

SECTION V

CHAPTER 9 - Care and Use of Property and Equipment

ARTICLE XIV - X26 Taser

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This policy is intended to provide general guidelines for the use of the X26 Taser. The X26 Taser will be used as an additional police tool and is not intended to replace firearms or other self-defense techniques. The X26 Taser may reduce the need for other types of physical force by the member.

2.0 POLICY

2.1 It is the policy of this Department that the minimum amount of force necessary to control an individual be used. In keeping with this policy the use of an X26 Taser as part of the use of force continuum is authorized.

2.2 Only members who have attended a Department approved training program may carry the X26 Taser while on duty.

2.3 To be certified in the use of the X26 Taser, it is required that members take at least a "hit/second hit/strike" during the training.

2.4 Re-certification for Members shall occur annually. Re-certification for instructors shall occur every two years.

2.5 Only brand name products approved and purchased by the Department may be carried.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Use of the X26 Taser is authorized for State Police personnel under the following guidelines:

(1) The X26 Taser has been authorized by the Department and has been inspected for proper functioning.

(2) The member must attend a Department approved training program on the use of the X26 Taser prior to the use while on duty.

(3) The X26 Taser will only be utilized as necessary and as part of the use of force continuum.

- (A) Member presence
- (B) Verbal direction
- (C) Empty hand (escorts)
- (D) O.C. aerosol agent and X26 Taser
- (E) Intermediate force (night stick)
- (F) Deadly force

(4) The use of the X26 Taser may be used at the member's discretion under any of the following circumstances:

- (A) When necessary to defend the member or others.
- (B) To effect an arrest.
- (C) To prevent the commission of a criminal offense.
- (D) When lower levels of force are deemed ineffective.

3.2 Use and Deployment Procedures

(1) Only properly functioning and charged X26 Tasers shall be carried for use. The X26 Taser will be worn on the duty belt in a cross draw fashion on the opposite side of the duty belt that the Department service weapon is carried.

(2) Each discharge, including accidental discharges, of the X26 Taser shall be investigated and documented utilizing the Vermont State Police Use of Force report.

(3) The X26 Taser is programmed to give a 5-second "electrical current." The operator can shorten or extend this time. The probes should not be touched during this time period, as you would also receive the same "electrical current." In addition, members should avoid stepping on or tripping over the wires.

(4) NEVER INTENTIONALLY aim the X26 Taser at the eyes or the face. It is laser sighted – the top probe will follow the front and rear sights and the laser sight; the bottom probe will travel at an 8-degree downward angle below the aim point. The rule of thumb for the bottom probe (due to the 8-degree drop) is that it drops 1 foot for every seven feet of travel. The X26 Taser has a range of 21 feet. Optimum distance for deployment is 7-15 feet.

(5) Keep hands away from the front of the unit at all times unless the safety slide is forward and the X26 Taser is deactivated. ** Handle the X26 Taser like you would a loaded handgun.

(6) Always replace air cartridges by their expiration date and use for training only.

(7) Use caution when firing the X26 Taser near flammable liquids or fumes. The X26 Taser can ignite gasoline or other flammables. Do not deploy in highly flammable environments such as meth labs, etc. Some self-defense sprays to include the ones currently carried by the Vermont State Police have an alcohol based propellant that “may” present a fire hazard. As with all hazard environments, Troopers should use their tactical discretion when deploying the Taser.

(8) Prior to the use of the X26 Taser if practical, Troopers should “verbally notify those on the scene” by saying “Taser/Taser/Taser” indicating the use of the X26 Taser is imminent to prevent unintentional shootings.

(9) The Taser can function in stun mode after the probes have been fired as a backup weapon. Drive weapon aggressively into nerve or motor points for best effectiveness: Drive Stun. If only the stun mode is used, the Taser becomes a pain compliance technique with limited threat reduction. The Taser will always fire a live cartridge when activated if an unfired cartridge is present. To use the drive stun without firing probes, remove live cartridge.

3.3 Tactical Considerations and Limitations - **Do not use the taser in any of the following situations:**

(1) The Taser is not a substitute for lethal force. When confronting an armed subject, the deployment of the Taser should always be used in conjunction with the ability to apply lethal force if necessary.

(2) Any known or obviously pregnant female.

(3) Any subject who is saturated with or in the presence of highly flammable or combustible materials and liquids.

(4) Avoid the facial area of the head, neck, groin and female breast, if possible.

(5) Any person that is shackled and handcuffed, unless there is an immediate threat to the member, suspect or bystander.

(6) Should not be used as a tool of coercion or punishment.

(7) Excessive use of the X26 Taser in subduing a subject is forbidden.

3.4 Post Use Procedures

(1) Subject

(A) After securing the subject in handcuffs, the Taser member will remove the probes using the prescribed methods. However, if the probes are imbedded in soft tissue such as the neck, face, and groin, the officer shall require the subject to be treated at a

hospital by medical personnel. Removal from other areas will be at the discretion of the deploying member. NOTE: The probes are #8 straightened fish hooks that only penetrate a maximum of ¼ inch.

(B) The member shall wear latex gloves for probe removal.

(C) If appropriate, puncture sites shall be treated with an antibiotic and adhesive bandages as soon as available.

(D) Only emergency room staff may remove probes that imbed in soft tissue areas such as the neck, face, eyes, or groin.

(E) Members should be alert for any injury that may or may not have been brought about by police use of force, which left untreated could become a possible serious problem for both the injured suspect and the department.

(F) Members will have a competent and licensed physician at a hospital emergency room examine all suspects who fall under either of the following categories:

(a) The suspect has an obvious injury, which, in the opinion of the deploying member requires treatment.

(b) The suspect requests medical treatment for an injury, whether obvious or not.

(G) Members who utilize the X26 Taser during an arrest, must submit a Use of Force Report to the Office of Professional Development - Training, via their chain of command within 72 hours, giving the details of the incident and commenting on the effectiveness of the X26 Taser.

(H) Photographs of the Taser probe entry sites shall be taken prior to releasing the subject from custody.

Effective August 1, 2007

The Vermont State Police Manual is not intended to apply in any criminal or civil proceeding outside of internal Department proceedings. No policy included in this publication should be construed as creating a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.

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