

PLMVKC Conducted Energy Device Policy

I. Overview

The Public Library of Mt. Vernon and Knox County (the Library) is committed to offering a welcoming, open atmosphere and providing a quiet, comfortable, and safe environment. In the interest of protecting these rights, we will employ the use of a Conducted Energy Device (“TASER” device) when absolutely necessary to provide peace of mind to patrons and staff by discouraging acts of aggression or other violent outbursts. This policy will set forth guidelines for the issuance and use of TASER devices.

II. Objective and Policy

The TASER device is intended to control a violent or extremely aggressive individual, while minimizing risk of serious injury. The appropriate use of this device should result in fewer injuries to library security and the violent party.

III. Issuance and Carrying TASER Devices

Only uniformed members of security personnel who have successfully completed office-approved training may be issued/allowed to carry the TASER device. TASER devices are only issued for use during a security officer’s assigned hours, and will be required to be returned to the security office at the end of each shift. Security personnel shall only use the TASER device and cartridges that have been issued by the Head of Security or Administration. Members carrying the TASER device will perform a spark test on the unit prior to the beginning of each shift to ensure functionality.

Uniformed security staff shall carry the TASER device in an open and clearly visible area using an approved holster. The TASER device employed by the library will be yellow in color to clearly differentiate it from any other kind of weapon or device. Officer’s will also be responsible for ensuring that their issued TASER device is properly maintained, up to date, and in working order.

IV. Verbal and Visual Warnings

A verbal warning of the intent to use the TASER device will precede its application, unless doing so would otherwise endanger the safety of security officers, or when it is not practicable due to the circumstances. The purpose of the warning is to:

- a) Provide the target with an opportunity to voluntarily comply.
- b) Provide surrounding individuals with a warning that the TASER device may be deployed.

If an individual is unwilling to voluntarily comply, the officer may display the electrical arc or laser sight in a final attempt to gain compliance prior to the application of the TASER device. The laser shall never be intentionally directed into the eyes of another as it may permanently impair their vision. The officer deploying the TASER device shall document whether a verbal/actionable warning was given, or why it was not, in a related report.

V. Usage and Application of the TASER Device

The TASER device should only be used when its operator can safely approach the subject within the operation range of the device. Although the TASER device is effective in controlling most individuals, security officers should be aware that the device may not achieve the intended results and be prepared with other solutions. The TASER device may be used in any of the following circumstances, when the officer at the time perceives that such application is necessary to control a subject that:

- a) Is violent or is physically resisting lawful orders
- b) Has demonstrated an intention to be violent or to physically resist/appears to present the potential to harm individuals on library property.

Simply fleeing from a pursuing officer, without other known circumstances or factors, is not cause for the use of the TASER device.

The application of the TASER is likely to cause intense, but momentary, pain. As such, security personnel should carefully consider the totality of circumstances available prior to using the TASER including, but not limited to, the following factors:

- a) The conduct of the individual being confronted (as perceived by the officer at the time).
- b) Security/subject factors (i.e., age, size, relative strength, training/experience of the officer, injury/exhaustion, number of officers vs. subject(s)).
- c) Influence of drugs/alcohol.
- d) Proximity of weapons.
- e) Whether the subject has been effectively restrained/their ability to resist despite restraint.
- f) The availability of other options.
- g) Seriousness of the suspected offense.
- h) Potential for injury to all surrounding individuals.
- i) Risk of escape/other exigent circumstances.

VI. Special Deployment Considerations

The use of the TASER device on certain individuals or in certain situations should be avoided unless the circumstance indicates that other available options appear ineffective or would present a greater danger to nearby/involved individuals, and the officer believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of using the device. Special considerations include:

- a) Individuals who are known to be pregnant.
- b) Elderly individuals/juveniles.
- c) Individuals with extremely low body mass.
- d) Individuals who are subdued or otherwise restrained
- e) Individuals who have recently been sprayed with a flammable chemical or who are otherwise in close proximity to any known combustible vapor or flammable material.
- f) Individuals whose position or activity may result in collateral injury (e.g., falls from heights, operating vehicles).

Because the application of the TASER device in the drive-stun mode (i.e., direct contact without probes) relies primarily on pain compliance, the use of the drive-stun mode should be limited to supplementing the probe-mode, or as a distraction technique to gain separation between officers and the subject, thereby giving officers time and distance to consider other force options or actions. The TASER device shall NOT be used to psychologically torment, elicit statements, or to punish any individual.

VII. Targeting Considerations

Reasonable efforts shall be made to target the lower-center-mass and avoid the head, neck, chest, and groin areas. If the dynamics of a situation or security personnel safety do not permit the application of the TASER device probes to a precise target area, the officer should monitor the condition of the subject until they are examined by medical personnel.

