

# WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## III-17 TASER

**EFFECTIVE: 10/01/2005**

CALEA Standards: 1.3.4, 1.3.5, 1.3.9

CFA Standards: 4.05, 4.07, 4.08, 4.09

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**I. POLICY:** The TASER is deployed as a less lethal tool for the officer. The TASER is not intended to replace the open hand self defense techniques used to restrain a passive resister. The TASER is to be used for control and arrest of active resisters who may be exhibiting violent behavior or there is reasonable belief it would be unsafe for officers to approach within contact range of the suspect. The TASER is placed on the use of force continuum at the same level of force as aerosol subject restraint/oleoresin capsicum (ASR/OC) spray.

### **II. DEFINITIONS:**

A. TASER - a handheld electrical device used as a less lethal alternative to control violent or potentially violent suspects. The current authorized device(s) and accessories are detailed in Appendix A.

B. EMD - Electro-Muscular Disruption is an involuntary contraction of muscles which disrupts neuro-motor control.

C. Anti Felony Identification Device (AFID) - Forty micro dot confetti-like ID tags, ejected with the probe containing the serial numbers of the deployed cartridge to allow identification of the cartridge used.

E. Air Cartridge - A single use item identified by a serial number. The cartridge is tamper resistant and is sealed with the AFID system in place.

### **III. DESCRIPTION:**

A. The TASER fires from an air cartridge which propels two metal probes connected to the weapon by a high voltage, insulated wire up to a distance of 21 feet.

B. When the probes make contact with the suspect, the TASER will transmit a twenty-six (26) watt electrical pulse along the wires and into the suspect.

1. The pulse can penetrate clothing up to two inches in thickness.

2. The pulse will temporarily override the target's central nervous system control over the skeletal muscles resulting in uncontrollable muscle contractions, temporarily disabling the individual.

C. The TASER is pre-programmed to deliver a five-second electrical burst.

1. During an actual deployment, it is recommended that the full five-second cycle be used for maximum effectiveness of the weapon and assuring the compliance of the individual.

2. The officer can shorten this automatic five-second cycle by simply engaging the safety, thereby turning off the weapon.

D. Each TASER Includes a data port located on the unit. Every time the TASER is utilized, specific information will be recovered electronically to ensure accurate incident documentation.

### **IV. TASER DEPLOYMENT:**

A. The TASER is not intended to be used in deadly force situations.

B. Situations appropriate for TASER deployment include, but are not limited to,:

1. A subject threatening himself or others with physical force and other means of controlling the subject are unreasonable or could cause injury to the public, the member, or the subject.

2. May be used on a subject when reasonably necessary to overcome active resistance to lawful objectives
3. Other means of lesser or equal force have been ineffective and the threat still exists to the public, the member, or the subject.
4. May be used on aggressive animals in the defense of the officers or innocent bystanders.

C. Improper handling or inappropriate uses of this device which may result in disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:

1. Needless display of the device;
2. Careless or haphazard muzzle control of the device;
3. Use against any person in a punitive manner;
4. Use or threat of use of the device during an interrogation;
5. Using the device to awaken a person;
6. Using the device as a prod;
7. Using the device on a helpless or severely disabled person;
8. Carelessness in its storage;
9. Abuse of the equipment;
10. Failure to report damage to the device; or
11. Failure to log out a device or cartridge.

D. Prior to deployment of the TASER, it is the responsibility of the TASER operator to obtain a lethal cover officer whenever practical. The cover officer will be armed with a Department approved sidearm or other approved firearm appropriate to the situation.

1. The cover officer will provide lethal cover if needed for the TASER operator.
2. Officers should consider cover and distance at all times.
3. Officers should consider bystanders at all times.
3. Should a subject take control of an officers TASER the subject possess the capability to discharge the weapon and render the officer helpless.

E. Prior to discharging the TASER the operator will notify others on scene by announcing "TASER".

1. By providing an advance warning, members are better prepared and will stay clear of the probes and their intended target.

F. Prior to firing, use loud verbal commands when feasible and point the laser sight at the subject

1. A suggested warning to the suspect may be "Sir/Maam: If You Do Not Comply with My Commands I Cannot Assure You of Your Safety"
2. Aim at center mass of the suspect.
3. Care should be taken to avoid the face and neck of the subject.

G. An arrest team utilizing no less than two officers is recommended when deploying the TASER.

1. Weapons will be secured in their holsters prior to approaching and securing the suspect.
2. When given the command to do so by the TASER operator, the arrest team will immediately attempt to safely control the subject
3. Throughout the incident, TASER operators will continually assess compliance levels and breathing ability before applying additional cycles to the subject.

H. The TASER will not be deployed under the following situations unless exigent and articulable circumstances necessitate its use:

1. The intended target is in a high building or in any area where a fall could result and cause further injury.
2. The subject is in or around water where drowning could result.
3. Flammable liquids and/or fumes are present which have the potential to ignite.
4. Pregnant subjects.
5. A child, 12 years of age or younger, considerations should include size, aggression and intent of the subject.
6. Subjects operating motor vehicles.
7. Armed subjects.

I. Anytime the TASER is utilized on a subject a supervisor will be notified.

1. Photographs will be taken of the affected area and any other injuries noted.
2. A Control of Persons report will be completed.
3. A copy of all reports will be forwarded to Training Sergeant for review.
5. TASER survey cards (Appendix B) will be completed any time the device is deployed to effect compliance.
  - a. TASER survey cards will be turned in at the end of the duty-day and forwarded to the Training Sergeant for review
4. Discharges of the TASER during approved training will not require completion of these reports.

