

Redmond Police Department Operations Manual

Subject: ***Use of Taser***

Approved: ***Dave Tarbet
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Accreditation Reference:

I. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to provide police officers with guidelines on the use of department approved and issued taser stun device.

II. POLICY

- A. The Redmond Police Department recognizes the value of having several options available for officers to use various levels of force in safe and efficient means. The taser is a tool that is designed to assist officers in avoiding physical combat or to overcome a resistive subject. The taser is intended to assist officers in gaining temporary control over subjects so they can be restrained while reducing the risk of injury to the officer, bystanders, or themselves.
- B. Tasers should be used under the response to resistance/aggression guidelines as set forth in the Response to Resistance/Aggression policy 5.01.
- C. The taser is a dual use tool that can be used in "Air" or "Drive Stun" modes. In both, a pulse is sent to the central nervous system of the subject that causes the subject to lose neuromuscular control and the ability to perform coordinated action. The taser has no long term affects and as soon as the tool is turned off the muscular disruption stops. In air mode the unit is a hand held device that projects two probes that are connected to thin insulated cables. Upon the probes connecting to a person, an electrical signal is transmitted throughout the region where the probes connected. The taser is placed at physical control in the Redmond Police Departments Force Continuum when used in the air mode. When the unit is in drive stun mode, the unit itself is touched to a subject's body and used as a pain compliance tool and is at the level of physical control.
- D. Refer to Police 5.01 section IV E - Levels of Force for the response to resistance/aggression applications.

III. DEFINITIONS

Air Cartridge: A replaceable cartridge for the taser which uses compressed nitrogen

to fire two barbed probes on thin connecting wires sending high voltage/low current signal into a subject.

Electronic Control Device: A less lethal weapon that stuns a subject with a high voltage, very low current, short duration shock that may incapacitate the subject.

Taser M26/X26: A less lethal, conducted energy weapon that uses propelled wires and probes to conduct energy to a remote target, thereby controlling and overriding the central nervous system of the body.

Probes: Probes are small projectiles launched from the taser using compressed and inert nitrogen capsules (1800 psi).

Aphids: Confetti like pieces of paper that are expelled from the cartridge when fired. Each aphid contains an alpha-numeric identifier unique to the cartridge used.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Type of TASER

The Redmond Police Department will only use Taser International brand tasers. The model currently available to officers is the Taser X26.

The taser is capable of firing probes at a maximum distance of 21 feet (cartridge with gray blast door) or 25 feet (cartridge with green blast door) depending on the cartridge inserted in the taser. The taser utilizes a Neuro Muscular Incapacitation system (NMI). The NMI system affects the sensory and motor nervous system and causes the muscles to contract.

The taser operates at 50,000 volts, 26 watts, and 0.162 amps. It is not the volts which are dangerous but the amps. The taser has been tested and tests conclude that it has no effect on heart rhythms. Testing has also been conducted on human volunteers with no injury. There may be minor skin irritation similar to sunburn present at the probe contact sites.

B. Types of Deployment

Laser Only: The thumb safety is moved from the off position to the on position activating the laser sight, which is then placed on the suspect.

Spark Demo: The cartridge is removed from the end of the Taser and the Taser is then cycled. An electrical spark arcs across the front of the contacts.

Drive Stun: The Taser (with or without a cartridge affixed) is placed against a suspect and then cycle. A drive stun can also be conducted as a follow up to a probe deployment.

Probe Deployment: The Taser is cycled with the cartridge in place deploying

both probes. The probes are connected to the Taser device by insulated wire.

C. Training

Tasers will only be deployed and operated by Redmond Police Personnel who have successfully completed the department approved training program, per the Survival Skills Coordinator. The certification class will require annual in service training to remain certified. All training will be conducted by a certified taser instructor.

Tasers should be considered for use to gain compliance from actively resisting subjects or those who demonstrate they intend to physically resist. This would include, but not limited to, threats to officer safety, threats to others, and includes the threat of a subject injuring themselves.

The primary target area for taser probes on the front of a person is from the sternum down, excluding the groin area. The primary target area for taser probes on the back of a person is from the shoulders down. Maximum effectiveness will only be achieved when the probes involve two large muscle groups.

1. Air Taser Mode: Stomach, back, legs, buttocks, and arms.
2. Drive Stun Mode: Chest, back, legs, buttocks, arms, neck, and groin.
3. Non Target Areas: Head or groin (except in drive stun mode).

Tasers should not be used in the following situations (unless there are compelling reasons to do so which can be clearly articulated):

1. Any known pregnant female;
2. Any subject who is saturated with or in the presence of a highly flammable or combustible substance;
3. Any subject who may receive a secondary injury from a severe fall from its use (i.e. standing on the roof ledge of a building);
4. Punitively for purposes of coercion, or in an unjustified manner;
5. To escort or jab individuals;
6. On subjects operating a motor vehicle;
7. On subjects holding a firearm;
8. On subjects at extremes of age or physically disabled.

