



SYKESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Electronic Control Weapon Policy

General Order 6-1 Effective: 03/09/17

Authorized By: *Michael A. Spaulding* Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

To provide members of the Sykesville Police Department with the proper guidance for the use of an Electronic Control Weapon (ECW)

II. POLICY

The Sykesville Police Department shall utilize the minimum amount of reasonable force to control a combative person, through the use of departmentally owned and issued X-26P Taser as approved for officers with proper training, appropriate equipment, and situational considerations. The X-26P Taser is not intended to replace the use of firearms when deadly force is necessary. The purpose of the X-26P Taser is to provide a less-lethal alternative use of force.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. Tasers shall be issued to and used only by officers who have completed the Advanced Taser training program.
- B. Only properly functioning and charged Tasers shall be carried in the field.
- C. Tasers must be worn on the weak side of either the gun belt or tactical vest to avoid any possible confusion with the officer's primary weapon.
- D. Each discharge, including accidental discharges, of a Taser shall be investigated and documented utilizing a detailed Incident Report.
- E. Never aim the Taser at the eyes or face of the suspect. It is laser-sighted with the top probe following the front and rear sights and the laser sight. The bottom probe will travel at an 8-degree downward angle below the aim point/laser sighted area. The rule of thumb for the bottom probe is that it drops one foot for every seven feet that it travels.
- F. Keep hands away from the front of the unit at all times unless the safety slide is pointed in a downward position and the Taser is deactivated.
- G. Always replace Air Cartridges by their expiration date and only use the expired cartridges for training.
- H. **DO NOT** Fire the Taser near flammable liquids and fumes. The Taser can ignite gasoline or other flammables. Alcohol based OC sprays are flammable and would be extremely dangerous to use in conjunction with the Taser. **Do Not** fire the Taser in the vicinity of highly flammable meth labs.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Chief of Police
 - 1. Ensure that incidents involving ANY discharge of a Taser is investigated and appropriately documented

2. Ensure use of the Taser is assigned to a trained officer
3. Monitor the use of Tasers and related tactics

B. Supervisor

1. Will be notified and if necessary respond to scenes where the Taser has been deployed
2. Ensure that officers, who use the Taser, complete a detailed Incident Report, to include a statement of deployment, as well as a Use of Force Form (SPD#179). Use includes; presentation, stun or discharge.
3. Investigate each incident in which the Taser is used and review the Incident Report and Use of Force Form.
4. Ensure that photographs are taken of the probe penetration sites and any secondary injuries caused by falling to the ground, etc.
5. Forward all documents and a memo stating if use was within policy

C. Officers

1. Ensure the batteries of the Taser are properly charged
2. Request the response of a supervisor in the event of Taser use
3. Prior to use of the Taser, if practical, broadcast “**TASER, TASER, TASER**” indicating a use of the Taser is imminent to prevent unintentional shootings
4. Provide necessary treatment – summon EMS to administer emergency medical care in each and every instance of any deployment.

V. USE OF FORCE

A. The use of the Taser constitutes a serious use of force

1. The Taser is placed on the Use of Force Continuum just after the Pepper Spray level
2. The Taser may be used up to 21 feet when:
 - a. The suspect is punching or kicking, or
 - b. Threatening to punch or kick, or
 - c. Lesser force options are ineffective, or
 - d. Likely to be ineffective, or
 - e. The officer reasonably believes the suspect poses a credible threat or,
 - f. The suspect poses a threat from a distance and the officer is at risk of injury if he/she attempts to close the gap
 - g. Other considerations on deployment are:
 - (1) Imminent threat to officers and/or others
 - (2) Suspect **actively** resisting arrest (Detention)
 - (3) Circumstances are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving
 - (4) Severity of the crime at issue

- (5) Attempting to evade by flight
 - (6) Number of officers present should dictate if Taser is used against simple resistance
 - (7) The level of the subject's exhaustion. Studies recommend that when an officer believes that control of a subject will be necessary and met with resistance, deployment of the Taser should be considered early on in the event so that the subject has not reached a level of exhaustion prior to the Taser's use.
3. The Taser should NOT be used:
- a. Against obviously pregnant females
 - b. Against the elderly
 - c. Against young children
 - d. Against a person who could fall from a significant height
 - e. In a flammable or explosive environment (i.e. meth lab, place where gasoline is stored, around the presence of alcohol based OC spray, etc)
 - f. Against a handcuffed person unless the individual continues to pose an immediate threat of harm or injury to the officer, themselves or the public
 - g. When confronting non-violent resistance that does not represent a threat to police officers or others
 - h. When flight itself is the only reason
 - i. Without first attempting to use negotiation, command or physical skills
 - j. In pain compliance or stun mode when circumstances dictate that pain is reasonably foreseeable to be ineffective (example, persons who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs or persons who appear to be or are known to be mentally ill).

