

# **COLUMBIA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **WRITTEN DIRECTIVE**

Number: PO 1.3.3 Effective: April 26, 2002

Date: February 25, 2004

Subject: Less than Lethal Weapons Taser M26 and X26

Reference:

Special Instructions:

Distribution: All Department Members

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### **PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for the use of the Advanced Taser (M26 or X26) by officers of this department.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Taser: The Taser (M26 or X26 model) is a less than lethal conductive energy weapon. The Tasers use electro-muscular disruption (EMD) technology, which affects the neuromuscular system, causing involuntary muscle contractions.

AFID (small plastic identification tag): Every time an air cartridge is fired, it disperses 20-30 identification tags called AFID's. These tags are printed with the serial number of the cartridge and can be used to determine who fired the cartridge.

### **CONDITIONS OF USE**

- A. The Taser is an intermediary tool, which falls on the department's force continuum at the same level as chemical agent. Its use is authorized only when used consistent with department authorized training and provision of this policy.
  - 1. Patrol officers currently trained in the use of the M26 or X26 Taser models are encouraged to carry the equipment while on duty.
  - 2. Tasers will be carried in a department-approved carrier. See Appendix A.

B. The Taser may be used:

1. Only as necessary to overcome physical or noncompliant resistance encountered in the discharge of an official duty where it is believed that the use of a less obtrusive method would either allow the individual to escape, or would reasonably expose the officer or others to physical injury.
2. Deployed by direct touch when physical confrontations are in progress.
3. As a warning device or intimidation tool to gain compliance with a legal verbal command, but only in circumstances justifying the authorized use of force.
4. To subdue animals deemed to be dangerous to public safety
5. During department regulated training.

C. The Taser may not be used:

1. On subjects exhibiting compliant or passive resistive behavior.
2. To threaten, harass, coerce, taunt, or abuse subjects.
3. In an unlawful manner.
4. In areas where there are concentrations of combustible or flammable materials, including known or suspected methamphetamine labs.
5. On subjects that have been sprayed with chemical agent.
6. On restrained individuals, unless the actions of the subject present a threat of death or bodily harm to themselves or any other person.
7. On women known to be pregnant, unless all other means short of lethal force have been used.
8. As an interrogative device, through either application or threat thereof.

**TASER DEPLOYMENT**

The Taser may be used to control a dangerous or violent subject when deadly force does not appear justified and/or necessary; or attempts to subdue a subject by conventional tactics have been, or will likely be, ineffective; or there is reasonable expectation that it will be unsafe for officers to approach within contact range of a subject.

A. Prior to using the Taser, if practical, announce the use of the Taser, indicating “Taser.”

- B. Officers should move in, control and restrain the subject as soon as possible.
- C. Request medical assistance to the scene to administer treatment.
- D. Do not remove probes that have penetrated sensitive areas, including the head, eye, neck, or groin. In such cases the subject shall be transported to a hospital for medical care and probe removal.
- E. The Taser cartridge and probes used shall be gathered and entered into evidence. The probes shall be handled in accordance with biohazard materials. Invert the probes and place them into the portals of the spent Taser cartridge. Secure the probes in place, using tape. When possible, collect several AFID's and include them with the cartridge in evidence.
- F. Once a subject has been Tased and the subject continues to indicate they are not going to cooperate, they shall be hobbled.
- G. When practical, take photos of where the probes contacted the subject.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

- A. Officers are required to fully document the Taser use and results in a narrative report in accordance with the department's use of force policy.
- B. Besides the ICR (if primary officer) or supplement (if assisting officer), each officer involved is to complete a force documentation form and submit this form to the supervisor or senior officer prior to the completion of the work shift in which the force was used unless circumstances make this task impractical. If this is impractical for the officer to complete, the supervisor or senior officer will complete as much of the form as can possibly be done.

## **TRAINING**

- A. All officers must be trained with the Taser prior to carrying it on duty.
- B. Officers must qualify once a year to continue carrying the Taser.

## **STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE**

- A. The Tasers will be stored in the designated "Taser cabinet" when not being used.
- B. The batteries on the Tasers will be changed after each deployment by the officer deploying the taser.

- C. The batteries on the Tasers will also be changed every two weeks by a Taser instructor or their designee to ensure they are fully charged.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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DATE

## APPENDIX A

### AUTHORIZED CARRIERS FOR THE TASER

#### Patrol officers:

- Thigh holster on reactionary side of officer's body.
- Fanny pack on the officer's waist area.

#### Investigators and plain-clothes officers:

- Thigh holster on reactionary side of officer's body.
- Fanny pack on the officer's waist area.