

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

NO.400.5



Electronic Control Device (Taser) Guidelines

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1. PURPOSE:

To provide members of the Worcester Police Department with Guidelines in the use of the Taser system.

2. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Worcester Police Department that the use of the Electronic Control Device¹ (E.C.D.) on a person be in compliance with this protocol and the Worcester Police Department's Use of Force Policy (# 400).

3. PROCEDURES:

1. The authorized E.C.D. of the Worcester Police shall be the **Taser X26P**, color yellow, manufactured by Taser International.
2. Prior to being authorized to carry the E.C.D., all officers assigned to carry the E.C.D. will receive proper instruction and training about E.C.D.'s and their application as how it relates to the M.P.T.C.² force model. This training will include familiarization with E.C.D. Taser International's product warning for law enforcement.
3. Only sworn members of the department that have been trained and certified in the E.C.D. are authorized to deploy and discharge said devices.
4. The E.C.D. shall be carried fully armed with the safety on in preparation for immediate use when authorized.
5. The E.C.D. shall be stored as it is carried with cartridges remaining in the E.C.D in its approved holster. All E.C.D's will be stored within the Worcester Police Headquarters when not in use. Storage will be within authorized secured areas not accessible to the general public to include the secured SWAT locker room(s) and the secured police employee's locker rooms situated on the second floor of HQ.

¹ Electronic Control Device ("E.C.D."): Device designed to disrupt a subject's central nervous system by means of deploying battery powered electrical energy sufficient to cause uncontrolled muscle contractions and override and individual's voluntary motor response.

² Municipal Police Training Committee: The governing State agency that sets forth guidelines and procedures for the municipalities to follow training.

6. Loading and unloading will be consistent with training. The E.C.D should be pointed in an upward safe direction this will also apply during “tactical reload” situations.
7. Basis for Deployment. There are 2 levels where the E.C.D. are authorized:
 - a. E.C.D. used in drive stun mode³ or sparks display⁴ is justified as a compliance technique in response to a perceived or actual active resistance by the subject (Level Three - see policy # 400, Use of Force).
 - b. E.C.D. used in probe deployment mode⁵ is justified as a defensive tactic in response to a perceived or actual assaultive bodily harm behavior of the subject (Level Four - see policy # 400, Use of Force).
8. Only one officer should activate an E.C.D. against a person at a time.
9. An E.C.D. may be used to control an aggressive animal that is threatening the safety of a person.
10. A verbal warning should be given if possible prior to deployment.
11. The preferred target for the E.C.D. is below center mass (subject's torso) or legs. Officers should avoid sensitive tissue (neck, head and genitalia).
12. All deployments should be aimed shots utilizing the E.C.D.'s laser aiming device.
13. If the E.C.D. is ineffective in achieving the desired effect, officers should consider reloading and redeploying or using other department authorized force option(s).
14. Officers should begin control and restraint procedures as soon as it is safe to do so in order to minimize the total duration of exertion and stress experienced by the subject.

4. DEPLOYMENT/RESTRICTIONS:

1. Officers should avoid deploying the E.C.D. when there is a known presence of combustible vapors and liquids or other flammable substances.
2. Officers should avoid deploying the E.C.D. against a suspect in control of a motor vehicle in motion to include automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, A.T.V.'s, bicycles and motorized scooters unless exigent circumstances exist.
3. Officers should avoid deploying the E.C.D. where a suspect is in a position where a fall will likely cause substantial injury or death.

³ Drive Stun: Contact is made by pressing the front of the Taser (cartridge removed) into the body of a subject and activating the Taser. The drive stun does not incapacitate a subject but may assist in taking the subject into custody.

⁴ Sparks Display: A non-contact demonstration of the Taser’s ability to discharge electricity. This is conducted only when the cartridge has been removed from the weapon. The purpose of this display is to convince the subject to comply with the lawful order and avoid the Taser being deployed in the drive stun or probe mode.

⁵ Probe Deployment: When the Taser cartridge is fired and probes make direct contact with the subject.

4. Officers should avoid deploying the E.C.D. against pregnant persons unless exigent circumstances exist.
5. Officers should avoid deploying the E.C.D. against persons located in water.
6. Officers should avoid deploying the E.C.D. on persons who fall under the “susceptible populations” category (*i.e.*: children, elderly and infirm) unless exigent circumstances exist.

5. MEDICAL ATTENTION:

A subject that has been exposed to an E.C.D. probe deployment SHALL be taken to an emergency care facility for removal of the E.C.D. probes. Officers are not to remove the probes from the subject in the field.

Note* *Per an advisory from the Executive Office of Human Services Department of Public Health dated September 1, 2006 E.M.S will treat the subject as a patient with an impaled object.*

A subject that has been exposed to an E.C.D drive-stun deployment SHALL be taken to an emergency facility if the deployment site shows obvious injury or if subject claims injury.

6. REPORTING PROCEDURES:

The use of the E.C.D. (Taser) is a reportable Use of Force. See policy # 400, Use of Force (section 10D “Written Reporting”). E.C.D. reports of use should be forwarded in hard copy form or via email through an officer’s chain-of-command to the following:

- The Deputy Chief of Operations,
- Bureau of Professional Standards,
- Training Division

Additionally, electronic control device instructors are required to review usage data stored in each individual Taser and submit the usage data in a bi-annually report to the Executive Office of Public Safety.

NOTE: remember to record assigned Taser number, A.F.I.D. number found on cartridge, and number of cycles. Deployed cartridge, and when possible probes should be collected/bagged as evidence and turned in as evidence. If probes have entered a sensitive soft tissue area (above the neck or genital area C.S.U should be notified for photographs). If deploying officer believes that the deployment fails, within approved targeted areas photographs are not necessary.

Per:



Gary J. Gemme
Chief of Police

Updated from April 13, 2007 (*original issuance*):

- *Section 3: #1 updated to TaserX26P;
5 & #6 updated concerning storage and loading;
#11 “below center mass”.
- *Section 4: #6 “susceptible populations” update.
- *Section 5: probe removal and medical attention update.
- *Section 6: Photographing update.

Updated August 4, 2015 to specific define Reporting Procedures section 6.