



# **SAN JOSE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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## **TRAINING BULLETIN**

**TO: All Sworn Personnel**

**FROM: Robert L. Davis  
Chief of Police**

**SUBJECT: TASER USAGE UPDATE**

**DATE: December 1, 2005**

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**BULLETIN NO: 004-05**

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The general provisions of the San Jose Police Department's (SJPD) Use of Force Policies are found in Duty Manual Sections L 2600 - 2605 and Sections L 2614 - 2617. All uses of the Taser by SJPD officers must conform to these Duty Manual policies.

The lesson plan and instruction used in the initial deployment of Tasers has been revised. The new instructional plan, *Electronic Weapons User Course*, provides officers with additional clarification and enhancements to the current SJPD Taser training program. The updates provided below will serve to inform officers of the most recent changes. Additional discussion of these changes will be addressed in the curriculum for the current Continuous Professional Training (CPT) course and Force Options Instruction.

### Taser Usage

1. Absent exigent circumstances,<sup>1</sup> the Taser should only be used against persons who are actively resisting<sup>2</sup> or exhibiting active aggression,<sup>3</sup> or to prevent individuals from harming themselves or others.
2. Absent exigent circumstances, officers should avoid activating multiple Taser devices against a single subject at the same time.
3. In general, the Taser should be deployed for the shortest period possible to take a subject safely into custody. After each application of a five-second cycle of the Taser, an officer should weigh the circumstances involved to determine whether additional Taser discharges would be effective in safely taking the subject into custody or whether another force option should be considered. In general, attempts should be made to use the Taser for no more than three five-second cycles. In any event, the circumstances surrounding the number of Taser discharges will be documented in the Crime Report.
4. Absent exigent circumstances, Tasers should not be used against obviously pregnant women, elderly persons, young children, or visibly frail persons. An example of an exigent circumstance would be a situation in which an obviously pregnant woman was in the process of harming herself or another person, and more intrusive force, such as a baton, would be necessary if not for the use of a Taser.
5. Absent exigent circumstances, Tasers should not be deployed against handcuffed persons unless they are actively resisting or exhibiting active aggression, and only in order to prevent such persons from harming themselves or others.

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<sup>1</sup> Circumstances that would cause a reasonable officer to believe that prompt action is necessary to prevent physical harm to civilians and/or officers.

<sup>2</sup> Physically evasive movements to defeat an officer's attempt at control, including bracing, tensing, pushing, or verbally signaling an intention to avoid or prevent being taken into or retained in custody.

<sup>3</sup> A threat or overt act of an assault (through physical or verbal means), coupled with the present ability to carry out the threat or assault, which reasonably indicates that an assault or injury to any person is imminent.

6. Absent exigent circumstances, Tasers should not be deployed in a location where a suspect's fall may cause substantial injury or death.
7. Whenever a subject has been subject to a Taser discharge,<sup>4</sup> an official hospital medical clearance will be obtained prior to the suspect's booking. If a suspect exhibits the need for medical attention at the scene of the arrest, emergency medical assistance will be summoned immediately.
8. Officers should avoid firing Taser darts at a subject's head, neck and/or genitalia.
9. The preferred method for Taser deployment is the Probe Method, with the Drive Stun method generally used as a secondary option.
10. Absent exigent circumstances, Tasers should not be used against subjects in physical control of a vehicle in motion, to include automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, ATVs, bicycles, and scooters.
11. If circumstances permit, a verbal warning should be given to a subject and other officers present prior to activating the Taser unless to do so would place another person at risk or a tactical advantage would be lost.
12. The officer's immediate supervisor will personally respond to evaluate and actively participate in the investigation of a Taser discharge at a subject.
13. Tasers have been shown to be an effective tool against aggressive animals. Tasers may be used against animals if an animal poses a threat to officers or others.

Taser Usage Reporting Requirements:

All activations of the Taser, other than spark testing, will be documented. Targeting of a suspect with a Taser laser sight, or arcing a Taser for purposes of gaining voluntary compliance, will be documented in the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) event. An actual discharge of a Taser against a person will be documented in a Crime Report and a Force Response Report Form (Form FRS-001). Accidental discharges of a Taser (firing of the Taser air cartridge) will be documented on a Departmental Memorandum addressed to the Chief of Police, which is then forwarded up through the entire chain of command.

Officers are responsible for submitting written documentation to a supervisor for review and signature prior to submission to the Operations Support Services Division (OSSD) - Records Unit as outlined in Duty Manual Section R 1802.

A supervisor presented with Taser documentation will conduct a thorough review for compliance with all policies and procedures prior to signing the report or transmittal form.



ROBERT L. DAVIS  
Chief of Police

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<sup>4</sup> The Taser probes are discharged at a subject or the Taser is used in a "drive stun" manner and makes contact with the subject's body or clothing.