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## Conducted Energy Device

### 304.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the issuance and use of TASER devices.

### 304.2 POLICY

The TASER® device is intended to control a violent or potentially violent individual while minimizing the risk of serious injury. The appropriate use of such a device should result in fewer serious injuries to deputies and suspects.

### 304.3 ISSUANCE AND CARRYING TASER DEVICES

Only members who have successfully completed Sheriff's Office-approved training may be issued and carry the TASER device.

TASER devices are issued for use during a member's current assignment. Those leaving a particular assignment may be required to return the device to the Sheriff's Office's inventory.

Deputies shall only use the TASER device and cartridges that have been issued by the Sheriff's Office. Uniformed deputies who have been issued the TASER device shall wear the device in an approved holster on their person. Non-uniformed deputies may secure the TASER device in the driver's compartment of their vehicle.

Members carrying the TASER device should perform a spark test on the unit prior to every shift.

When carried while in uniform, deputies shall carry the TASER device in a weak-side holster on the side opposite the duty weapon.

- (a) All TASER devices shall be clearly and distinctly marked to differentiate them from the duty weapon and any other device.
- (b) Whenever practicable, deputies should carry two or more cartridges on their person when carrying the TASER device.
- (c) Deputies shall be responsible for ensuring that their issued TASER device is properly maintained and in good working order.
- (d) Deputies should not hold both a firearm and the TASER device at the same time.

### 304.4 VERBAL AND VISUAL WARNINGS

A verbal warning of the intended use of the TASER device should precede its application unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of deputies or when it is not practicable due to articulable circumstances. The purpose of the warning is to:

- (a) Provide the individual with a reasonable opportunity to voluntarily comply.
- (b) Provide other deputies and individuals with a warning that the TASER device may be deployed.

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If, after a verbal warning, an individual is unwilling to voluntarily comply with a deputy's lawful orders and it appears both reasonable and feasible under the circumstances, the deputy may, but is not required to, display the laser in a further attempt to gain compliance prior to the application of the TASER device. The aiming laser should never be intentionally directed into the eyes of another as it may permanently impair his/her vision.

The fact that a verbal or other warning was given or the reasons it was not given shall be documented by the deputy deploying the TASER device in the related report.

### **304.5 USE OF THE TASER DEVICE**

The TASER device has limitations and restrictions requiring consideration before its use. The TASER device should only be used when its operator can safely approach the subject within the operational range of the device. Although the TASER device is generally effective in controlling most individuals, deputies should be aware that the device may not achieve the intended results and be prepared with other options.

#### **304.5.1 APPLICATION OF THE TASER DEVICE**

The TASER device may be used in any of the following circumstances when the circumstances perceived by the deputy at the time indicate that such application is reasonably necessary to control a person:

- (a) The subject is violent or is physically resisting.
- (b) The subject has demonstrated, by words or action, an intention to be violent or to physically resist, and reasonably appears to present the potential to harm deputies, him/herself or others.

Mere flight from a pursuing deputy, without other known circumstances or factors, is not good cause for the use of the TASER device to apprehend an individual.

#### **304.5.2 SPECIAL DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

The use of the TASER device on certain individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates that other available options reasonably appear ineffective or would present a greater danger to the deputy, the subject or others, and the deputy reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of using the device. This includes:

- (a) Individuals who are known to be pregnant.
- (b) Elderly individuals or obvious juveniles.
- (c) Individuals with obviously low body mass.
- (d) Individuals who are handcuffed or otherwise restrained.

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- (e) Individuals who have been recently sprayed with a flammable chemical agent or who are otherwise in close proximity to any known combustible vapor or flammable material, including alcohol-based oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray.
- (f) Individuals whose position or activity may result in collateral injury (e.g., falls from height, operating vehicles).

Because the application of the TASER device in the drive-stun mode (i.e., direct contact without probes) relies primarily on pain compliance, the use of the drive-stun mode generally should be limited to supplementing the probe-mode to complete the circuit, or as a distraction technique to gain separation between deputies and the subject, thereby giving deputies time and distance to consider other force options or actions.

The TASER device shall not be used to psychologically torment, elicit statements or to punish any individual.

### 304.5.3 TARGETING CONSIDERATIONS

Deputies shall not discharge electrical weapons in a manner that targets the head, neck, chest, groin, or anterior pelvis. If the dynamics of a situation or officer safety do not permit the deputy to limit the application of the TASER device probes to a precise target area, deputies should monitor the condition of the subject if one or more probes strikes the head, neck, chest, groin or anterior pelvis until the subject is examined by paramedics or other medical personnel.

