


<p><b>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</b></p>  <p><b>General Order Number: 4.27</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Issue</b></p> <p><b>2/23/2016</b></p>	<p><b>Effective Date</b></p> <p><b>2/23/2016</b></p>	<p><b>Revision Date</b></p>
<p>Subject: <b>M/X 26 TASER</b></p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as: General Policies and Procedures M/X 26 Taser Taser Use of Force</p>	<p>State Certification Standards: 1.14, 1.17</p>		

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the policy and procedures for the use of the M/X 26 Taser by employees of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office that the M/X 26 Tasers shall be used in a manner as prescribed by policy and in accordance to the accepted statute limitations, the use of force, and the deputy's training.

**DISCUSSION**

The M/X-26 Tasers (hereinafter referred to as "Taser") provides a force option in which an deputy does not have to get unnecessarily close to a threat before deploying the weapon system. The Taser may reduce the need for other types of physical force by the officer(s).

The M/X-26 Tasers are the only Tasers authorized for use by deputies of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office. No other Taser or other electrical devices shall be used by any deputy of this department. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary actions that may include the offending deputy having his authorization to carry a Taser revoked or suspended.

The Taser fires two probes up to a distance of 21 feet from a replaceable air cartridge. These probes are connected to the Taser by insulated wire. When the probes make contact with the target, the Taser transmits electrical pulses along the wire and into the target through up to two inches of clothing.

The Taser can be laser sighted. The Taser fires two probes up to a distance of 21 feet from a replaceable air cartridge, depending on the cartridge. The top probe will follow the front sight, or laser, rear sight and laser sight. The bottom probe will travel at an 8-degree downward angle below the aim point. The general rule is that the drop of the bottom probe is one foot for every 7 feet that the probes travel.

The air cartridge has a shelf life of five years. If the cartridge breaks open, it **must** be immediately replaced with a new cartridge, or the Taser must be taken out of service. Damaged cartridges will be returned to Taser International for replacement.

The Taser has a data port that stores the time and date the Taser was fired. This data can protect deputies from claims of excessive force by providing complete and accurate documentation for each firing.

The Taser falls into the category of Less Lethal Force Technology and equipment, which is defined as "those items which, when used properly, are less likely to result in death or serious physical injury than force commonly referred to as deadly force."

The Taser is a sensitive, costly, electronic product that should always be carried in the holster or secured except during inspections and when preparing to deploy or actually deploying the device. Care should be taken to avoid dropping the Taser. Deputies must ensure that the Taser is adequately secured while being transported in vehicles. Defective Tasers and defective or out of date Air Cartridges will be returned to the Training Unit for training use. The faceplate of the Taser Air Cartridge is secured to the Air Cartridge body. Direct sunlight, heat, or pressing on the faceplate may cause the cover to disengage from the Air Cartridge. The Air Cartridge should never be placed near static electricity. Additional spare cartridges should not be attached to the weapons system.

The Taser is deployed as an additional law enforcement tool and is not intended to replace the department issued and/or authorized firearms or other self defense techniques. The Taser may be used to control a dangerous or violent subject when deadly force does not appear to be justified or necessary, or when attempts to subdue the subject by conventional means have been, or will likely be, ineffective in the situation at hand. The Taser can also be used if there is reasonable expectation that it would be unsafe for deputies to approach the subject within contact range of other, traditional law enforcement tools which fall into the non-deadly force category.

## **I. GENERAL PROCEDURES**

- A. The Taser shall be worn and/or used only by deputies who have successfully completed the Taser Training Program.
- B. Part of the training shall consist of deputies being personally exposed to the effects of the Taser. Deputies are required to be shot with the probes, or have the probes attached to their body with tape or similar adhesive.
- C. Deputies who wish to continue carrying the Taser shall attend annual re-training on the Taser as approved by the Sheriff or his designee(s).
- D. Any deputy who fails to attend such training shall have his/her authority to carry or use the weapon revoked until he/she successfully completes such mandatory re-training. If an deputy who fails to attend the annual re-training is carrying a department issued Taser, he/she shall immediately surrender it to the departmental Quartermaster or Training Coordinator for that division upon notice of his/her failure to attend the re-training.

- E. Only properly functioning and charged Tasers shall be carried on duty.
- F. The Shift Supervisor shall routinely inspect the Taser(s) to ensure that the weapon is fully charged and has no defects that could render it nonfunctional. Taser(s) found with defects will be removed from service immediately until the defect is repaired or replaced.
- G. The M/X-26 Tasers are equipped with rechargeable batteries that need to be recharged every two weeks. Batteries should be replaced annually. The M/X-26 Taser should be monitored by the user and the battery turned in at 20% to the Training Unit.
- H. Each discharge, excluding the manufacturers recommended daily spark test, (including accidental discharges) or Use of the Taser without a discharge shall be investigated and documented by an Incident Report, Use of Force Form, M/X-26 Taser Use Report and/or any other reports deemed necessary by the Sheriff or his designee(s). All reports shall be completed and submitted for approval prior to the deputy ending his/her tour of duty. No waivers or delays may be granted for the completion of these reports except by the Sheriff or his designee(s).
- I. The Taser is programmed to deliver a five second electrical current. The deputy can shorten this time by the use of the safety lever. The probes should not be touched during this period of time as the person so touching the probes will also receive the same electrical current. Deputies should take great care to avoid stepping on or tripping over the wires.
- J. When a deputy is preparing to deploy the weapon, he/she should never aim the weapon at the eyes, face, or genitals of the subject unless an incident escalates into a deadly force situation. Less than lethal weapon may be used at that point in any manner necessary to include targeting the suspect's eyes, face, throat, spine or groin to prevent death or serious bodily injury to the involved Rabun County Sheriff's Office member(s) or any other person(s)
- K. Keep hands away from the front of the blast door at all times.
- L. Do not deploy the Taser near flammable liquids or fumes. The Taser could ignite gasoline or other flammables. Some self-defense or OC sprays are flammable and would be extremely dangerous to use in conjunction with the Taser. Deputies should also never use the Taser at confirmed or suspected methamphetamine lab sites.
- M. Use of the Taser can prevent a violent confrontation that may result in deputys) or subject(s) being injured.
- N. Tasers are not to be used on any female suspects that are known to be pregnant.

