

**GORHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
Use of Taser**

**Effective: March 1, 2016
Review: September 8, 2023**

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish uniform procedures within the Gorham Police Department for the use of Taser (Axon Taser), referred to as a Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW).

B. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility of all personnel of the Gorham Police Department is to become familiar with the procedures listed below and to comply with the contents of this policy.

C. DEFINITION

The Taser is a laser sighted electronic device that utilizes fifty thousand (50,000) volts of electricity at one half of one ampere (amp). The Taser delivers the energy from either a cartridge containing two barbed projectiles attached to wires with an effective range of up to thirty feet (30), or in a "drive stun" mode that effectively overrides a person's motor and sensory nervous system.

The Taser is intended to provide officers with a less than lethal force option to help them overcome a subject's combative intent, physical resistance and/or assaultive, aggressive behavior.

D. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

1. No officer shall carry the Taser until he/she has successfully completed the required training course consisting of a minimum of 4 (Four) hours of instruction conducted by a certified Taser instructor.

2. Each year officers shall be recertified in a 4 (Four) hour recertification course conducted by a certified Taser instructor.

3. User exposure is recommended, but not required. Benefits of exposure include:

- Understanding the effects of the weapon.
- Confidence that touching an exposed subject will not shock the officer(s).
- Courtroom credibility.

E. AUTHORIZED ISSUE

1. The authorized intermediate weapon of the Gorham Police Department is the Taser X2.

2. Primary and secondary officers trained and certified in the use of Taser, should carry the Taser during their assigned shifts.

F. MAINTENANCE

Each Officer in possession of a Taser shall be responsible for the proper storage and maintenance of the device.

1. The Taser and its cartridges shall be carried and stored in the issued holster.
2. Prior to the start of any shift, a "spark test" shall be conducted to ensure adequate battery charge and operational condition, by pressing the arch switch button.

The battery power needs to be checked for the percentage of power on the display screen before each shift. In the event that the battery power percentage is at 20%, or below, the Taser battery shall be removed, and replaced. Otherwise, the Taser should be removed from the officer's holster, and taken out of battery.

3. It is each officer's responsibility to examine the Taser and air cartridges prior to each shift. Expired or damaged cartridges shall be replaced.
4. Each quarter, the data in each Taser unit shall be downloaded by a training officer and records of such data maintained to protect officers from allegations of abuse and to ensure Taser software is upgraded on a regular basis.

G. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

1. Officers shall use due care when deploying the Taser in situations in which the subject could sustain serious bodily injury such as falling from an elevated position, near traffic, or if the subject is running, or in a moving vehicle.
2. The Taser shall only be used for a defensive purpose and/or to overcome hostile resistance.
3. Prior to deploying the Taser, the officer shall verbalize "Taser" to alert other officers (if applicable), of impending use. This is to insure other officers do not mistake the Taser for lethal force.

4. The Taser has the ability to ignite flammable liquids. The Taser should not be deployed if the subject has been exposed to flammable liquids, is in an environment where flammable liquids are present, or the subject has been exposed to any chemical agents used to control resistive, or combative behaviors where the agent could be flammable.
5. No officer shall occupy both hands with the Taser and any other weapon simultaneously.
6. The Taser does not replace firearms and should not be used in situations that warrant lethal force measures.
7. Issued air cartridges should not be carried in pockets. Accidental discharges can result from static electricity.
8. The Taser shall only be carried on the side opposite the officer's firearm.
9. The Taser, and Taser light, should not be intentionally directed towards the eyes.

H. DEPLOYMENT

1. The Taser may be utilized at any point within the Force Continuum.
2. The officer should be sufficiently prepared to follow up immediately in the event one or both probes miss, or the Taser malfunctions. The proper method of handling such a situation shall include:
 - a) drive stun to an approved area opposite the probe in contact with the body
 - b) holstering the Taser, and implementation of another weapon of appropriate force, or method of intervention
3. The Taser shall run through the full five-second cycle unless the officer(s) or person's safety is a concern. The officer may administer additional five-second cycles until control has been established.
4. Any discharges shall be reported immediately to the Chief of Police or Chief Firearms Instructor.
5. When an officer discharges a Taser for other than a training purpose, whether accidental or justified, they will immediately report to the Chief of Police or Primary Firearms Instructor, including a written report of all the facts and circumstances surrounding such discharge within twenty-four (24) hours, and with a completed use of force report form.

I. OFFICER SAFETY

1. If the officer loses his/her Taser to an assailant he/she should immediately create as much distance as the environment allows and be sufficiently prepared to follow-up with appropriate use of force measures.

2. Because the Taser can incapacitate an officer, referred to as neuromuscular incapacitation, rendering them unable to defend themselves, if an officer loses control of his/her Taser, or, if the assailant directs the Taser towards the officer, or threatens to use the Taser against the officer, lethal force measures shall apply.

3. If a person attempts to gain control of an officer's Taser, the officer shall utilize weapon retention techniques as trained.

J. POST EXPOSURE

Immediately following a Taser discharge, and the person has been controlled, the officer shall:

1. Break the connecting wires and remove the probes by securing the surrounding skin with the weak hand, quickly pulling the probes straight to the rear with the strong hand.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS APPLY AND THE USE OF LATEX GLOVES IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

2. The discharging officer shall monitor the subject's condition and insure medical treatment is available, if requested.
3. Secure the probes in the expended air cartridge, and treat as bio hazardous materials.
4. Photograph probe impact areas and any injuries incurred.
5. Collect the blast doors and a sample of AFIDS (Anti Felon Identification Dots) to be marked and submitted as evidence with the spent cartridge(s).
6. Include the Taser and air cartridge serial numbers when documenting any incidents that involve a deployment.

PER ORDER OF:

Adam Marsh
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Marsh', written over the printed name and title.

Distribution:

- Master File
- All Sworn Personnel
- Town Manager