

LITTLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT

264 Cottage Street
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PROCEDURE #: 31

SUBJECT: TASER

CALEA STANDARDS:

PSS

NOTE: This written directive is for the internal governance of the Littleton Police Department, and as provided by RSA 516:36, is not intended and should not be interpreted to establish a higher standard of care in any civil or criminal action than would otherwise be applicable under existing law.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide law enforcement officers with guidelines for proper use of the TASER.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Littleton Police Department to use only the amount of force necessary and appropriate to affect the arrest by utilizing the state's force continuum.

DEFINITIONS

The TASER X26- the only authorized less-lethal energy weapon that uses propelled wires to conduct energy to a remote target controlling and effecting the central nervous system of the body.

Air cartridge- contains two probes attached to 15 or 21 feet of conductive wire propelled by inert, non-flammable nitrogen capsules.

AFID (Anti-Felon Identification)- on firing 20-30 ID particles are disbursed containing the serial number of the cartridge.

Dataport- allows for the downloading of the TASER use histories containing the time, date and energy disbursements.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. The TASER uses compressed nitrogen to project two probes a maximum of 21 feet. An electrical signal is then sent to the probes, via small wires, which disrupts the body's ability to communicate messages from the brain to the muscles and causes motor skill dysfunction.
2. It acts as a touch stun system when brought into immediate contact with a person's body

PRECAUTIONS

1. The decision to use the TASER is based on the same criteria an officer uses when selecting to deploy Oleoresin Capsicum spray or an expandable baton. The decision must be made dependant on the actions of the subject(s) or threat facing the officer(s) and the totality of the circumstances surrounding the incident. In any event, use of the TASER must be reasonable and necessary.
2. The TASER is not meant to be used in a deadly force situation. The TASER should not be used without a firearm backup in those situations where there is a substantial threat towards the officer(s) or other present.
3. The TASER provides a force option in which the officer does not have to get dangerously close to a threat before deploying the tool. Using the TASER may greatly reduce the need for other types of physical force by the officer(s), resulting in a reduction or serious or potential deadly injury to the offender, officer or others present.
4. Any use of an electronic incapacitation device contrary to the direction of this policy can result in the revocation of the officer's right to use such product and may subject the officer to disciplinary action.
5. For the purpose of this policy, the only Department-approved Electronic Incapacitation Device is the TASER X26

ISSUANCE OF THE TASER

1. Department personnel shall only carry and use the Department-issued TASER X26's. Members may only use Department-issued TASER cartridges, which include the standard 21 foot probe cartridge and the 21 foot probe XP (extra penetration) cartridge for use on heavy clothing.
2. The TASER will be worn on the officer's duty belt on the officer's support side.

3. Use histories will be run on each TASER by the Chief or his designee every time the TASER is deployed in the field. A printout of the Use of History shall be attached to the officer's Use of Force Report. .
- *4. Each TASER X26 will be inspected bi-annually. A use history will be run on each TASER during the bi-annual inspection.
5. Any TASER found to be not functional shall be taken out of service by the officer and turned into the shift supervisor. The shift Supervisor shall secure the TASER until such time as the department can issue a replacement.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

1. All officers who carry and/or use a TASER must first successfully complete a four-hour training program, to include written and practical tests. The TASER training will be conducted by a qualified TASER instructor.
2. A mandatory recertification program will be conducted annually.

USE OF THE TASER

1. The TASER is NOT a substitute for deadly force and should not be used in those situations. Deployment of the TASER should be backed up with the availability of lethal force. The TASER may be used in those situations where:
 - a. A subject is threatening himself, an officer or a third party with physical force and other means of controlling the subject are unreasonable or could cause injury to the officer(s), the subject, or a third party, OR
 - b. In cases where the Officer/Subject factors indicate the officer(s), offender(s) or a third party would be endangered by the use of physical force, OR
 - c. Other means of lesser or equal force have been ineffective and the threat still exists to the officer(s), subject(s) or a third party.
2. Center mass of the body should be the target area when firing a TASER, particularly the center mass of the back, as clothing tends to be tighter on

this part of the body. Officers encountering subjects wearing heavy or loose clothing on the upper body should consider targeting the legs. The head and face should not be targeted unless deadly force can be justified.

3. The TASER will never be used punitively or for the purpose of coercion. It is to be used as a way of averting a potentially injurious or dangerous situation. The TASER has an effective range of 13 feet with a 15-foot cartridge and 19 feet with a 21-foot cartridge. Ranges less than 3 feet away may not provide adequate disruption of the probes to allow the unit to function to its full effectiveness. Firing the TASER at a subject at a range closer than 3 feet is not dangerous to the subject, however.
4. Prior to deployment of a TASER, the officer deploying has the responsibility to visually and physically confirm that the tool selected is in fact the TASER and not a firearm. The deploying officer should also notify dispatch, if feasible, that a TASER is going to be deployed. The deploying person should also notify any on scene officer that s/he intends to deploy a TASER. Immediately prior to deploying the TASER the deploying officer should announce, if feasible, "TASER! TASER! TASER!" The announcement should be made only if it would not endanger any civilians, officers or suspects.
5. Once a subject has been struck with a TASER, the deploying officer will give the subject verbal commands to order the subject how to comply with the arrest. Once the subject is restrained or has complied, the TASER should be turned off. If the subject does not comply with the officers commands and continues to resist arrest, the deploying officer can deploy the TASER for subsequent cycles of operation.
6. Once the subject has been placed in handcuffs, s/he will not be TASED again, unless special circumstances arise where no other alternative is available.
7. The TASER has the ability to ignite flammable liquids. It will not be deployed at subjects who have come in contact with flammables or in environments where flammables are obviously present. Personnel should be especially aware of this when in known meth lab environments.
8. Proper consideration and care should be taken when deploying the TASER on subjects who are in an elevated position or involved in circumstances when a fall may cause substantial injury or death, such as on a pregnant woman. Officer must be prepared to justify such deployment.
9. All officers of the Littleton Police Department who carry and/or use a TASER must comply with the Littleton Police Department Use of Force standard operating procedures.

DUTIES AFTER DEPLOYMENT

1. Immediate action should be taken to apprehend any suspects, to care for the injured and to protect the scene.
2. A TASER will not be left unattended, except in exigent circumstances, as when an officer is forced to act alone in taking custody of an immediate threat.
3. Removal of the probes may be done by officer at the discretion of the on-scene supervisor. Officer will provide first aid following removal of the probes by applying iodine or alcohol wipes and band-aids to the probe sites as needed. Officers should inspect the probes after removal, to ensure that the entire probe and the probe barb have been removed. In the event a probe or probe barb has broken off and is still embedded in a subject's skin, the subject should be provided appropriate medical attention to facilitate the removal of the object. If the subject requests medical services they will be provided.
4. Photographs will be taken of the probe impact sites and any other related injuries.
5. Probes removed from the skin will be treated as biohazard sharps. They should be placed point-down into the expended cartridge bores and secured by removed rubber gloves in a manner so that the cartridge is sealed inside. The cartridge will then be properly placed into evidence. Expelled cartridges will be secured as evidence for a period of 24 months.
6. Involved personnel will attempt to locate and identify any witnesses to the incident and obtain all statements when possible. If possible three or four AFID tags will be collected from the scene as evidence and placed with the expelled cartridge.
7. Following the deployment of a TASER, the officer(s) involved shall immediately notify a supervisor.
8. In all instances of the use of force, following the deployment of a TASER, each officer involved in the incident shall report the facts and circumstances in a relevant arrest or incident report. Further, each officer shall be required to file a "Use of Force" report form.

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