




ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE MANUAL

Chapter: 5 <i>Procedures</i>	Revision Date: <i>April 3, 2025</i>	Initiation Date: <i>October 15, 2013</i>	By Authority of the Chief of Police  Chief Charles A. Penn
Accreditation Standard(s): CALEA 4.3.2, 4.3.3			

538.05 Use of the Taser Energy Weapon

I. Overview

The department supplies qualified, trained officers with the Taser Energy Weapon (TEW) as a less lethal use of force option to safely end dangerous situations.

II. Policy

This policy provides guidelines for the issuance and use of the less-lethal Taser 7 and Taser 10 energy weapons, which are designed to temporarily incapacitate a dangerous or potentially dangerous person from a safer distance than other force options. TEW use must be in accordance with the provisions of this directive and those of 538.04 – Use of Force. This directive does not create a duty to use the TEW in place of other use-of-force options.

III. Definitions

- A. **TASER Energy Weapon** – A less lethal weapon designed to deliver electrical charges into a suspect that will cause involuntary muscle contractions and override the suspect's voluntary motor responses, rendering the suspect temporarily incapacitated. The current models used by the department are the TASER 7 and TASER 10 energy weapons.
- B. **Neuro-Muscular Incapacitation (NMI)** – Electrical signals that stimulate the central nervous system and directly control the sensory and motor nervous systems. The NMI effect causes involuntary contractions of the muscle tissue, temporarily incapacitating the suspect.
- C. **Close Quarters (CQ) Smart Cartridge (TASER 7 only)** – A replaceable cartridge for the TASER 7 energy weapon with a bottom probe that deploys at a 12-degree downward angle. The CQ cartridge is black in color.
- D. **Standoff (SO) Smart Cartridge (TASER 7 only)** – A replaceable cartridge for the TASER 7 energy weapon with a bottom probe that deploys at a 3.5-degree downward angle. The SO cartridge is gray in color.
- E. **Cartridges (TASER 10 only)** – Single, replaceable probe inserts for the TASER 10 energy weapon. Each cartridge contains a single probe which is loaded into a TASER 10 magazine. TASER 10 cartridges are color-coded as follows:
 - 1. Silver (with black band) – live cartridges
 - 2. Silver (with blue band) – live training cartridges
 - 3. Red – inert Cartridge
- F. **Magazine (TASER 10 only)** - A removable rectangular container for the Taser 10 energy weapon that has a maximum capacity of ten individual cartridges. The magazine is inserted into the frame of the Taser 10 and is color-coded as follows:
 - 1. Black – duty magazine

2. Purple – Live training magazine
 3. Blue – HALT magazine
 4. Red – Inert magazine
- G. **Taser Coordinator** – An officer designated by the Commander of the Wellness and Employee Development Section to coordinate the department's TEW training and logistics.
 - H. **Passive Resistance** - A refusal by an unarmed person not reasonably perceived to be an immediate threat or flight risk to comply with an officer's verbal commands or physical control techniques that does not involve the use of physical force, control, or active resistance of any kind.
 - I. **Active Resistance** - The use of non-assaultive physical measures by an unarmed person, including flight, to resist and or prevent an officer from gaining control.
 - J. **Active Aggression** – Threat, attempt, or actual physical harm to self or others.
 - K. **Delirium Syndrome** – A potentially life-threatening illness caused by stress and characterized by any combination of acute change in mental status, inattention, disorganized thinking, and altered level of consciousness. It can include hyperactive delirium (increased agitation) and/or hypoactive delirium (decreased arousal).

