



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, DC


JUN 13 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/A7S

FROM: HQ USAF/A7S
1030 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1030

SUBJECT: Taser Policy

1. This letter, with attached policy, is approval for the use of Tasers in Security Forces operations and supersedes all previous policies. This policy also adds provisions for voluntary exposures and recommends initial training include discharging at least three cartridges for familiarization. During recertification training, cartridge discharging is at the commander's discretion.
2. Tasers will be added in the next revision of AFM 31-222. In the interim, use this policy letter for implementation purposes. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Norbert Chavez, DSN 945-8933 or Mr. Sal Hernandez, DSN 945-5015.


MARY KAY HERTOOG, Brig Gen, USAF
Director of Security Forces
DCS/Logistics, Installations & Mission Support

Attachment:
Taser Policy

Taser Policy

1. Introduction. The M26 Advanced Taser and X26E Taser are conducted energy weapons manufactured by Taser International Inc. They use direct contact or propelled wires to conduct energy that affects the sensory and motor functions of the central nervous system. The primary intended effect is electro-muscular disruption to assure compliance of an individual. Generally, you can expect to use a Taser when the subject's actions are located within the resistant (active) portion of the Use of Force Model (refer to AFI 31-207, para 1.3.). Additionally, CONUS MAJCOMs will ensure installations coordinate with the Staff Judge Advocate's (SJA) office to confirm Taser use is permitted at local installations. OCONUS MAJCOMs and deployed units in overseas areas will coordinate with the local SJA to ensure use of the Taser does not violate any Status of Forces Agreements or international laws. Further explanation and training can be retrieved from the Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) on the HQ Air Force Security Forces Center web site at <https://afsfmil.lackland.af.mil/>.

2. Nomenclature. Tasers are similar in shape and appearance to a pistol. The on/off switch is modeled after the safety of a pistol and its mechanical functions are similar to the de-cock lever on an M-9 pistol. When the safety is flipped upward with either thumb, the weapon system is turned on and a laser designator projects from underneath the front of the weapon, serving as both an aim point and a deterrent to the subject.

2.1. Cartridges. Use the cartridges identified in the TTP.

2.2. Batteries. Use batteries in accordance with the TTP. Dispose of batteries and cartridges in accordance with packaging instructions and AF Instructions.

3. Training. Thorough training in the use and employment of the Taser is critical. Training enhances the Taser effectiveness, protects both the user and the Air Force against liability, and ensures the safety of the user, the subject, and bystanders. Comprehensive training should go beyond the technical application to include physiological reactions, legal issues (use of force guidelines), tactical issues, and applications. Refer to the TTPs as stated in Para 1 for further guidance.

3.1. Instructor Training. Instructors must complete the instructor training conducted by Taser International Inc, the Interservice Non-Lethal Weapons Instructors Course or any certified Master Taser Instructor, and must recertify every two years. If trained by a civilian Master Instructor, ensure AF policy and TTPs are reviewed and incorporated into your training plan for your users' certification training. Installations wishing to use Taser International must contact the training coordinator directly at 800-978-2737 or <http://www.taser.com> to arrange instructor training. Note: see Para 3.5 for voluntary exposure guidance.

3.2. Initial User Training. Certified Air Force Taser Instructors will conduct initial training in accordance with established TTPs stated in Para 1. To ensure users are familiarized with Taser employment, each person will deploy a minimum of three cartridges

(training or live). Trainees must successfully complete and pass the written certification test and evaluation specified by Taser International Inc.

3.3. Annual User Training. Trained AF instructors will train all Security Forces (SF) Taser users annually, as a minimum, and trainees must successfully complete and pass the written certification test and evaluation specified by Taser International Inc. Evaluations can include cartridge employment at the unit commander's discretion. The TTPs include a lesson plan for conducting annual training.

3.4. Documenting Training. Units must document all Taser training (initial and annual refresher training), including voluntary exposure, on the AF Form 1098.

3.5. Voluntary Exposure During Training. Taser International Inc recommends training include every user receiving a five second duty cycle. SF will not require members to receive the five second duty cycle exposure to be certified; however this does not preclude members from volunteering. In order to better understand the effects of the incapacitation of Taser, SF users and instructors are highly encouraged to receive the exposure at least once in their career. All volunteers, military or civilian, must fill out the Warning, Risk, and Informed Consent prior to being exposed. The form must also be annotated by the certified instructor who will be conducting the exposure. The Informed Consent form is attached to the TTPs as stated in Para 1.

4. Carrying Tasers. Tasers will be worn in a support side carry position and *may not* be worn on the same side of the body as the firearm. **NOTE:** Always replace the air cartridge prior to expiration. The expiration date is printed on each cartridge. **EXCEPTON:** When conducting prisoner escort on an aircraft, no cartridge will be inserted and only the drive-stun mode will be used.

4.1. Holster/Belt Clip. X26 Tasers come with the Exoskeleton Holster, but the 3" Belt Clip to fit our nylon belts must be requested separately.

4.2. Arc testing of the Taser. Each time a SF member is issued a Taser from the Armory, the member is required to conduct a function check. The function check will consist of an Arc test using the following procedures.

