture or skin irritations shall be photographed and retained for evidence as well.

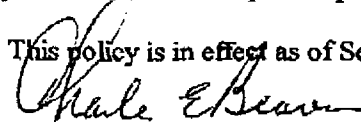
**Limitations for use of M26:** Do Not use the M26 in the following situations-

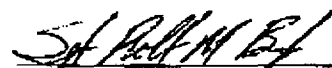
1. Any known or obviously pregnant female.
2. Any subject who is saturated with or in the presence of highly flammable or combustible materials and liquids.
3. Any subject who may receive a secondary injury resulting from a fall from its use, i.e....standing on a roof ledge.
4. The facial area of the head.

**Treatment:** Once the subject is in custody notify the dispatch center of the M26 Deployment and ask for Fire/EMS to respond to the scene and evaluate the suspect. In most instances the suspect will not require transport to a medical facility. Point out the puncture sites as necessary to Fire/EMS personnel. Only Emergency Room Staff may remove probes from sensitive tissue areas i.e. Face, Neck, Groin and Female Breast. Removal from other areas will be to the discretion of the on-scene supervisor.

**Blood Borne Pathogens:** Any time the probes have penetrated the skin of a suspect they should be considered as Infectious and treated as any other potentially hazardous "Sharps". *The probes, once removed, should be carefully returned to the air cartridge tip first, secured with tape and placed into a biohazard sharps container for evidence.*

This policy is in effect as of September 12, 2000.

  
Charles E Beaver, Sheriff

  
Sgt. Robert M Brown Jr.  
TASER Instructor