

Columbus Police Division Directive	EFFECTIVE	NUMBER
	Mar. 30, 2012	2.04
	REVISED	TOTAL PAGES
	Jun. 30, 2023	5
Chemical Spray and Intermediate Weapons Regulations		



Cross Reference: 2.01, 2.05

I. Definitions

A. Conducted Energy Weapon (hereafter referred to as taser)

An intermediate weapon not intended to replace firearms or self-defense techniques. The taser is designed to temporarily immobilize a violent or potentially violent subject. When applied correctly, the taser generates an electrical current that disrupts the neuromuscular and sensory nervous system **and** incapacitates the subject.

B. Close-Quarter Probe Deployment

A method in which the user deploys the taser on a subject in “Probe” mode, then places the taser at another position on the subject’s body as distant as possible from the initial contact point, and rocks the taser forward and backward.

C. Drive-Stun

A function in which the taser is held directly against the subject’s body, causing localized pain, but does not override the subject’s motor responses.

II. Policy Statements

A. Following a use of force with chemical **spray** or an intermediate weapon, if a subject experiences an **n** injury or is in medical distress, sworn personnel shall render aid as appropriate and as follows:

1. Notify Communications personnel;
2. Summon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and ensure that the dispatcher acknowledges the request; and
3. Render medical aid consistent with training and available equipment as soon as it is safe to do so. Refer to **Section II,C,23** for rendering aid following taser use.

B. Chemical **Spray**

1. **Sworn personnel shall only carry chemical spray that has been authorized by the Chief of Police.**
2. Sworn personnel shall not carry chemical spray until training and qualification standards have been satisfied. Sworn personnel shall demonstrate proficiency with chemical spray once each calendar year.

3. Sworn personnel may use chemical spray to protect themselves or another person from harm, to effect the arrest of or gain control of a physically aggressive/resistive subject, to prevent escape, or to prevent or stop the commission of a criminal offense.
 - a. Sworn personnel should not use chemical spray on handcuffed subjects unless they pose a danger to themselves, officer(s), or the public.
 - b. Supervisors investigating incidents in which chemical spray has been used against a handcuffed person shall comply with the applicable procedures detailed in the Supervisor's Manual and the "Use of Force" directive.
 4. Sworn personnel shall not use chemical spray to disperse a congregation of individuals.
 - a. Sworn personnel encountering a group of people, some of whom are engaged in unlawful conduct, shall be guided by the "Use of Force" directive when determining whether to use chemical spray.
 - b. If chemical spray is used, it **shall** be directed at the persons participating in the violent conduct, not at the group in general.
 - c. The encounter **shall** be audio/video-recorded.
 5. Sworn personnel deploying chemical **spray** shall make a reasonable effort to decontaminate exposed persons once the situation is under control. Decontamination may include exposure to fresh air, flushing the eyes with fresh water, or seeking medical attention.
- C. Intermediate Weapons
1. Sworn personnel shall carry only those intermediate weapons authorized by the Chief of Police. The **following are** approved intermediate weapons:
 - a. A flashlight not to exceed 15 inches in length
 - b. The issued tactical baton
 - c. The approved taser
 2. Sworn personnel shall not carry an intermediate weapon until training and qualification standards for that weapon have been satisfied. Sworn personnel shall requalify once each calendar year with each intermediate weapon they are authorized to carry.
 3. Sworn personnel may use an intermediate weapon to protect themselves or another person from harm, to effect the arrest of or gain control of a physically aggressive/resistive subject, or to prevent or stop the commission of a criminal offense.
 4. Sworn personnel should not use an intermediate weapon on handcuffed subjects unless they pose a danger to themselves, officer(s), or the public.
 5. Intermediate weapons are not a substitute for deadly force.

6. It is recommended that sworn personnel have an approved intermediate weapon and a restraint device available when in possession of a firearm while off duty.
 7. Sworn personnel shall complete a Use of Force Report, form U-10.128, when an intermediate weapon is used on a subject.
 8. Sworn personnel shall complete the Personal Advanced Taser Agreement, form J-10.112, and obtain approval from the Defensive Tactics Unit (DTU) prior to carrying a personally owned taser. Personally owned tasers may be carried while working regular duty, special duty, or off duty as an intermediate weapon. Division-owned tasers that are not personally assigned shall only be used for regular duty.
 9. Sworn personnel shall not target the head, face, neck, or groin with the taser in probe mode.
 10. Sworn personnel should not intentionally target the chest area above the sternum when deploying the taser in probe mode when possible.
 11. Sworn personnel may target the neck or groin with the taser in drive-stun mode.
 12. Sworn personnel **shall** consider training and the following when determining whether to use the taser:
 - a. Subject's age
 - b. Subject's weight
 - c. Subject's obvious physical disabilities
 - d. Subjects who are in a position where a fall may cause substantial injury or death
 - e. Whether the subject is exhibiting signs or symptoms of mental illness
 13. Sworn personnel should not use the taser in drive-stun mode for pain compliance if it is likely to be ineffective due to intoxication or to signs or symptoms of mental illness.
 14. Sworn personnel should not use the taser on small children, infirm or elderly individuals, obviously pregnant females, or subjects who are in control of a motor vehicle.
 15. Sworn personnel shall not deploy the taser on subjects known to have come in contact with flammables or in environments where flammables are obviously present.
 16. Sworn personnel shall not use the taser on a fleeing subject who committed a minor misdemeanor as a primary offense, unless the subject is posing an articulable threat to the officer or to another citizen.
- Note: Failure to Comply and/or Obstructing Official Business violations arising solely from the act of fleeing from a minor misdemeanor are not justification for using the taser.
17. Sworn personnel shall properly store the taser when it is not in use. Once the taser is issued, sworn personnel shall not leave the taser unattended.

