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	Approving Authority: Chief Kenneth Seuberlich	
WASPC Standard(s):	Subject: CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPONS - TASER	

206.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Policy provides guidelines for the issuance and use of TASERs and conductive energy weapons.

206.2 POLICY

The Bothell Police Department authorized the use of an energy control weapon commonly known as a TASER. The is a portable device that fires darts/electrodes that transmit as electrical charge or current intended to temporarily immobilize a person. The TASER is intended to control a violent or potentially violent individual while minimizing the risk of serious injury. The appropriate use of such a device should result in fewer serious injuries to officers and suspects.

206.3 ISSUANCE AND CARRYING TASERS

Only members who have successfully completed department-approved training and have shown proficiency with the TASER may be issued and carry the TASER. Officers are required to recertify in accordance with policy and manufacturer recommendations. Officers-issued TASERs are expected to carry them as a less lethal option.

Officers shall only use the TASER and cartridges that have been issued by the Department. Uniformed officers who have been issued the TASER shall wear the device in an approved holster on their person. Non-uniformed officers may secure the TASER in the driver's compartment of their vehicle.

Members carrying the TASER should perform a spark test on the unit and check the remaining battery life prior to every shift. Officers should report any malfunctions to a supervisor or other appropriate personnel. When carried while in uniform officers shall carry the TASER in a weak-side holster on the side opposite the duty weapon and in all but extreme circumstances should draw the device with the support (non-pistol firing) hand.

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- (a) All TASERs shall be clearly and distinctly marked to differentiate them from the duty weapon and any other device.
- (b) Whenever practicable, officers should carry two or more cartridges on their person when carrying the TASER.
- (c) Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that their issued TASER is properly maintained and in good working order.
- (d) Officers should not hold both a firearm and the TASER at the same time unless exigent circumstances exist.

206.4 VERBAL AND VISUAL WARNINGS

A verbal warning of the intended use of the TASER should precede its application, unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of officers or when it is not practicable due to the circumstances. The purpose of the warning is to:

- (a) Provide the individual with a reasonable opportunity to voluntarily comply.
- (b) Provide other officers and individuals with a warning that the TASER may be deployed.

If, after a verbal warning, an individual is unwilling to voluntarily comply with an officer's lawful orders and it appears both reasonable and feasible under the circumstances, the officer may, but is not required to, display the electrical arc (provided that a cartridge has not been loaded into the device), or the laser in a further attempt to gain compliance prior to the application of the TASER.

The aiming laser should never be intentionally directed into the eyes of another as it may permanently impair his/her vision. The fact that a verbal or other warning was given or the reasons it was not given shall be documented by the officer deploying the TASER in the related report.

206.5 USE OF THE TASER

The TASER has limitations and restrictions requiring consideration before its use. The TASER should only be used when its operator can safely approach the subject within the operational range of the device. Although the TASER is generally effective in controlling most individuals, officers should be aware that the device may not achieve the intended results and be prepared with other options.

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206.6 APPLICATION OF THE TASER

The TASER may be used in any of the following circumstances, when the circumstances perceived by the officer at the time indicate that such application is reasonably necessary to control a person:

- (a) The subject is violent or is physically resisting.
- (b) The subject has demonstrated, by words or action, an intention to be violent or to physically resist, and reasonably appears to present the potential to harm officers, him/herself or others.
- (c) Officers should be aware that the primary use of a TASER is not as a pain compliance tool. Drive-stun mode should only be used when necessary to complete the incapacitation circuit when only one probe has attached to the person, where both probes are attached in close proximity, or when no other less lethal options are available or appropriate.

Mere flight from a pursuing officer, absent other factors, is not good cause for the use of the TASER to apprehend an individual and should not be used under these circumstances.

The TASER should not be used in the following circumstances:

- (a) On a person who is handcuffed or otherwise restrained unless deadly force is authorized.
- (b) On a person who is situated on an elevated surface (e.g., a ledge, scaffold, near a precipice, etc.) unless reasonable efforts have been made to prevent or minimize a fall-related injury (e.g., deploying a safety net).
- (c) Or an operator in physical control of a vehicle in motion, including automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, ATVs, bicycles, and scooters, unless deadly force is authorized.
- (d) In any environment where an officer knows or has reason to believe that a potentially flammable, volatile, or explosive material is present that might be ignited by an open spark, including but not limited to OC spray with a volatile propellant, gasoline, natural gas, or propane.