### 304.5.4 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS OF THE TASER DEVICE

Deputies should apply the TASER device for only one standard cycle and then evaluate the situation before applying any subsequent cycles. Multiple applications of the TASER device against a single individual should be avoided unless the deputy reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the potentially increased risk posed by multiple applications.

If the first application of the TASER device appears to be ineffective in gaining control of an individual, the deputy should consider certain factors before additional applications of the TASER device, including:

- (a) Whether the probes are making proper contact.
- (b) Whether the individual has the ability and has been given a reasonable opportunity to comply.
- (c) Whether verbal commands, other options or tactics may be more effective.

Deputies should generally not intentionally apply more than one TASER device at a time against a single subject.

The Taser that is used in a deployment shall be taken out of service and placed in a locker located in the patrol room. A certified Taser instructor shall download the information and inspect the Taser prior to being placed back into service.

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### 304.5.5 ACTIONS FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENTS

Deputies shall notify a supervisor of all TASER device discharges. AFID tags should be collected if possible and the expended cartridge, along with both probes and wire, should be submitted into evidence. The cartridge serial number should be noted and documented on the evidence paperwork. The evidence packaging should be marked "Biohazard" if the probes penetrated the subject's skin.

### 304.5.6 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

The TASER device may be deployed against an animal as part of a plan to deal with a potentially dangerous animal, such as a dog if the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

### 304.5.7 OFF-DUTY CONSIDERATIONS

Deputies are not authorized to carry department TASER devices while off-duty.

Deputies shall ensure that TASER devices are secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control, in a manner that will keep the device inaccessible to others.

## **304.6 DOCUMENTATION**

Deputies shall document all TASER discharges in the related police report and the TASER report form. The notification shall also be made to a supervisor in compliance with the Use of Force Policy. Unintentional discharges, pointing the device at a person, laser activation and arcing the device will also be documented in a police report, which shall be marked Code A. The routine spark test before each shift does not require a report.

The DeKalb County Sheriff Taser Use Form (Addendum B) shall be completed on all Taser applications and shall be included in the Code A report.

### 304.6.1 TASER DEVICE FORM

Items that shall be included in the TASER device report form are:

- (a) The type and brand of TASER device and cartridge and cartridge serial number.
- (b) Date, time and location of the incident.
- (c) Whether any display, or laser deterred a subject and gained compliance.
- (d) The range at which the TASER device was used.
- (e) The type of mode used (probe or drive-stun).
- (f) Location of any probe impact.
- (g) Location of contact in drive-stun mode.
- (h) Description of where missed probes went.
- (i) Whether medical care was provided to the subject.
- (j) Whether the subject sustained any injuries.

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- (k) Whether any deputies sustained any injuries.

### 304.6.2 REPORTS

The deputy should include the following in the police report:

- (a) Identification of all personnel firing TASER devices
- (b) Identification of all witnesses
- (c) Medical care provided to the subject
- (d) Observations of the subject's physical and physiological actions
- (e) Any known or suspected drug use, intoxication or other medical problems
- (f) Completed DeKalb County Sheriff Taser Use Form attached to the Code A report. (Addendum B)

[See attachment: Addendum B.pdf](#)

### 304.7 MEDICAL TREATMENT

Consistent with local medical personnel protocols and absent extenuating circumstances, only a certified Taser operator or appropriate medical personnel should remove TASER probes from a person's body. Used TASER probes shall be treated as a sharps biohazard, similar to a used hypodermic needle, and handled appropriately. Universal precautions should be taken.

Any such individual who falls under any of the following categories should, as soon as practicable, be examined by paramedics or other qualified medical personnel:

- (a) The person is suspected of being under the influence of controlled substances and/or alcohol.
- (b) The person may be pregnant.
- (c) The person reasonably appears to be in need of medical attention.
- (d) The TASER probes are lodged in a sensitive area (e.g., groin, female breast, head, face, neck).
- (e) The person requests medical treatment.

Any individual exhibiting signs of distress or who are exposed to multiple or prolonged applications (i.e., more than 15 seconds) shall be evaluated by a medical professional. If any individual refuses medical attention, such a refusal should be witnessed by another deputy and/or medical personnel and shall be fully documented in related reports. If an audio recording is made of the contact or an interview with the individual, any refusal should be included, if possible.