4.2.1. Receive cartridges and holster, if applicable, from the Armorer and secure them per your unit's policy.

4.2.2 Receive the Taser butt first from the Armorer and ensure it is safe with no cartridge loaded.

4.2.3. Step back one step and point the Taser upward ensuring no one is at risk of being accidentally tased. (Note: Anytime the unit is placed on fire, ensure the laser pointer is not pointed at a person's eye).

4.2.4. Place the Taser on fire, shout out “Arc Test” one time and pull the trigger, allowing the unit to cycle long enough to ensure proper operation. Ensure the Taser has sufficient battery life as defined in the lesson plan.

4.2.5. Prior to holstering the Taser, ensure a cartridge is inserted and the unit is ready for duty.

5. Taser Use. Many situations that begin as standoffs have the potential to escalate to lethal force. Early, aggressive use of a non-lethal weapon like the Taser can prevent many of these situations from escalating to deadly force. Tasers are considered non-lethal force and may be used when the subject is actively resisting or is noncompliant and demonstrating a willingness and the ability to harm themselves or others (i.e. emotionally-disturbed persons). Additionally, Tasers have been used successfully to incapacitate subjects armed with an edged weapon. In such situations, it is recommended that Security Forces members have one or more accompanying Security Forces members providing lethal coverage in the event the Taser fails to incapacitate the subject. **NOTE:** If a subject armed with a Taser attacks a SF member, the SF member is authorized to use the minimum amount of force necessary to ensure the safety of themselves or others, up to and including the use of deadly force.

5.1. Employing Tasers. Users must comply with the use of force continuum. Immediately prior to firing a Taser, the SF member will shout “TASER! TASER! TASER!” in a loud, clear manner to prevent other SF members from mistaking the Taser use for a firearms discharge. **NOTE:** The Taser will not be fired at the face or throat. The Taser has a Class IIIa laser pointer and could be harmful if shining into person’s eyes at distances shorter than 18 meters.

5.2. Taser Use in Conjunction with Pepper Spray. Tasers may be used in lieu of pepper spray, prior to use of pepper spray or following the use of pepper spray if the spray is ineffective at incapacitating the subject. **CAUTION!** If the subject has been heavily sprayed with a pepper spray that uses an alcohol-based carrier (check the label to see if the spray contains alcohol), then SF personnel must wait thirty seconds for the alcohol to evaporate before the Taser can be used. This is to avoid the electrical discharge of the Taser igniting the alcohol that may have saturated the subject’s clothing. If a water-based carrier is used in the pepper spray, there is no need to wait to use the Taser.

6. Post-Use Actions. Once a subject has been incapacitated with a Taser, the covering SF member should move in and handcuff the subject.

6.1. Precautions. SF must be vigilant not to step on or come in contact with the wires running from the Taser to the darts in the subject. It is safe to touch and place the suspect at a disadvantage while the Taser is actively incapacitating the subject as long as the SF member does not make contact with the wires.

6.2. Removing Taser Darts. SF may remove the darts from the subject once the subject has been handcuffed and is no longer actively resisting. Personnel will don personal protection

equipment (rubber gloves) prior to removing the darts to prevent exposure to blood borne pathogens. The darts removed from the skin must be inserted in the gaps on either side of the front of the expended cartridge to prevent biohazards and placed in a biohazard container. Areas of the skin penetrated by the darts should be wiped with an alcohol pad or other first aid wipe and covered with adhesive dressing if needed. **EXCEPTIONS:** If the dart cannot be easily removed (such as being impaled in bones, throat, or groin), obtain medical assistance as necessary. Additionally, if a subject requests medical assistance, such assistance must be provided in a timely manner.

6.3. Evidence Collection. The expended cartridge and Anti Felon IDs (AFIDS) will be collected and secured as evidence. Photographs shall be taken of the dart impact sites and any other related injuries and placed in the case file. The cartridge should be labeled, secured, and placed into the evidence locker IAW AFI 31-206, *Security Forces Investigations Program*.

6.4. Recording and Reporting TASER Use. SF members who use a Taser while subduing a subject will ensure such actions are reported on AF Form 53, *Security Forces Desk Blotter*, and AF Form 3545, *Incident Report*. Notify the MAJCOM/A7S within 24 hours of the basic incident facts. Units will send an After Action Report to AFSFC/SFOP within 30 days of the incident, by using the lessons learned format in AFI 31-201. These reports will be published in the lessons learned section of the JLLIS web site at <https://www.jllis.mil/usaf> as a learning tool for all security forces members.

7. Carrying Tasers on Aircraft. If going on an aircraft, the Taser must be placed in a hard case in your checked luggage (except when armed for prisoner escort duties). Remove the batteries and cartridges from the Taser and store separately in the hard case. Although the Taser is not classified as a firearm, you should advise the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) official prior to baggage screening that you are carrying the Taser in your checked baggage. Additionally, some airlines may require notification, so coordinate with the airline prior to travel and inform the agent when checking in. If shipping a Taser, store the Taser in a hard case as stated above.

8. Military Working Dog Interaction with Taser. To allow the handler to focus on activities associated with the Canine, it is not recommended that canine handlers use or be issued Tasers. However, this is permissible if done according to guidance from the Installation Chief of Security Forces.