

SCRANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY

Effective Date:
February 3, 2020

Policy Number:
09-001

Policy Subject:
TASER

Reevaluation Date:
February 3, 2021

No. Pages:
4

PLEAC Standard(s):
1.3.4, 1.3.10

I. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to define the correct procedure in operating, carrying and deploying the TASER® X26 electronic control device.

II. POLICY

The policy of the Scranton Police Department is to provide officers with options for controlling combative or uncooperative subjects in a manner that minimizes the risk of injury to both officers and the subject. The TASER® X26 is a proven device for controlling uncooperative or combative subjects with a minimal risk of injury. The TASER® X26 is deployed as an additional police tool and is not intended to replace firearms or self defense techniques. The TASER® X26 falls into the category of less-lethal force options and is intended to supplement other weapons in this category.

III. DEFINITIONS

TASER X26® – An electro-muscular disruption hand held weapon (called ECD or electronic control device) manufactured by Taser International ® that disrupts the body's ability to communicate messages from the brain to the muscles causing temporary motor skill dysfunction to a subject by electrical pulses sent through a high voltage insulated wire.

Drive Stun – A secondary function of the TASER® is to stun a subject by making direct contact with the body after the air cartridge has been expended or removed. The cartridge does not have to be removed to perform a drive stun after deploying the probes.

Cartridge – A replaceable cartridge for the TASER® which uses compressed nitrogen to fire two barbed probes on thin connecting wires sending a high voltage/low current signal into a subject.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Use of the TASER®

1. The TASER® *may be* used when a subject is displaying, active, aggressive or aggravated aggressive resistance to an officer attempting to conduct legal law enforcement activities, pursuant to Policy 10-002 Use of Force.
2. The TASER® *may not* be used:
 - a. When the officer knows a subject has come in contact with flammable liquids or is in a flammable atmosphere.
 - b. Punitively, for purpose of coercion, or in an unjustified manner.
 - c. When a prisoner is compliant.
 - d. To jab individuals.
 - e. To awaken unconscious or intoxicated individuals.
 - f. When a subject is visibly pregnant, unless deadly force is the only other option.
 - g. The Taser may not be deployed to stop a suspect for mere flight from apprehension, unless the circumstances meet the requirements for the escalation of use of force under the Policy 10-002 Use of Force. Also see section (D4) of this policy.
3. Although it may be unavoidable, care must be taken to prevent further injury from a fall to the best of the officer's ability and surroundings.
4. Officers are responsible for ensuring the device is fully operational at all times. If the unit is not functioning correctly, the Training Unit or certified TASER® instructor will be notified as soon as possible. Officers will conduct a spark check at the beginning of each shift to ensure the TASER® will function properly. This check will be conducted out of public view. This is conducted by removing the cartridge to more than two feet away from the unit, activating the TASER® and viewing the arcing spark.
5. The TASER® has the ability to ignite flammable liquids or gases. Care must be taken to ensure there is not threat of such in the situation, and the person has not been sprayed with a flammable pepper spray or similar device.

B. Equipment and duty carry

1. Officers will only be authorized to carry department approved TASER® equipment. Routine inspections for damage and cleanliness will be conducted in accordance with department protocols. Batteries and cartridges will be inspected by the officer prior to each shift. A reading of

20% or less will require that the Training Unit be notified of a low battery status.

2. Taser batteries shall not be removed or changed by any officers other than Taser certified instructors within the Scranton Police Department.
3. TASER®s will not be stored off duty in a vehicle **and never without the battery pack.**
4. Officers shall carry the TASER in the department approved holster **ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE (WEAK SIDE) FROM THE DUTY WEAPON (cross draw).**
5. Department members are not authorized to draw or display the TASER® in view of the public except for training, unless the circumstances create reasonable belief that it may be necessary to use it.
6. Officers authorized to carry the TASER® X26 on duty shall successfully complete a department certification program in accordance to department protocols which include a written and practical exam and exposure to the device. Annual re-certification is required for all officers carrying the TASER® X26.

C. Deploying the TASER®

1. Officers shall deploy the TASER® according to the training guidelines received in certification from the Scranton Police Department Training Unit.
2. Officers shall, when capable, attempt to avoid deploying TASER® probes into sensitive areas of the body, including the head, face, neck, groin and female breast area. Optimal area of deployment is center mass, particularly the back of the subject due to the clothing normally being tighter to the body in that area.
3. Activated TASER® units are to be placed on “safe” if a K9 is deployed. Once the K9 is engaged in the biting of a suspect, the TASER® will not be used.
4. In *Graham vs. Conner* courts consider three specific factors in the use of force. These factors shall be used when determining whether deployment of the TASER is an appropriate level of force for a fleeing suspect.
 - a. How serious was the offense that the officer suspected the suspect had engaged in at the time the officer decided to use force? The more serious the offense the greater the need for apprehension, thus the greater the level of force may be used.
 - b. Did the suspect pose a threat to the officer or any other person present?
 - c. Was the suspect actively resisting or attempting to evade arrest by flight?

D. Post Deployment

1. The subject will be handcuffed (double locked) as soon as practical after deployment.

2. After deployment, medical assistance will be requested for the receiver of the deployment in a timely fashion and the deploying officer will contact and notify an immediate supervisor.
3. Probes will only be removed by TASER® certified officers. If probes are imbedded in a sensitive area, or significant injury may result from the removal, the subject may be transported to a medical facility for removal.
4. A supervisor will respond to the scene whenever a TASER® has been deployed.
5. Photographs of the probe impact site will be taken unless in a sensitive area designated as the genitals or female breast area.
6. Probes shall be handled as a contaminated needle/biohazard and shall be disposed of properly in a designated sharps container.

By Order Of:

Chief Carl R. Graziano
Superintendent of Police
Scranton Police Department