

COCONUT CREEK POLICE DEPARTMENT

General Order #113



Use of TASER®

Effective Date: February 25, 2015

PURPOSE: This General Order establishes guidelines for the use of the TASER®. It is the policy of the Coconut Creek Police Department to utilize only that force necessary to subdue or apprehend a subject. The TASER® is deployed as an additional law enforcement tool and is not intended to replace firearms or self-defense techniques. The TASER® may provide another use of force option for the officers' consideration. The TASER® will be utilized under the conditions set forth in this order.

113.1 GENERAL ORDER

The Training Unit will be responsible for the overall coordination of all matters pertaining to the TASER®. It will be the responsibility of the Training Unit to train and certify officers on the proper techniques and use of the TASER®. Additionally, the Training Unit will be responsible for compiling and analyzing data from incidents involving the use of the TASER® to identify training-related needs and issues. It will be the responsibility of the respective officers' chain of command to ensure proper supervision, managerial controls, and compliance with this General Order.

113.2 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

All personnel who successfully complete the department's authorized training course and demonstrate proficiency in the use of the TASER® will be certified to carry the TASER®. Certification requirements will be determined by the Training Unit, in accordance with the manufacturer's standards. Certified instructors will conduct all training and issue certifications for the TASER®. In order to maintain proficiency in the use of the TASER®, all officers certified to carry the weapon will be re-certified annually.

113.3 AUTHORIZED USE OF THE TASER®

Its purpose is to effect the control of a subject who is resisting, opposing, threatening harm, or attempting to flee from officers. The decision by officers to deploy their TASER® will ultimately rest on the officers' judgment and application of department policies. A subject's actions, including verbal statements and body language, should be taken into account, before the deployment of a TASER®. Use of the TASER® may be appropriate in situations including, but not limited to:

- Situations involving a combative subject, an emotionally disturbed person, or a subject who appears to be under the influence of a mind-altering drug.

- Defending against attack from a dangerous animal. If an animal is subdued with the TASER®, Animal Control will be notified.
- Controlling a dangerous or violent subject; when attempts to subdue the subject by other conventional tactics have been, or will likely be, ineffective in the situation at hand; or, there is a reasonable expectation that it will be unsafe for officers to approach within the contact range of the subject.
- Using when officers reasonably believe the subject(s) may have committed, or are in the process of committing, a crime; or, in the detention of an individual who is being detained on an involuntary mental commitment.
- Handcuffed prisoners, when exigent circumstances exist.

113.4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

When the situation permits, and prior to unholstering their TASER®, the deploying officers will announce “taser, taser” to alert others of the impending use of the weapon.

113.5 CONSIDERATIONS

Use of the TASER® is prohibited under the following circumstances, unless exigent circumstances arise:

- Subject is in close proximity of flammable gases or liquids.
- Subject is in an elevated location which poses a risk of serious injury or death from a fall, including proximity to deep water, unless lethal force is justified.
- Subject is a young child, elderly person, or female known to be pregnant, unless lethal force is justified.

113.6 MEDICAL CLEARANCE

Notwithstanding any requirements from BSO, any person who receives more than one, five-second cycle will be medically cleared at the hospital before processing at the booking area.

113.7 REMOVAL OF PROBES

TASER® probes will be removed as soon as possible. TASER® probes that are imbedded in a subject's skin, as opposed to just clothing, will only be removed by Fire Rescue personnel, other medical personnel, or by police personnel who are trained in the removal of the probes. Police personnel will not remove TASER® probes that have struck a subject's head, throat, groin, or female breast. TASER® probes that have penetrated a person's skin will be considered a biological hazard and will be handled with the appropriate care.

113.8 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For the purpose of this General Order, an injury will not include the mere penetration and removal of the TASER® probe, unless the probe requires removal by medical personnel, as stated in this General Order.

Each discharge, including accidental discharges, of a TASER® will be investigated and documented. All accidental discharges will require a police report and use the header of Police Information. A supervisor will be notified in all instances when the TASER® has been utilized. The supervisor will respond to the scene and conduct an inquiry into the incident. Said inquiry will include, but not be limited to, a review of the evidence and interviews of witnesses. The supervisor will also notify a commanding officer of the incident. The supervisor and respective chain of command will review the incident for compliance to policy.

Fire Rescue will be requested to respond to all instances when the TASER® has been deployed and the subject is injured or complains of being injured. In those instances, the requesting officers will monitor the subject, until Fire Rescue personnel have arrived. If the subject has received more than one, five-second cycle of a TASER®, that subject will be medically cleared, prior to the arrest being processed.

In addition to the official report forms for the incident, a Response to Resistance Report will be completed on all TASER® incidents. Originals of the Response to Resistance Report will be forwarded, through chain of command, to the Records Unit. A copy of the Response to Resistance Report will be forwarded to the Training Unit, Internal Affairs Commander, the deploying officer's commander, the Deputy Chief of Police, the Chief of Police, and, if subject is injured or claims injury, to the City's Risk Management Department. Photographs will be taken in all cases when a TASER® has been used.

Expendable TASER® cartridges will be discarded, unless serious injury has occurred, at which time, they will be submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit as evidence. If a probe comes in contact with bodily fluids, follow procedure for biohazard evidence. The officers will contact the Training Unit to obtain a replacement cartridge, during regular business hours. Replacement cartridges will not be issued without a copy of the Response to Resistance Report signed by the shift supervisor. A supply of cartridges and a spare TASER® will also be available to Patrol Supervisors to issue, if officers need replacement when the Training Unit is not available. When circumstances exist, an officer who's assigned TASER® is down for repair may use another officer's assigned TASER® for his shift. E-mail notifications stating such must be sent to the specific Patrol Supervisor and the Training Unit listing the serial number upon occurrence.

113.9 MAINTENANCE AND CARE

Officers issued a TASER® will be responsible for proper maintenance and care. At the beginning of each shift, officers will also perform a function check of the TASER®. Patrol Supervisors will ensure that spare TASERs® be function checked every Sunday. Function checks are to be performed with the TASER® cartridge removed. If the battery indicator reads 20 or less, the TASER® will be taken out of service until the battery is replaced. Replacement batteries will be obtained from the Training Unit.

If the TASER® malfunctions, it is to be removed from service immediately and turned over to the Training Unit as soon as practical. If the TASER® is dropped, officers will function-test the unit as soon as practical. If the TASER® malfunctions after being

dropped, officers will complete an Incident Report headed Property Damage and remove the unit(s) from service.

Test firing of the TASER® is prohibited, unless instructed to do so by a member of the Training Unit.

113.10 CARRYING OF THE TASER®

- Officers issued the TASER® must carry them on their duty belts at all times, unless performing administrative duties at the police station or otherwise excused by guidelines established by the Chief of Police. The TASER® will be worn on their support side in front of the radio. Officers issued the TASER® must also wear their Autolock expandable batons. Carrying of pepper spray is optional. The TASER® will never be left unsecured. Officers will only carry department-issued TASERs® and TASER® cartridges.