B. Touch Stun Mode:

- 1. Use common sense
- 2. The touch stun mode is a pain compliance technique
- 3. It is only to be used for close quarter operation only. This includes circumstances in which the subject is too close to initiate the taser mode; room size is too small; other less lethal weapons such as OC Spray would contaminate others; or any other circumstance where deemed appropriate
- 4. The air cartridge must be removed or a previously fired air cartridge must be in place prior to use
- 5. Any area of the body can be targeted, however three areas are recommended; carotid/brachial stun, groin, and common perineal
- 6. Be aware that this mode is not as effective with subjects in a mental health crisis state, under the influence of a mind altering substance, or extremely goal oriented who are prone to mind-body disconnection

7. A single trigger squeeze activates an automatic timer, which produces a five second burst
8. Once compliance is obtained, take custody of the subject for processing

C. Taser Mode:

1. Use common sense
2. Advise the subject that you are going to TASE him (if situation allows)
3. Show the subject a short burst of the TASER in the Touch Stun mode
4. Use verbal commands, TASER, TASER, TASER, and point laser sight at subject prior to firing. The use of verbal commands shall be given if situation allows
5. Have a second cartridge present or a second Taser ready to fire in case the probes miss the target, or a malfunction of an Air Cartridge
6. Required backup/arrest team (depending on situation and with lethal force option)
7. Aim at center of mass and from the rear if possible. Watch for thick and/or loose clothing. If probes hit clothing, the electrical current can penetrate for a maximum of 2 inches away from the skin
8. Use cover and distance to ensure the officers safety
9. Use to avert violent confrontation
10. If target runs, officers must follow to prevent wires from breaking
11. Avoid use on slanted rooftops or on the ledge of a building

D. Treatment:

Persons who have been subjected to the Taser or the probes, shall be treated as follows:

1. Once in custody, officers shall notify a supervisor that the person has been subjected to the Taser and relate the approximate time the action occurred. If the probes penetrate the skin, the puncture sites shall be brought to the attention of the supervisor. EMS will be requested and the suspect will be evaluated as to the need for further medical treatment
2. Do not remove the probe if the barb shaft is imbedded so deep as to prevent the probe from hanging loosely. Officers will request EMS to remove the probes because of the depth of penetration or a hit to the head, groin or woman's breast area. Officers will wear latex gloves when removing probes from the skin. If possible, administer instant sanitizing gel or spray to each puncture site and a Band-aid
3. After examining the affected person, the paramedics will make the determination if the person should or should not be transported to the hospital. Transportation to a medical facility will be by law enforcement transport unless an ambulance is more appropriate
4. If the probes used are no longer impaled in the skin, the subject may be released to the custody of the officer pending EMS evaluation

5. If the person was transported to the hospital, clearance from the emergency room physician shall be obtained prior to departing the hospital
6. Officers must be aware that one easily overlooked aspect of injury when deploying a Taser at a subject is that of falling from a standing position. An examination with particular emphasis to secondary injuries should be performed by the paramedics if on-scene, otherwise by the on-scene supervisor, if available
7. Submit a detailed Incident Report.
8. The Air Cartridge and probes used shall be placed into evidence. Since the probes will probably have blood on them (biohazard), the officers shall wear protective latex gloves when handling. The wires shall be wound around the cartridge. The probes shall be inverted into the portals they originally were deployed from (this will prevent the sharp ends from penetrating the envelope). Tape should then be placed over the portals to secure the probes in the cartridge. Place in an evidence package. If a film canister or sharp tube is available, place the probes inside the container. Then place wires, cartridge, and container inside an evidence package
9. Also collect the Anti-Felon Identification Tags (AFID) from the scene and place them inside the evidence package.

VI. CANCELLATIONS

This General Order cancels and replaces the following policies:

General Order 1.3.7, entitled, Less Lethal Weapons, dated December 10, 2001.