

Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association

The State of Maryland is comprised of 23 counties and Baltimore City, and encompasses over 12,400 square miles of land and waterways. There are approximately 170 local, county, and state law enforcement agencies that protect the citizens of Maryland. Many of Maryland's law enforcement agencies use an Electronic Control Device (ECD) sometimes called an Electronic Control Weapon. The ECD is a non-lethal device that, when deployed against an individual, emits an electrical energy charge that affects the sensory and motor functions of the individual's central nervous system. The electric discharge from an ECD is relatively minimal and as such, when used properly, the ECD is a safe tool for law enforcement in accomplishing their mission.

The Maryland Chiefs of Police and the Maryland Sheriffs' Associations are dynamic professional associations of public and private law enforcement leaders who are committed to providing high quality police and security services. Many of the State's law enforcement agencies are members of one or both Associations. The members of the Associations are committed to the use of safe and innovative technology to further the goals of effective law enforcement, while protecting citizens and officers alike from undue harm. The ECD is an example of such useful technology.

The Associations have developed the attached Guidelines in the training, use, and reporting procedures associated with the ECD's. These guidelines consider that Maryland is a diverse state and Maryland's law enforcement communities consist of agencies as small as one police officer and as large as Baltimore City, which employs approximately 3,000 sworn officers. Therefore, these guidelines have been developed as a reference for law enforcement agencies in the development of or enhancement of their own ECD policies. The Maryland Chiefs

of Police and the Maryland Sheriffs' Associations recognize that each agency must consider its own individual needs consistent with the demographics and resources unique to their community needs. These guidelines are not meant or intended to supersede ECD guidelines established by any other law enforcement agency, or to create a higher standard of care or cause of action to be brought by any third party against a law enforcement agency or officer, other than that already established by law.

The use of an ECD is a use of force by a law enforcement or correctional officer. No use of force is without risk of injury to a suspect or an officer. The key criteria to be considered in every use of force situation is whether the force used was objectively reasonable under the circumstances known to the officer at the time force was used. This familiar standard, established by the United States Supreme Court in the seminal case of *Graham v. Connor*, remains the touchstone for the justification of use of force, regardless of the weapon or technology used.

The Associations are grateful to members of the Legal Advisors' Committee, especially Major Sam Bilotti, Washington County Sheriff's Office; Phil Hinkle, Counsel, Charles County Sheriff's Office; Jordan Watts, Director, Legal Division, Baltimore County Police Department, and Karen Kruger, Funk and Bolton, P.A. for their extensive efforts in creating these guidelines.