



***Delano Police Department
TASER Survey Results***

Disclaimer:

The following report is in no way intended to reflect empirical data regarding the deployment of Tasers within law enforcement. It is the intent of this report to provide answers to specific questions asked, to determine what might be considered “best practices” used by police departments within the State of California regarding Taser deployment.

At the end of this report, you will find an overall statement that puts into one paragraph, the findings of my inquiry. You will also find some possible considerations that some agencies may desire to explore regarding the use of Tasers within their Departments.

Background:

Sometime during January 2007, the Chief of Police for the Delano Police Department was approached by the Assistant City Manager for the City, asking if the Police Department had ever considered deploying Tasers. She had indicated that the Risk Management Authority (RMA) endorsed the use of Tasers if, the agency that was deploying them had a policy in effect regarding their use. She went on to say that the RMA’s stance was that the proper deployment of Tasers minimized the number of incidents where the officers had to utilize hand to hand contact with the subject, and as a result, reduced the number of worker’s compensation claims. Further, if the Chief of Police for Delano determined that Tasers were a viable use of a less lethal system, she may be able to assist in the purchase of so the purchase would drastically impact the Police Department’s General Fund. A request was subsequently forwarded to all California Chiefs of Police to obtain answers to certain questions regarding the Taser.

General Statement:

A large number of responses were received from many police agencies regarding Tasers. In fact, this Department received a video and some policies that were used at Council meetings to explain the Taser, deployment of the Taser, etc. The purpose of the survey was to determine what other agencies were doing, and hopefully provide this Department with some solid information

concerning Tasers. The following information only discusses the most answered response from the Departments who provided information.

Questions asked:

#1. What make and model Taser does your agency use?

Response:

Taser X-26. (Many agencies either have or are considering the purchasing of Taser-Cams for each of the units. The Taser-Cams are able to provide audio and video of each deployment for future use. Some agencies started with M26 Taser but have transferred to the X26. One large southern California agency is deploying 750 M26 Tasers, and according to the response provided, budgeting for approximately 7200 X26 over the next few years.

#2. Is your agency satisfied with their performance?

Response:

Agencies reported that they were very satisfied with the performance of the Taser. Many indicated that they believed the Taser was a very effective tool for law enforcement.

#3. If yes, what specifically are you satisfied with?

Response:

Allows officers to temporarily incapacitate a potentially violent suspect long enough to approach and handcuff, and, decreases the chances for injury to the officer(s) and suspect.

#4. If no, what specifically are you dissatisfied with?

Response:

Several agencies complained about the retention strap on the holster for the Taser, indicating that many have broken. Approximately 4 agencies reported some instances of ineffective dart penetration, perhaps due to loose or thick outerwear.

#5. Would you recommend the manufacturer to another police agency (based on your evaluation of the equipment)?

Response:

Yes. (Zero responses stating that they would not recommend the manufacturer).

#6. What was the cost per item, and is there a cost break for purchasing more than one item?

Response:

There was not one specific price that was paid, but based on all responses received, it would appear that about \$799.00 per Taser is an average, with about \$399.00 being an average price for the Taser-Cam. No agency reported receiving any discount for making bulk Taser (or Taser-Cam) purchases. Total average cost for one Taser with Taser-Cam (\$1198.00). No agency reported receiving a discount based on bulk purchases.

#7. What is the distance that the probes will travel, ie., 15 ft, 25 ft., etc.

Response:

Most departments reported that they are using a cartridge that deploys probes that travels up to 25 ft.

#8. Have officer injuries during arrests decreased or increased?

Response:

Most agencies reported that they have not tracked this information, however, many agencies responded stating that they believe officer injuries have decreased. One agency in particular wrote, "According to our City's risk management records, our officer injuries have greatly decreased since we began issuing Tasers to all sworn. Purchasing Tasers is cheaper than the cost of expenses related to an officer injury."

#9. Have lawsuits increased/decreased?

Response:

Many agencies reported that they have not yet experienced any lawsuits as a result of Taser use, however, some agencies reported that they have decreased. Further, only a few agencies were found to actually be tracking lawsuits relative to Taser deployment.

#10. Based on your agency review, did arrestee injuries decrease based on the use of the Taser during arrest/controlling the subject?

Response:

This answer is similar to question #9, in that some agencies have not tracked this information. However, a large number of agencies reported that they believed injuries have decreased, but did not have specific numbers regarding the decrease in arrestee injuries.

Conclusion (Summarized for easy reading):

Of the departments that responded to the survey, most agencies use and deploy the Taser X26. Agencies reported that they were very satisfied with the performance of the Tasers, however, some agencies reported that they had issues regarding restraining straps on the Taser holster breaking. Many agencies felt the Taser was a very effective tool for law enforcement. All would recommend the Taser to other agencies for consideration. The average price for the Taser is \$799.00 and \$399.00 for the Taser-Cam, with no agency reporting price reduction for bulk purchases. A final total cost average for the Taser and Taser-Cam is \$1198.00. The most popular cartridge being used for probe distance is 25 foot. Regarding officer injuries, there was an indication that officer injuries have decreased, however, many agencies are not tracking this information. In regards to the decrease or increase of lawsuits and arrestee injuries, many agencies do not track this information.

Considerations:

Based on my review of the information received from those Departments that responded to my request, I would like to offer the following three considerations:

First, for those agencies not tracking worker compensation injuries on their officers, they may want to consider doing so. The same holds true for arrestee injuries and lawsuits filed. It should be noted, that I am not sure what the implications tracking this information would be relative to discovery issues when dealing with use of force issues, or other reports or documents requested under discovery. This is perhaps best left up to the City Attorneys or others who provide legal guidance for law enforcement. For agencies who are CALEA accredited, this information is probably already being tracked as a part of the accreditation standards.

Next, reviewing the effectiveness of a deployed Taser, or any other piece of less/low lethal equipment on a regular basis, may be able to provide us a way to determine whether or not the equipment tracked, is really cost effective for continued deployment. Considerations can be based on costs associated with injuries, law suits, worker compensation claims, and cost associated with

purchase and repair of the specific item tracked, and balanced with the ability of the user to remain a further distances in an effort to gain control of a subject.

Finally, based on the responses that Taser holster retaining straps have been known to break easily, an inspection of the straps and perhaps notification to the manufacturer would be in order by all agencies using the item, whether they be the M26 or X26.