IV. Procedures

- A. **General Deployment Criteria** - The following general use guidelines apply to both the use of the Taser 7 and the Taser 10:
 1. **Deployment Criteria** - The decision to use the TEW will be dependent upon the actions of the suspect, the threat or risk to the officer or the public, and the totality of circumstances surrounding the incident.
 2. The TEW is authorized to be used in the following circumstances:
 - a. To protect the officer or others from reasonably perceived immediate threat of physical harm from the person to be exposed to the TEW,
 - b. To restrain or subdue an individual who is actively resisting or evading arrest, or,
 - c. To bring an unlawful situation safely and effectively under control
 3. In addition to the above guidelines as well as the guidelines governing the use of force in ACPD Manual Directive 538.04 – Use of Force, a TEW may only be deployed in probe mode (Taser 10 or 7) or drive stun follow-up (Taser 7 only) when an officer is faced with an exigency creating an immediate threat that is reasonably likely to be cured by deploying the TEW. Each deployment of a TEW in probe mode or drive stun follow-up must meet these criteria.
 4. The TEW shall not be used in the following circumstances:
 - a. On individuals who passively resist and are not reasonably perceived as an immediate threat or flight risk;
 - b. On individuals in restraints, except as objectively reasonable to prevent their escape or prevent imminent bodily injury to the individual, the officer, or another person; however, in these situations, only the minimal amount of force necessary to control the situation must be used;
 - c. When the officer has a reasonable belief that deployment may cause serious injury or death from situational hazards including falling, drowning, or igniting a potentially explosive or flammable material or substance, except when deadly force would be justified;
 - d. When the suspect's movement or body positioning prevents the officer from aiming or maintaining appropriate body part targeting, unless the risk of increased injury to the suspect is justified

because of the reasonably perceived threat or flight risk;

- e. To prevent or stop a person from committing self-harm unless the self-harm being threatened or committed is likely to cause death or serious bodily injury and the use of the TEW is reasonably likely to prevent or stop the self-harm;
 - f. For any reason other than legitimate law enforcement purposes; or
 - g. In drive stun (only) mode.
5. A warning arc (TASER 7 only) or warning alert (TASER 10 only) may be used to gain control of a potentially dangerous or unlawful situation or suspect when use of the TEW in probe mode or drive stun follow-up is not reasonable. Use of the TEW warning arc or warning alert, while not involving physical contact with a suspect, may only be done for a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
6. Furthermore, the TEW shall not be used in the following situations, unless the officer can articulate extraordinary circumstances:
- a. When the officer has reason to believe that deployment of the TEW may cause injury or death from situational hazards such as falling or drowning.
 - b. When an officer has reason to believe a suspect is pregnant unless deadly force is justified.
 - c. When an officer has reason to believe the suspect suffers from a heart condition.
 - d. When the suspect is operating a motor vehicle unless the vehicle can be immobilized.
 - e. When the suspect is holding a firearm.
 - f. When the suspect is handcuffed or in other physical restraints.
 - g. When the suspect is physically immature, frail, or disabled.
 - h. When the suspect is physically disabled.
7. Taser 7 Energy Weapon Procedures
- a. Warning arc – A warning arc is a non-contact demonstration of the TEW's ability to discharge electricity. A warning arc is performed by moving the safety to the armed (up) position and pressing and holding the arc switch without removing the smart cartridges.
 - b. Probe mode – When used in probe mode, the TASER 7 energy weapon fires two small, barbed probes connected to the smart cartridges by wires. When both probes make direct contact with a suspect and have sufficient distance (spread) between them, NMI is achieved. The TEW is most effective when used in probe mode. Use of probe mode at distances of less than three feet may not result in NMI due to insufficient spread. Probe mode includes subsequent pulls of the trigger or presses of the arc switch, which re-energize any smart cartridge still attached to the TEW.
 - c. Drive Stun Follow-up – A direct contact stun which will complete the circuit of Neuro-Muscular Incapacitation (NMI). This technique is only utilized after a TASER 7 energy weapon has been used in probe mode and only one probe has made contact with a suspect, or two probes have made contact with a spread insufficient to achieve NMI.
8. Taser 10 Energy Weapon Procedures
- a. Warning alert - The TASER 10's warning alert is an audible and visual warning system that emits a loud alert sound and a bright pulsing light when activated. The warning alert is intended to be used to warn subjects that the TASER 10 may be used as a de-escalation attempt. This allows the user to de-escalate without using cartridges.
 - b. Probe deployment - When the TASER 10 energy weapon trigger is pulled twice and then released to deploy two cartridges, the electrical discharge begins. The cycle continues for five seconds unless the selector switch is moved to the down (SAFE) position during the cycle. When two or

more probes make direct contact with a suspect and have sufficient distance (spread) between them, NMI is achieved.