The transporting deputy shall inform any person providing medical care or receiving custody that the individual has been subjected to the application of the TASER.

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### **304.8 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

When possible, supervisors should respond to calls when they reasonably believe there is a likelihood the TASER device may be used. A supervisor should respond to all incidents where the TASER device was activated.

A supervisor should review each incident where a person has been exposed to an activation of the TASER device. Photographs of probe sites should be taken and witnesses interviewed.

### **304.9 TRAINING**

Personnel who are authorized to carry the TASER device shall be permitted to do so only after successfully completing the initial Sheriff's Office-approved training. Any personnel who are not currently certified shall be recertified by a Sheriff's Office-approved TASER device instructor prior to again carrying or using the device.

Proficiency training for personnel who have been issued TASER devices should occur every year. A reassessment of a deputy's knowledge and/or practical skill may be required at any time if deemed appropriate by the Division Lieutenant.

Command staff, supervisors and investigators should receive TASER device training as appropriate for the investigations they conduct and review.

Deputies who do not carry TASER devices should receive training that is sufficient to familiarize them with the device and with working with deputies who use the device.

The Patrol Lieutenant or designee is responsible for ensuring that all members who carry TASER devices have received initial and annual proficiency training. Periodic audits should be used for verification.

Application of TASER devices during training could result in injury to personnel and should not be mandatory for certification.

The Patrol Lieutenant and Taser Instructor should ensure that all training includes:

- (a) A review of this policy.
- (b) A review of the Use of Force Policy.
- (c) Performing weak-hand draws or cross-draws to reduce the possibility of unintentionally drawing and firing a firearm.
- (d) Target area considerations, to include techniques or options to reduce the unintentional application of probes near the head, neck, chest, and groin.
- (e) Handcuffing a subject during the application of the TASER device and transitioning to other force options.
- (f) De-escalation techniques.
- (g) Restraint techniques that do not impair respiration following the application of the TASER device.

## **Attachments**

## **Addendum B.pdf**





# DeKalb County Sheriff Taser Use Form



Deputy: \_\_\_\_\_ OCA: \_\_\_\_\_ Nature of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Build: \_\_\_\_\_

Suspect Under the Influence: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Alcohol: \_\_\_\_\_ Drugs: \_\_\_\_\_ Both: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Taser Serial #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cartridge Serial #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Display/Laser Only: \_\_\_\_\_ Drive Stun: \_\_\_\_\_ Probe Deployment: \_\_\_\_\_

Did Any Probes Miss the Offender: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

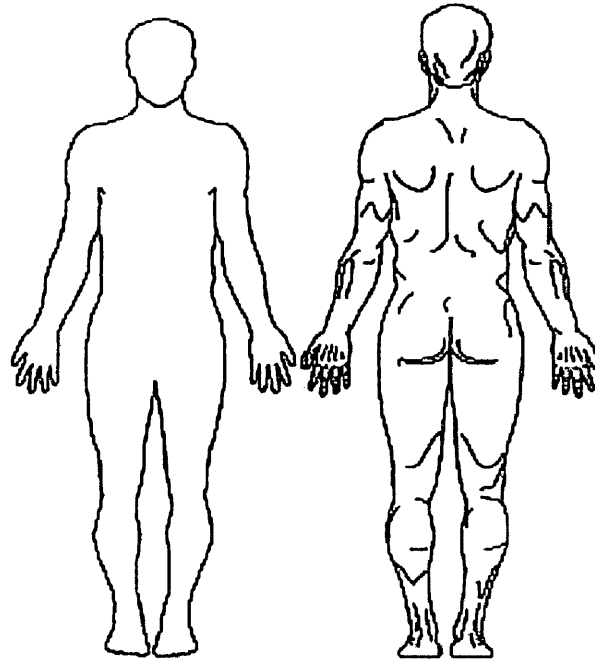
Describe Location of Any Prob Misses:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Distance of Deployment: \_\_\_\_\_

Need for Additional Application: Yes: (if so, how many) \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

# Mark with An X Any Probes Impacts or Drive Stuns



Did the Darts Penetrate the Subject's Skin: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Any Injuries Offender Sustained:

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Was the Subject Admitted to the Hospital: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes - Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Were they released to: Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_ Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Was Any Deputy Injured: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Photos of Injuries or Impact Areas: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

Was Taser Effective: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_