206.7 SPECIAL DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The use of the TASER on certain individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates that other available options reasonably appear ineffective or would present a greater danger to the officer, the subject or others, and

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the officer reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of using the device. This includes:

- (a) Individuals who are known to be pregnant.
- (b) Elderly individuals or obvious juveniles.
- (c) Individuals with obviously low body mass.
- (d) Individuals who are handcuffed or otherwise restrained.
- (e) Individuals who have been recently sprayed with a flammable chemical agent or who are otherwise in close proximity to any known combustible vapor or flammable material, including alcohol-based oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray.
- (f) Individuals whose position or activity may result in collateral injury (e.g., falls from height, operating vehicles).

Because the application of the TASER in the drive-stun mode (i.e., direct contact without probes) relies primarily on pain compliance, the use of the drive-stun mode generally should be limited to supplementing the probe-mode to complete the circuit, or as a distraction technique to gain separation between officers and the subject, thereby giving officers time and distance to consider other force options or actions.

The TASER shall not be used to psychologically torment, elicit statements or to punish any individual.

206.8 TARGETING CONSIDERATIONS

Reasonable efforts should be made to target lower center mass and avoid the head, neck, chest, and groin. If the dynamics of a situation or officer safety do not permit the officer to limit the application of the TASER probes to a precise target area, officers should monitor the condition of the subject if one or more probes strikes the head, neck, chest or groin until the subject is examined by paramedics or other medical personnel.

206.9 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS OF THE TASER

Officers should apply the TASER for only one standard cycle and then evaluate the situation before applying any subsequent cycles. Multiple applications of the TASER against a single individual are generally not recommended and should be avoided unless the officer reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the potentially increased risk posed by multiple applications. Officers should be aware that multiple applications the TASER increases the risk of serious bodily injury or death.

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If the first application of the TASER appears to be ineffective in gaining control of an individual, the officer should consider certain factors before additional applications of the TASER, including:

- (a) Whether the probes are making proper contact.
- (b) Whether the individual has the ability and has been given a reasonable opportunity to comply.
- (c) Whether verbal commands, other options, or tactics may be more effective.
- (d) Officers must be able to clearly articulate and document the justification for each individual application of the TASER.
- (e) A TASER should be used for one standard discharge cycle of five seconds or less, after which the officer should reassess the situation. An officer shall use only the minimum number of cycles necessary to control the person.
- (f) Officer should assume that if they have used a TASER three times against a person and the person continues to aggress, the TASER may not be effective against that person and the officer should consider other options.

Officers should generally not intentionally apply more than one TASER at a time against a single subject, unless the first deployed weapon clearly fails.

206.10 ACTIONS FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENTS

Officers shall perform the following after a TASER discharge:

- (a) Notify a supervisor of the TASER discharge.
- (b) Request aid for the subject.
- (c) Take photographs indicating probe placement, signature marks, or other noticeable injuries.
- (d) Remove probes. An officer or aid personnel may remove probes at the scene. If the probes are in sensitive areas (e.g., groin, female breasts, near the eye), the subject shall have the probes removed by qualified medical personnel. Probes shall be considered a sharp biohazard, and universal precautions should be utilized accordingly.
- (e) Document the Use of Force in accordance with the Policy.

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If the tased subject shows signs of any serious injury, the following additional items should be performed:

- (a) Take photos of the scene.
- (b) Collect Anti-Felon Identification (AFID) tags.
- (c) Collect the expended cartridge with connected wires. The cartridges shall be collected by loosely collecting the attached wires and cartridges and placing them in a large paper bag. This should include the probes when possible. Officers should utilize universal precautions. The paper bag should be clearly marked "Biohazard" and placed into evidence.

206.11 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

The TASER may be deployed against an animal as part of a plan to deal with a potentially dangerous animal, such as a dog, if the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

206.12 OFF-DUTY CONSIDERATIONS

Officers are not authorized to carry department TASERs while off-duty. This Policy does not restrict officers from carrying a Taser while working Department sanctioned off-duty employment/assignments.

Officers shall ensure that TASERs are secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control, in a manner that will keep the device inaccessible to others.

206.13 DOCUMENTATION

Officers shall document all TASER discharges in the related arrest/crime report and Use of Force report as required by Policy 200.

When a TASER is used, the reporting officer shall include the following information in the Use of Force report:

- (a) The type of TASER and TASER serial number.
- (b) The type of cartridge and cartridge serial number.
- (c) Date, time and location of the incident.