## II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. Training Unit

1. Ensure that training on the Taser as a less than lethal weapon is provided when and as needed.
2. May conduct annual refresher training on the use of the Taser.
3. Expired cartridges taken out of service may be used for training purposes only.

## B. Shift Supervisor

1. Ensure that only deputies properly trained in the use of the Taser are allowed to carry or use the weapons on duty.
2. The Shift Supervisor must ensure that each and every incident involving the discharge of a Taser is fully documented by the completion and submission of all necessary reports.
3. Ensure that the batteries of the Taser are regularly charged according to manufacture's recommendations. (When checking the batteries, the air cartridge must be removed).
4. Respond to locations where the Taser has been deployed.
5. Summons EMS personnel if required.
6. Ensure that pictures are taken of the probe penetration sites, if such sites exist, and any secondary injuries caused by falling to the ground, etc.
7. If the probes have penetrated the subject's skin, the supervisor will make a determination if the deputy(s) on the scene can remove the probes, or if EMS or other medical personnel should remove them.

## C. Deputy(s)

1. Deputies and EMS personnel must be aware that one easily overlooked aspect of injury to a subject hit with the Taser is that of falling from a standing position to the ground. If EMS personnel are on scene, they should be advised to check for secondary injuries sustained from such a fall. If EMS is not on scene, the deputy should perform the secondary injury check, after the offender is secured.
2. Request the response of the Shift Supervisor if he/she is not already enroute or on-scene.
3. Prior to the deployment of the Taser, when and if practical, announce "Taser Clear" to alert other deputies that use of the Taser is imminent to avoid and prevent accidental and/or unintentional shootings of other deputies.
4. Deputies attempting to remove the probes from a person shall wear latex gloves and should use the thumb and forefinger for the removal of the probes.
5. The spent Air Cartridge must be bagged, tagged and submitted into evidence. (Since the probes may have blood (biohazard) on them the probes shall be removed from the wire and properly disposed of in a sharps container.)
6. When preparing the Air Cartridge for bagging, deputies should wind the wires around the used Air Cartridge. The Air Cartridge may then be placed into the evidence bag and submitted into evidence.

7. The deputy shall also collect several of the "Aphids", if possible (the small pieces of paper that are expelled with the probes), which identify the Taser that was fired and place them in the evidence bag along with the Air Cartridge.

### III. TACTICAL DEPLOYMENT

Deputies who are preparing to deploy the Taser on a subject should, if time and circumstances permit, utilize the following recommendations:

- A. Use common sense and allow subject to submit if possible;
- B. Use verbal commands and point the laser light at subject prior to firing the weapon. This may by itself de-escalate the situation so that no further force is required to subdue the subject;
- C. Prior to the use of the Taser, if practical and circumstances permit, broadcast "Taser Clear" indicating the use of the Taser is imminent to prevent unintentional shootings of other deputies on the scene;
- D. Have a second Air Cartridge present or a second Taser ready to fire in case the probes miss the intended target, or there is a malfunction of the Air Cartridge;
- E. Aim at center of lower mass (i.e., the center of the abdomen). Watch for thick and/or loose clothing. If probes strike the clothing, the electrical current can still penetrate up to two inches away from the skin of the target;
- F. Use cover and distance to ensure deputy safety. The Taser is effective up to 21 feet away from the target;
- G. If target runs after being hit with the probes, the deploying deputy must follow to prevent the wires being broken; and
- H. Avoid using the Taser at a location where the subject may fall and hurt him or herself as the target will fall after being struck by the probes.
- I. **Deputies should immediately try to affect the arrest upon the initial Taser employment if no safety hazards exist.**

### IV. USE OF FORCE ISSUES

- A. The use of the Taser constitutes a use of force.
- B. The Taser may be used effectively at a distance up to 21 feet when:
  1. The suspect is punching and/or kicking;
  2. The suspect is threatening to punch and/or kick;
  3. Lesser force options are ineffective or likely to be ineffective;
  4. The deputy reasonably believes the suspect poses a credible threat; and
  5. The suspect poses a threat from a distance and the deputy is at risk of injury if he/she attempts to approach the offender.

C. Other considerations for deployment are:

1. Imminent threat to deputies and/or a third party;
2. Suspect actively resisting or refusing to submit to instructions;
3. Circumstances are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving;
4. Severity of the incident at issue; and/or
5. The suspect is attempting to evade or flee from deputies.

D. Deputy or suspect factors that may be considered in determining the use of the Taser:

1. Age or sex of the suspect;
2. Multiple offenders;
3. Physical, psychological, or physiological factors of the offender based on the use of a substance legal or illegal.

E. Special Circumstances

1. Closeness of a weapon.
2. Injury to or exhaustion of deputy.
3. Deputy on the ground.
4. Distance between the deputy and the offender.
5. Knowledge of past histories of the suspect(s).
6. Availability of other options.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**  
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