VIII. Multiple Applications of the TASER Device

The TASER device employed by the library holds two cartridges for multiple probe launches, and also is capable of re-energizing already launched probes for another cycle. As such, Security personnel should apply the TASER device for only one standard cycle (5 seconds) and then evaluate the situation before applying any subsequent cycles. Multiple applications of the TASER device are not recommended and should be avoided unless officer believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the potentially increased risk posed by multiple applications. If the first application of the TASER device appears to be ineffective in gaining control of an individual, the officer should consider certain factors before additional applications of the TASER device, including:

- a) Whether the probes are making proper contact.
- b) Whether the subject has the ability to comply/has been given an opportunity to comply.
- c) Whether verbal commands or other options/tactics may be more effective.

IX. Actions Following Deployments

Security personnel shall immediately notify law enforcement, EMS, and a member of Administration of all TASER discharges. Any expenditures from the device should be submitted into evidence collection to be handed over to law enforcement. The cartridge serial number shall be documented within a report. The evidence packaging should be marked "Bio-hazard" if the probes penetrated the subject's skin.

X. Dangerous Animals

The TASER device may be deployed against an animal as part of a plan to deal with a potentially dangerous animal, such as a dog, if the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

XI. Documentation and Incident Reports

Security personnel shall document all TASER device discharges immediately in the related usage/incident reports. Notification will also be made to Administration or the Head of Security in compliance with this policy. Unintentional discharges, pointing the device at a person, laser activation, and arcing the device will also be documented. Items that shall be included are:

- a) The type, brand, and serial number of the TASER device and TASER cartridges.
- b) Date, time, and location of the incident.
- c) Whether any display, laser, or arcing deterred a subject and gained compliance.
- d) The number of TASER device applications, the duration of each cycle, the duration between applications, and the duration that the subject received applications.
- e) The range at which the TASER device was used.
- f) Mode used (probe/drive-stun).
- g) Location of any probe impacts/misses, or drive-stun impact(s).
- h) Whether medical care was provided to the subject plus a description of care provided.
- i) Whether there were any injuries sustained.
- j) Identification of the personnel firing the TASER device.
- k) Identification of all witnesses.
- l) Observations of the subject's actions.
- m) Any known/suspected drug/alcohol use, or any known medical problems.

The Head of Security/Administration should periodically analyze the reports to identify deterrence/effectiveness trends. These personnel should also conduct audits of data downloads and reconcile TASER device report forms with any recorded activation.

XII. Medical Treatment

All persons who have been struck by TASER device probes or who have been subjected to the electric discharge of the device shall be medically assessed upon arrival of law enforcement and EMS. If the probes penetrate the skin of the subject, EMS personnel will determine if they can safely remove the probes, or if the individual should be transported to the hospital for removal. Additionally, any such individual who falls under the following categories should be IMMEDIATELY examined by qualified medical personnel:

- a) The person is suspected of being under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- b) The person may be pregnant.
- c) The person appears in need of medical attention.
- d) The TASER device probes are lodged in a sensitive area as listed above.
- e) The person requests medical treatment.

Any individual exhibiting signs of distress or who is exposed to multiple or prolonged applications (i.e., more than 15 seconds) shall be transported to a medical facility for examination and evaluation. If any individual refuses medical attention, such refusal should be witnessed by the Head of Security/Administration, as well as by medical personnel, and documented in the related reports. The acting security personnel or member of Administration shall immediately inform any person providing medical care or receiving custody of the individual that the individual has been subjected to the application of the TASER device.

XIII. Administration Responsibilities

When possible, the Head of Security/Administration team should respond to calls when they believe there is the likelihood of the TASER device being deployed. These personnel shall respond to all incidents where the TASER device is activated. These personnel should review each incident report where a person has been exposed to an activation of the TASER device. The device's onboard memory should be downloaded and saved with the related TASER reports. Photographs of the probe sites should be taken and witnesses asked to stay for law enforcement interviews.

XIV. Training

Proficiency training for authorized personnel shall occur yearly. A reassessment of a security officers' knowledge/practical skill may be required at any time by administration. All training and proficiency certificates for TASER devices will be on file. Any personnel who have not carried the device as a part of their assignment for a period of six months or more shall be recertified by a certified TASER device instructor prior to carrying or using the device again.

Administration is responsible for ensuring that all members of security who carry TASER devices have received initial and annual proficiency training.

Administration should ensure that all training includes:

- a) A review of this policy.
- b) Performing draws and holstering of the TASER device
- c) Target area considerations, including techniques/options to reduce the unintentional application of probes near the head, neck, chest, and groin.
- d) Subduing a subject during the application of the TASER device and transitioning to other force options.
- e) De-escalation techniques.
- f) Restraint techniques that do not impair respiration following the application of the TASER device.

Questions from the public about the policies set here should be directed to the security staff or administration team. A copy of this policy may be shared with members of the public upon request.

Policy updated on 6/24/2022