18. Sworn personnel shall not change or modify the taser.
19. Sworn personnel shall contact a DTU supervisor for replacement of any taser that is not safe or functioning properly. Only a DTU supervisor shall repair the taser or accessories.
20. Sworn personnel shall not remove the Digital Power Magazine (DPM) from the taser unit. Once the DPM read-out reaches 20% or less, personnel should have the DPM replaced. The DPM shall only be replaced by a DTU supervisor.
21. Taser unintentional discharges
 - a. Sworn personnel shall notify an on-duty supervisor and record the incident on the Taser Log Sheet, form S-70.113.
 - (1) If a subject is struck, sworn personnel shall complete a Use of Force Report and follow the applicable procedures outlined in the "Use of Force" directive.
 - (2) If no subject is struck, sworn personnel shall ensure that the probes and cartridges are destroyed.
 - (3) The supervisor shall conduct an administrative investigation when an incident occurs at a location other than a police facility or at a police facility when a suspect or arrestee is present.
22. Taser deployment
 - a. Sworn personnel choosing to deploy a taser shall confirm that the weapon selected is a taser and not a firearm.
 - b. Only cartridges marked "25 FEET" or "XP" shall be used in the taser.
 - c. When feasible, sworn personnel should communicate to the subject that the taser is going to be deployed to attempt to gain compliance. This can be communicated to the subject by removing the air cartridge, displaying the laser on the subject, and "sparking" the taser unit.

Note: When the taser is displayed or "sparked" for compliance, sworn personnel shall document these actions as outlined in the "Use of Force" directive.
 - d. If possible, personnel should give the loud verbal command "Taser! Taser! Taser!" prior to firing the taser.
 - e. Sworn personnel may use the taser in the drive-stun mode to gain control of suspects displaying active resistance. The drive-stun mode shall not be used with a live air cartridge in place.
 - f. Sworn personnel should attempt to control and handcuff the subject under power during the window of opportunity the taser cycle provides.
 - g. Sworn personnel should consider moving on to another force option if unable to control and handcuff under power.

23. Taser post-use

- a. Sworn personnel shall summon EMS to respond to the scene as soon as it is safe to do so. Any subject upon whom the taser is used in either probe or drive-stun mode shall be examined by EMS personnel and shall remain under observation by sworn personnel until slated or released.
 - (1) Sworn personnel shall advise EMS personnel as soon as possible if medical distress becomes evident.
 - (2) Sworn personnel shall request EMS personnel to remove any probes that have penetrated the skin or to care for wounds caused by probes that penetrated but fell out. Sworn personnel shall not remove the probes.
 - (3) If the subject is transported to a medical facility, sworn personnel shall ride in the medic unit and remain with the subject until further medical attention has been offered.
- b. Sworn personnel shall provide the subject with the Taser Aftercare, form S-70.112.
- c. Sworn personnel shall treat the taser cartridge, wires, and probes as evidence and shall secure and submit them to the Property Control Unit for two years. This does not apply to unintentional discharges when no subject is struck or when used against an animal. Probes that have penetrated the skin should be treated as a biohazard and proper universal health precautions should be taken when handling and packaging them.

24. Taser dataport

- a. Only zone lieutenants, a DTU supervisor, and Internal Affairs Bureau supervisors shall access the taser's USB dataport.
- b. Taser dataport settings shall only be set or adjusted by a DTU supervisor.

25. Each unit assigned a taser shall maintain a Taser Log Sheet that includes:

- a. Tasers assigned to the unit;
- b. Taser cartridge serial numbers assigned to the unit; and
- c. Spent taser cartridge serial numbers with the date fired, the officer's name and badge number, and the taser serial number from which it was fired.

26. When the Taser Log Sheet indicates four cartridges remain assigned to the unit, the first shift supervisor shall obtain replacements through DTU.

27. Completed Taser Log Sheets shall be forwarded to DTU for retention.