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CONTACT: **Steve Tuttle**  
Director of Government Affairs  
TASER International, Inc.  
(480) 905-2006

### **Coroner in Philadelphia Clears TASER® International Rules Fatality Caused by Cocaine and Alcohol**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., March 11, 2002 - TASER® International, Inc. (Nasdaq: TASR and TASRW) a provider of advanced less-lethal weapons for use in the law enforcement, private security and personal defense markets, announced today that the death of a man armed with a knife that the Philadelphia Police Department attempted to subdue was caused by cocaine overdose and not the use of the ADVANCED TASER.

On February 12, 2002, Philadelphia Police responded to a domestic disturbance call at the home of Anthony Spencer, 35. When police arrived at the house, they found the 6-foot-tall and 280-pound man naked, intoxicated, high on cocaine and brandishing a 7-inch knife. When officers attempted to subdue Spencer, officers first deployed pepper spray without success and then the ADVANCED TASER. Spencer was apprehended, handcuffed and placed in a patrol wagon for the ride to the hospital. He was conscious during the time of the arrest and the drive to the hospital. He later died at Frankford Hospital's Frankford Division – 38 minutes after officers responded to the call.

Philadelphia City Health Department spokesman Jeff Moran said that tests indicated that Spencer died of cocaine overdose and the ADVANCED TASER's electrical output did not contribute to his death.

Three deaths have occurred since November of 2001 where suspects were subdued using the ADVANCED TASER and later died in custody. These cases have received significant media attention inquiring whether the TASER may have contributed to these fatalities. Two of the three cases have now absolved the ADVANCED TASER as the cause of death. The remaining Hollywood, FL fatality under investigation is still pending.

The first of these cases was closed on January 25<sup>th</sup> when Butler County Coroner Dr. Richard Burkhardt signed the death certificate of Marvin Hendrix, an Ohio man who died while in police custody, listing the cause of death as "cocaine abuse / accidental." During the investigation, investigators learned that Hendrix had swallowed a plastic bag containing an "eight-ball" of crack cocaine in efforts to conceal it from officers. The bag later burst, releasing toxic levels of cocaine.

The other case is in Hollywood, FL. "Unfortunately, there's a tendency for people to rush to conclusions in these cases," said TASER International CEO Rick Smith. "Every year around 12,000 people die as a result of drug overdoses in the U.S. Since one of the early indicators of toxic drug levels is violent psychosis and paranoia, many of these people are confronted by police officers called to protect other citizens during these violent outbursts. It is not surprising, that some of these people will be hit with the TASER as police seek to subdue them before they can hurt themselves, or others. If someone is in the throes of a drug overdose, the application of the TASER will not stop or exacerbate the ongoing chemical reactions that will lead to the eventual death of the subject."

“There have been many of these cases since the TASER was first introduced in 1974 – we know of at least 20,” Smith continued, “However, once medical reviews are completed, the TASER has never been linked as a definitive cause of death in any of these cases. We are confident that the medical examinations in Hollywood will yield similar results to the recent incidents in Hamilton and Philadelphia, and that the TASER will be cleared from any implication in this death.”

In a recent medical review conducted by Dr. Robert Stratbucker, Medical Director for TASER International and internationally respected expert in the field of electrical safety, Dr. Stratbucker noted, “I am unaware of any pathophysiological mechanism whereby the application of a TASER-like electrical stimulus anywhere on the body surface could be the cause of that person’s death some 45 minutes later. The only plausible cause of death from electrical injury not leaving tell-tale skin lesions -- clearly not present in any of the cited cases -- is ventricular fibrillation, a fatal disturbance of heart rhythm which ensues immediately upon shocking the heart with greater-than-threshold, non-Taser-like electric current pulses. Specifically, if the TASER output were to cause cardiac arrest, it would be immediate.”

“I believe that in the Ohio case at issue (referring to an in-custody death in Hamilton OH), the recorded time lag of minutes (rather than a few seconds) between application of the TASER and pulseless collapse of the subject proves beyond reasonable doubt that the TASER was not the cause of death,” Stratbucker concluded.

Preliminary reports all indicate that the deaths in the remaining two open cases occurred at least minutes after the TASER application. “We continue to stand behind the safety of our products,” said Smith, “While we certainly regret the loss of life in these cases, we need to give the authorities time to conduct their investigations so that medical conclusions can be drawn. For example, in the Philadelphia incident, the subject was naked in weather 10 degrees below freezing, exhibiting bizarre behavior, and cocaine was found in the original blood samples. Yet, there is a rush for people to assign blame to the TASER, even though the subject did not expire until well after the TASER application – clear evidence that the TASER could not have played a causal role in the fatality.”

“As the use of the TASER becomes more widespread, we can anticipate it will be used to subdue even more individuals who are in the course of a toxic, fatal overdose. Based on decades of experience and over 5,000 human volunteers, we are confident the results will continue to exonerate this effective, safe technology. In order to help people learn more about this complex topic, we have posted additional information on our website at [www.TASER.com](http://www.TASER.com).” Smith concluded.

### **About TASER International, Inc.**

TASER International, Inc. provides advanced less-lethal weapons for use in the law enforcement, airlines, private security, and personal defense markets. Its flagship ADVANCED TASER<sup>®</sup> product uses proprietary technology to incapacitate dangerous, combative, or high-risk subjects that may be impervious to other less-lethal means. This technology reduces injury rates to suspects and officers, thereby lowering liability risk and improving officer safety. The ADVANCED TASER is currently in testing or deployment at over 1100 law enforcement and correctional agencies in the U.S. and Canada.

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