9. TEW Firing Procedures

- a. Ideally, if time and the tactical situation permits, deployment of a TEW is a team effort involving several officers, including a primary TEW officer, a secondary TEW officer, an arrest team, a lethal force cover officer, and a supervisor. Deployment of a TEW without a full team is appropriate when insufficient time exists to assemble a full team or when site conditions make the use of a second TEW impractical.
- b. If a supervisor was not on scene at the time of a TEW deployment, the officer who deployed the TEW shall ensure that a supervisor is notified as soon as possible after deployment.
- c. If feasible and reasonable, officers shall precede their firing of the TEW with verbal commands in an attempt to gain compliance from the suspect. Additionally, if practical, the officer firing the TEW shall shout the word "Taser" at least twice immediately before discharging the TEW to alert other officers that a deployment is about to occur.
- d. The TEW shall be discharged for an initial 5-second cycle;
 - (1) During and immediately after this cycle, the officer shall give verbal commands for the suspect to stop resisting.
 - (2) The officer shall be aware that an energized subject might not be able to respond to commands during or immediately following exposure.
 - (3) The officer shall allow a reasonable amount of time to assess the cycle's effectiveness and give the subject the opportunity to comply with the instructions given.
 - (4) The officer shall evaluate, under the totality of circumstances presented, whether additional cycles are reasonably necessary and whether additional cycles appear reasonably likely to be effective in accomplishing the officer's lawful objectives. The evaluation shall include consideration of the enhanced risks to subjects exposed to multiple and/or prolonged TEW cycles.
 - (5) If the officer reasonably perceives that the subject has not responded to the TEW in the anticipated manner based on the training and experience of the deploying officer, the deploying officer or a secondary Taser officer should deploy another cartridge (Taser 7) additional probe(s) (Taser 10), or transition to an alternative force option.
 - (6) To reduce the number of cycles and duration of exposure, the subject should be secured as soon as practical while exposed to the TEW cycle or immediately thereafter.
- e. Secondary Deployment
 - (1) All secondary deployment techniques are subject to the same guidelines and restrictions as initial deployments.

B. Medical Assistance

1. As soon as practical after the deployment of the TEW where contact is made with a suspect, officers shall request medical assistance, whether or not an injury is evident.
2. Medical personnel will determine whether the TEW probes penetrated the suspect's skin. If they did, any embedded probes shall be removed by medical personnel.
3. In most cases, transport of the suspect to a medical facility will not be necessary. However, transport becomes mandatory in any case where:
 - a. The suspect requests transport, or medical personnel recommend it.
 - b. The suspect was struck by the TEW in the head, neck, or groin.

- c. The suspect is discovered to be pregnant or suffering from a heart condition.
- d. The suspect complains of (or appears to be suffering from) chest pains, irregular heartbeat, difficulty breathing, and/or diminished consciousness.
- e. Any probe (or portion thereof) could not be removed from the suspect by medical personnel.
- f. The suspect has sustained a secondary injury that cannot be adequately treated by medical personnel at the scene.
- g. If a suspect exhibits behavior and physical signs of possible delirium syndrome.

If the suspect is transported to a hospital or other medical facility, the officer who maintains custody at that facility shall obtain a written medical release upon the suspect's discharge.

