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# Oklahoma City police officers get Taser guns

► Weapon delivers shock that can immobilize without injury

**Associated Press**

OKLAHOMA CITY — The police department has purchased 100 Taser stun guns and begins training with them this week.

The weapon fires two insulated wires, which deliver a shock that can immobilize a person without causing serious injury.

Police Sgt. Blake Webster says stun guns can provide an alternative to the use of deadly force.

"There are going to be times

they are going to fail, but this is another option, another tool in the tool box," he said.

Last year, Oklahoma City officers used firearms in five separate shootings in which a person was killed.

Each shooting was cleared by Oklahoma County District Attorney Bob Macy.

But police say using the Air Tasers or bean bag shotguns are not in response to officer-involved shootings, including seven other nonfatal shootings last year.

Webster said those shootings may not have been cases in which less-lethal weapons would have been used.

The department started planning to buy less-lethal weapons

before last year's shootings. They have not had any fatal shootings involving officers this year, he said.

For several years, specialized police tactical teams have had shotgun shells loaded with bean bags and stun-gun-type pistols, but the department plans to make more of these weapons available on the streets each shift.

There will be four Tasers available to police in each division of the city.

Most officers on the streets expect the Tasers will make their jobs easier, said Sgt. Bill Patten, an Oklahoma City police officer for nine years.

"Any time we have a tool that could help us resolve a situation with less force, it is going to help

us. The Tasers can help us diffuse a situation before it escalates to the use of lethal force," Patten said.

He said in any fight involving a police officer, the suspect has a chance to grab the officer's weapon.

The Taser would allow an officer to subdue a violent person from a distance, without a physical fight.

"I don't know any officer who wants to get involved in a possible lethal confrontation," Patten said.