J. It is the responsibility of the initiating officer to collect the spent probes and the AFID's dispersed at the time of the cartridge firing.

1. If the probes do not penetrate the subject's face, neck or groin region, they may be removed and secured at the scene.
2. Probes which penetrate the face, neck or groin region must be removed at a medical facility.

K. Spent probes shall be placed into evidence using the following procedure:

1. The probes shall be placed into the expended cartridge with the pointed end of the probe facing down, wrapping the wire around cartridge.
2. The cartridge holes will be secured with evidence tape.
3. The cartridge shall be placed in an evidence envelope and labeled with a bio-hazard sticker.

4. A sample of the AFID confetti from the TASER cartridge will be placed in a separate evidence envelope.

5. If the AFID confetti cannot be recovered from the scene (washed away by rain, destroyed by fire, etc.), the circumstances preventing recovery will be detailed in the Offense/Incident Report and the Control of Persons report.

L. A Shift Commander or designee shall download the TASER information and include it with the Control of Persons report. (NOTE: The TASER information will be stored in Greenwich Mean Time.)

M. Any use of the TASER contrary to the direction of this policy can result in revocation of the officer=s privilege to use this weapon and may result in disciplinary action.

#### **V. FIRST AID PROCEDURES:**

A. Attention to the subject=s actions after utilization of the TASER is vital. Members need to be aware and look for obvious signs of head injury which may result from a fall as a result of the TASER use. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Scrapes on or around the head and face,
2. Contusions or bruising on the head,
3. Bruising behind the ears, or
4. Bruising around the eyes.

B. Any time the TASER is utilized and the probes penetrate the face, neck, female breast, or groin region of the intended target, the suspect will be transported to a medical treatment facility for removal of the TASER probes. The officer will remove probes from strikes in any other area utilizing techniques learned in training.

C. Other falling type injuries should also be anticipated after using the TASER. If an injury is apparent or if the subject complains of injury, the Fire Medics will be called to the scene to evaluate the subject and take appropriate medical action.

#### **VI. TRAINING AND STANDARD:**

A. Only members selected by the Chief of Police or designee shall be trained in the use of the TASER.

1. Annually, All members authorized TASER carry will attend a re-fresher course on TASER use.

B. Personnel shall only utilize the TASER consistent with the training received.

C. Members are required to attend a Department approved TASER course before carry of the device on duty.

1. Instruction will be both lecture and hands on.
2. Students must obtain a passing written and practical exam score before authorization will be granted.
3. Annually, TASER operators will be required to attend a Department approved TASER re-certification course.
  - a. If a member fails the written or practical exam, they shall participate in remedial training, which will include additional information and practical training prior to authorizing carry of the TASER on-duty.
  - b. If the member fails any portion of the remedial training they will be removed from the selection process and no longer participate in the TASER program.
  - c. The member can re-apply for the TASER Operator program after six (6) months.

**VII. USE OF THE TASER:**

- A. This weapon resembles a pistol and should be handled accordingly.
- B. Authorized use will include both uniformed and non-uniformed assignments, both regular duty and extra duty assignments.
- C. the TASER may be worn; in the issued cross-draw holster opposite the issued firearm, in the traditional carry method located on the opposite hip of the duty firearm or placed on the front of a tactical vest.
- D. Officers who carry the TASER may choose not to carry the issued ASP Baton as part of his or her Department-issued equipment.
- E. A pre-operation check of the TASER will be conducted prior to going into service.
1. The member, **with the cartridge removed and the weapon pointed in a safe direction**, will perform a test fire of the TASER. A full, five second, cycle will be conducted.
  2. If the TASER fails to fire or fires slowly, ensure the batteries are fully charged and properly installed.
  3. The member will attach the air cartridge and holster the weapon.
- F. The officer will not test fire the TASER a second time during the shift without a specific reason and a supervisor's approval.
- G. Accidental discharges will require a supervisor's notification.

**VIII. EQUIPMENT ISSUE:**

- A. TASER and three cartridges will be issued to authorized members.
- B. The serial number of the TASER and the serial number of each cartridge will be documented at the time of issue of the equipment.
- C. Cartridges will not be stored except in the designated issue point, a department locker or the armory.
- D. Both the cartridges and the device are subject to both extreme cold and heat, therefore **no TASER and/or cartridge will be stored in a vehicle.**
- E. After each deployment the Training Sergeant will be notified for a replacement air cartridge. Prior to issuance of a new air cartridge, a report documenting the deployment will be provided to the training sergeant.

**IX. REFERENCE:**

- SOP # III-13 Use of Force.
- SOP # IV-22 Internal Affairs Function

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**Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police**

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Old SOP # 4.05  
Revision Dates: 01/01/2005, 10/01/2005

Job Title Task Files: Shift Commander

**APPENDIX A**

The current authorized issued electrical stun device is:

Advanced TASER M-26 manufactured by TASER International

The current authorized cartridge is:

TASER International 21 foot air cartridge

The current authorized cross-draw holsters are:

TASER International,  
Model X351-M26, Nylon  
Model K351-M26W, Basketweave

**APPENDIX B**

TASER EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY

If a TASER is used to either subdue an aggressor or discourage hostile actions, please fill out this card

Check the line that applies:

- TASER was deployed successfully
- TASER was not effective in controlling the subject
- TASER was used in drive stun mode effectively
- TASER laser was used as warning effectively
- TASER use was threatened and compliance was gained

Case/ CAD # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_