C. Reporting and Collection of Evidence

1. An officer who deploys a TEW in probe mode or drive stun follow-up shall document the circumstances in a Case Report. A supervisor shall document any TEW probe mode and drive stun follow-up deployment in a Use of Force review in BlueTeam. The Case Report and BlueTeam documentation of probe mode and drive stun follow-up deployments shall occur even if contact was not made with a suspect. An officer who discharges a TEW unintentionally shall notify a supervisor. A supervisor shall document any unintentional discharge of a TEW in an Administrative Investigation in BlueTeam.
2. An officer who points a TEW at a person, with or without displaying a warning arc or warning alert, shall document the circumstances in a Case Report or Field Investigation. Pointing a TEW at a person, with or without displaying a warning arc or warning alert, does not require a BlueTeam review.
3. Collection of Evidence – Following the intentional use of a TEW in probe mode, an agent with TEW evidence procedure training shall perform the following tasks:
 - a. Collect expended cartridges, probes, and intact TEW wires, and the TASER cartridge. Care should be taken not to damage the wires as data can be collected from them. These items shall be submitted to the Evidence & Inventory Management Unit, in accordance with standard evidence submission procedures.
 - b. Take photographs of the impact areas on the suspect's body:
 - (1) If probes penetrated the suspect's skin, photos of probes still embedded, if such photographs can be taken without delaying removal AND,
 - (2) Photos of the same areas of the suspect's body after successful removal of the probes, OR
 - (3) If probes did not penetrate the suspect's skin, photos of the areas believed to have been struck by the probes, showing that no penetration occurred.
 - (4) If drive stun follow-ups were executed or attempted, photographs of the area where they contacted the suspect's body or were intended to contact the suspect's body.

D. Wearing / Carrying of the TEW

1. Officers shall carry the TEW in a holster approved by the Taser Coordinator on the opposite side of the body as their duty firearm. Officers shall not attach the TEW to the exterior ballistic vest except SWAT officers, who may carry a TEW in a holster approved by the Taser Coordinator on their exterior ballistic vest during a SWAT mission or training.
2. Smart Cartridges (Taser 7 only) - Officers shall carry the TASER 7 energy weapon loaded with two Close Quarters Smart Cartridges. Officers shall carry two Standoff Smart Cartridges in a cartridge pouch approved by the Taser Coordinator attached to the TEW holster or to the officer's patrol belt or vest. Officers may remove the Close Quarters Smart Cartridges and load Standoff Smart Cartridges when appropriate for the tactical situation. When the need for Standoff Smart Cartridges is concluded,

officers shall remove the Standoff Smart Cartridges and load Close Quarters Smart Cartridges. Officers may only carry the TEW loaded with Standoff Smart Cartridges temporarily when Close Quarters Smart Cartridges are not available.

3. Smart Cartridges (Taser 10 only) - Officers shall carry the TASER 10 energy weapon with ten cartridges loaded in the black duty magazine.
4. Officers issued a TEW shall carry the device while working any uniformed assignment or detail.

E. TEW Storage

1. When not being used, all TEWs should be stored in a secure, climate-controlled location. Officers shall make every reasonable effort to avoid storing TEWs in extreme temperature conditions.

F. Training [4.3.2]

1. Only agency personnel demonstrating proficiency on an annual basis are approved to carry a TEW. Annual training shall include the department policy on use of force and all training will be documented. [4.3.3, a]
2. The Tactical Training Unit is responsible for selection, training, and recertification of Taser operators.
3. TEW certified personnel shall maintain their certification without interruption until they are transferred to a non-uniformed assignment. Officers who lose certification for any reason shall not carry their TEW until recertified.
4. Any officer who fails to meet the proficiency standards set during TEW training will be provided remedial training. Remedial training will be determined by the lead instructor. [4.3.3,c]

G. Maintenance

1. All officers are responsible for ensuring that their assigned TEW are properly maintained and shall exchange their TEW battery with a fully charged battery at least every forty-five days. Any TEW that has been exposed to excessive moisture must immediately be brought to the attention of the TASER Coordinator so that preventative maintenance may be conducted.
2. Officers shall function test their TEW at the beginning of their shift to ensure it is properly charged and in good working order. If either the Taser 7 or 10 energy weapon does not pass the function test or perform as expected, the officer will immediately notify their supervisor of the issue and shall immediately remove the device from service until the device has been repaired by the Taser Coordinator or another Taser instructor or another device has been issued.