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- (d) The number of TASER activations/cycles, the duration between activations/cycles and (as best as can be determined) the duration that the subject received applications.
- (e) The range at which the TASER was used.
- (e) The type of mode used (probe or drive-stun).
- (f) Location of any probe impact.
- (g) Location of contact in drive-stun mode.
- (h) Description of where missed probes went.
- (i) Whether medical care was provided to the subject.
- (j) Whether the subject sustained any injuries.
- (l) Whether any officers sustained any injuries.

The Administrative Sergeant should periodically analyze the report forms to identify trends, including deterrence and effectiveness. The Professional Standards Sergeant should also conduct audits of data downloads and reconcile Use of Force reports with recorded activations. TASER information and statistics, with identifying information removed, should periodically be made available to the public.

206.14 REPORTS

The officer should include the following in the arrest/crime report:

- (a) Identification of all personnel firing TASERs.
- (b) Identification of all witnesses.
- (c) Medical care provided to the subject.
- (d) Observations of the subject's physical and physiological actions.
- (e) Any known or suspected drug use, intoxication or other medical problems.

206.15 MEDICAL TREATMENT

At the earliest safe opportunity at the scene controlled by law enforcement, trained personnel should remove TASER probes from a person's body. Used TASER probes

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shall be treated as a sharps biohazard, similar to a used hypodermic needle and handled appropriately. Universal precautions should be taken. Only qualified medical personnel should remove probes from sensitive areas (e.g., groin, female breasts, head, face, neck).

All persons who have been struck by TASER probes or who have been subjected to the electric discharge of the device shall be medically assessed prior to booking. Additionally, any such individual who falls under any of the following categories should, as soon as practicable, be examined by paramedics or other qualified medical personnel:

- (a) The person is suspected of being under the influence of controlled substances and/or alcohol.
- (b) The person may be pregnant.
- (c) The person reasonably appears to be in need of medical attention.
- (d) The TASER probes are lodged in a sensitive area (e.g., groin, female breast, head, face, neck).
- (e) The person requests medical treatment.

Any individual exhibiting signs of distress or who is exposed to multiple or prolonged applications (i.e., more than 15 seconds) shall be transported to a medical facility for examination or medically evaluated prior to booking. If any individual refuses medical attention, such a refusal should be witnessed by another officer and/or medical personnel and shall be fully documented in related reports. If an audio recording is made of the contact or an interview with the individual, any refusal should be included, if possible.

The transporting officer shall inform any person providing medical care or receiving custody that the individual has been subjected to the application of the TASER.

206.16 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When possible, supervisors should respond to calls when they reasonably believe there is a likelihood the TASER may be used. A supervisor should respond to all incidents where the TASER was activated. The supervisor shall ensure photographs of probe sites are taken and that witnesses are interviewed.

A supervisor shall review each incident where a person has been exposed to an activation of the TASER.

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The TASER's on-board memory should be downloaded through the data port by a supervisor, TASER Instructor or Firearms Instructor and saved with the related Use of Force report. If no one is available to download the TASER following an application, the TASER shall be taken out of service till such download can take place.

206.17 TRAINING

Personnel who are authorized to carry the TASER shall be permitted to do so only after successfully completing department-approved training.

Proficiency training for personnel who have been issued TASER's should occur a minimum of once every two years. A reassessment of an officer's knowledge and/or practical skill may be required at any time if deemed appropriate by the Administrative or Professional Standards Sergeant. All training and proficiency for TASER's will be documented in the officer's training file.

Command staff, supervisors and investigators should receive TASER training as appropriate for the investigations they conduct and review.

Officers who do not carry TASER's should receive training that is sufficient to familiarize them with the device and with working with officers who use the device.

The Administrative Sergeant is responsible for ensuring that all members who carry TASER's have received initial and biennial proficiency training. Periodic audits should be used for verification of training.

Before any TASER training or exposure, all persons MUST read and sign the TASER conducted Electrical Weapon Instructor and User: Warnings, Risks, Release & Indemnification Agreement Form (PFA-0206A).

Application of TASERs during training can result in injury to personnel and is therefore completely voluntary.

The Administrative Sergeant should ensure that all training includes:

- (a) A review of this Policy.
- (b) A review of the Use of Force Policy.
- (c) Performing weak-hand draws to reduce the possibility of accidentally drawing and firing a firearm.
- (d) Target area considerations to include techniques or options to reduce the accidental application of probes near the head, neck, chest, and groin.

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- (e) Handcuffing a subject during the application of the TASER and transitioning to other force options.
- (f) De-escalation techniques.
- (g) Restraint techniques that do not impair respiration following the application of the TASER.