9. To prod, escort or to arouse unconscious, impaired or intoxicated individuals.

C. Deployment

The taser is one of the options available to officers. The taser, like the baton, OC spray, or empty hand techniques, may not be effective in every situation. Officers must assess the effectiveness of each application and determine whether further applications are warranted or a different tactic should be employed.

The taser is to be carried only in the department issue holster. The holster will be placed on the duty belt of the officer and will be on the opposite side as the firearm.

Tasers will be handled in the same manner as a firearm and will be secured prior to entering any detention facility unless authorized otherwise by that facility. The taser will not be drawn or displayed unless under the following circumstances;

1. Function checking the weapon:
2. During those incidents which the officer believes that it may be necessary to use the TASER:
3. Or during training exercises.

Officers assigned the taser should monitor the radio for calls where the taser could be useful. The taser operator should formulate a plan with other on scene officers which includes lethal cover officer and a two person arrest team when practical.

When a subject demonstrates they intend to physically resist, it is preferable to use the taser prior to attempting physical control holds. Use of the taser is intended to make it less likely for suspects to physically resist.

Officers deploying the taser should give an announcement to the subject when it is to be used when practical. Officers should provide the individual with a reasonable opportunity to voluntarily comply. Officers also should announce that a taser is being deployed to other officers on scene to reduce the chance for sympathetic fire.

When using the taser the officer will only aim for acceptable target areas. Once the probes are attached to the subject the officer should prepare to cycle the taser as many times as needed until the subject is controlled or no longer combative. If the first set of probes is ineffective the officer can reload and deploy another set of probes if needed.

There is no minimum distance from which the taser can be fired with any increase in safety concerns to the subject. However, if the taser is deployed

inside a five foot area, the spread of the probes will be very small and the effectiveness of the unit will be diminished. The maximum range of the taser is due to the cables attached to the probes.

The taser can be used in a drive stun mode. This is where the probe cartridge is removed from the taser and it is placed directly onto the subject. This use should be restricted to pressure points and other safe areas and only to gain compliance from the subject.

A taser should not be used in air mode on an individual who is handcuffed or otherwise restrained, unless the suspect's behavior is overtly combative, assaultive or actively resistant and cannot be reasonably dealt with in a less intrusive manner. The officer should give the subject a verbal warning unless it is not practical under the circumstances.

Taser instructors will download data from the taser as needed. The TASER will hold information on 1500 discharges. The downloaded data will be kept in the appropriate records keeping files.

D. After Care

Once subject is taken into custody and is no longer combative, the probes are to be removed. When the probes are stuck in the skin of the subject they can be removed by the taser operator. The officer will stabilize the muscle area around the probe and pull the probe straight out. Where the probes come in contact with the human skin they can cause small cuts and bruising. When the probes are damaged during the incident or are stuck in a sensitive part of the body the probes are to be removed by trained medical personnel who arrive on scene or at a medical facility. Removed probes should be treated as all other sharps and bio hazardous materials per department policy.

The officer should also contact the on duty supervisor and advise them that taser has been deployed. Medical units can be dispatched to the scene to evaluate the subject or the subject can be transported by the officer to a medical facility to be checked out. In most cases transport to a medical facility will not be required.

Any time a taser is air deployed or used in drive stun mode, photographs of the locations where the device was applied will be taken and entered into evidence. Consent should be obtained before photographing personally sensitive areas. If a person adamantly opposes photographs of a sensitive area (groin or breast), document the refusal in the police report.

Officers will advise jail staff of the use of taser if the subject is lodged in their facility.

E. Documentation

Officers will follow response to resistance/aggression documentation requirements set forth in policy 5.01 section VII for all taser deployments.

F. Care and Maintenance

It is the individual officer's responsibility to ensure the issued taser is in proper working condition. Any deficiencies found which can be fixed or replaced by the officer will be completed before carrying the taser on duty. Any deficiencies which cannot be fixed or replaced by the officer will be reported to the department range master for needed repairs or replacements.

Officers will conduct a spark check on a weekly basis to ensure the taser will function properly and that the batteries are charged. A spark check is an equipment check conducted outside of public view to ensure the taser is operable. It is conducted by removing the cartridge, test firing the weapon and observing the electric arc. The spark check does not require a completion of a response to resistance/aggression report.

Officers must check the weapon for cleanliness and damage. Batteries and cartridges will be replaced when needed by the taser instructors. The battery display will be checked at the beginning of each shift. A reading of 20% or less will require the DPM/battery pack to be changed. The DPM/battery pack will not be removed from the taser except when the reading is 20% or less or to conduct a data download.

The taser is not authorized for off duty use.