

**VALLEJO POLICE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF CHIEF OF POLICE**

**SPECIAL ORDER 2003-3 (REVISED)**

Subject: Taser Use and Deployment Policy

To: All Personnel

From: Robert W. Nichelini  
Chief of Police

Date: 30 Nov 04

The subject order has been revised to update terminology, clarify emergency medical response procedures and refine existing guidelines. This order shall remain in effect until a permanent general order incorporating the information is published.

**PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

To reduce and minimize altercation-related injuries to officers and suspects, the Department authorizes the use of selected less-lethal control devices. Such devices are provided in order to control non-compliant, potentially violent, and actively resistive suspects in order to prevent an escalation of the situation. The use of these devices will result in fewer altercation-related injuries to officers and suspects.

**TASER GUIDELINES**

Personnel who have completed the pertinent Department training program shall be authorized to use the Taser. The Taser may be considered comparable to control holds for continuum of force purposes.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Advanced Taser:** A conducted energy weapon that utilizes compressed nitrogen to shoot two probes up to 21 feet. The probes are connected to the weapon by high-voltage, insulated wires. When the probes make contact with the target, the Advanced Taser transmits an electrical pulse along the wires and into the body of the target. The Taser affects the sensory and motor nervous system causing electro-muscular disruption. The Advanced Taser is made of plastic and has an integral laser sight and low level illuminator.

**Air Cartridge:** A removable plastic cartridge containing two probes, wire, and compressed nitrogen charge, and up to 40 small AFID tags. (The AFID tags are small plastic disks that can be traced to the purchaser).

Probes: Small metal cylinders with a barbed point. The probes are used to transmit the electro-muscular disruption pulses into the target's body by insulated conductive wires.

Cartridge Deployment: Activation of the Taser with an unfired cartridge causing probes to come in contact with subject body allowing transmission of electro-muscular disruption (EMD) pulses

Drive Stun Backup: Activation of the Taser with or without a cartridge in place in which the Taser is driven into the suspect's body. The preferred areas of drive stun activation are pressure points and other targets specified in Taser User Certification.

## FIELD USE

Officers should attempt to gain compliance by verbal persuasion and commands prior to the use of the Taser.

The Taser may be deployed to incapacitate a subject who actively resists apprehension or detention, including pulling away, fleeing, or resisting control holds. **Under no circumstances shall the Taser be deployed when the subject no longer constitutes a threat, has complied with the officer's instructions or loses the ability to escape.** If practical, the officer should give a warning to other officers that he/she will be deploying or has deployed the Taser. Officers should, if practical, give a warning to the subject prior to firing the Taser. Every attempt should be made to target the suspect's body center of mass, avoiding the head, neck, or face.

The Taser generally should not be deployed against young juveniles -- giving due consideration for the subject's size, aggressiveness, potential for violence, and the gravity of the crime. **Unless they present an actual threat of violence,** the Taser shall not be deployed against obviously pregnant women, elderly or disabled persons. Although Taser deployment is safe for such individuals; the possibility of collateral injury from a post activation fall is substantially greater.

Under no circumstances shall a subject be "shocked" for longer than the automatic five-second Taser-controlled interval until his/her willingness to comply with the officer's instructions is determined. Subsequent Taser activations may be appropriate if the subject continues to pose a threat or continues escape attempts that cannot be safely controlled using verbal persuasion, control holds or physical prowess. However, officers are not expected to engage in hand-to-hand combat to avoid using the Taser – officer safety remains paramount. **Lengthy continuous applications of the Taser are prohibited, unless there is probable cause to believe that continuous application will prevent the use of less lethal or lethal force by the suspect or officers.**

Officers will carry the Taser in the Department approved holster for off-hand draw. No officer will carry the Taser in a manner that allows strong hand draw from the weapon side. Officers shall not simultaneously deploy a Taser and a firearm.

Prior to deploying the Taser, the officer must have reasonable suspicion that the subject is committing or has committed a crime (including an infraction) or is wanted for prior criminal activity. Note: If a subject who is personally known to the officer escapes custody and an immediate arrest is not required (i.e., to preserve evidence, prevent other criminal activity, identify other suspects, etc.) the Taser shall not be used and the complaint-warrant process shall be invoked.

## REPORTING USE

The officer shall notify an on duty supervisor as soon as practical following Taser deployment.

All intentional Taser discharges will be noted on the Arrest Report and documented in any related crime or offense report. The officer shall include the serial number of the Taser and the serial number of the cartridge deployed.

Officers deploying the Taser shall email an after-action report describing the circumstances to Lieutenants T. Liddicoet and L. Lee. The report shall include a download of the data port to confirm firing at or near the specified time and date of the described incident. The data port printout shall be maintained by the Management Support Division with the after-action report. Note: The Taser operates on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Perceived Taser deployment failures will be brought to the attention of Lieutenant Liddicoet for analysis.

## MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Persons struck with the Taser probes, injured by a probe, or injured in the course of apprehension or detention shall be treated by EMS as soon as practical. Suspects shall be medically cleared prior to being booked.

## REMOVAL OF PROBES

Officers may remove the probes from the clothing of an arrestee; however, only medical personnel shall remove probes that have pierced the skin.

The probes and cartridges will be treated as evidence and, whenever possible, photographs shall be taken of visible probe impact sites and any other injuries.