

Rockville City Police Department

GENERAL ORDER



Subject CONDUCTED ELECTRICAL WEAPON		Procedure G.O. # 4-51
Authorizing Signature 	Effective: 01-01-12 Revised: 06-26-23 Revised: 06-25-25 Revised: 11-20-25	Total Pages 9

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Rockville City Police Department to utilize the safest and most effective technology in law enforcement to detain and apprehend subjects with the lowest risk of injury ratio for both officers and subjects.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the theory, guidelines, and training necessary to safely and effectively operate the TASER 7 – Conducted Electrical Weapon.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW):** Conducted Electrical Weapons use propelled wire or direct contact to conduct energy to affect the sensory and motor functions of the nervous system.
- B. **TASER 7:** Two-shot CEW designed to provide the operator with the capability to immediately follow-up a missed shot or clothing disconnects with an additional cartridge discharge without reloading.

The TASER 7 may be discharged in two ways:

- 1. **Probe Discharge:** Expulsion of two small probes into a target delivering electricity to create Neuro-Muscular Incapacitation (NMI). NMI is the stimulation of the peripheral nervous system by causing direct stimulation of motor nerves that contract muscles creating muscular disruption.
- 2. **Drive-Stun:** CEW is driven into the nerve plexus with force to cause muscular dysfunction.
- C. **Passive Resistance:** Refers to displays of defiant behavior refusing to comply with an officer's verbal command or physical control techniques by non-violent actions. Passive

resistance may include, but is not limited to, standing stationary and not moving upon lawful direction, falling limp and refusing to move (dead weight), or other non-compliant behavior that does not pose a threat to the officer or another.

- D. **Active Resistance:** Refers to any action or evasive movements a subject takes to avoid or physically counteract an officer's attempts to detain or place them in custody, and/or take control. Active resistance movements or behaviors may include, but are not limited to, pushing away, tensing arm muscles to avoid handcuffing (bracing), twisting, fleeing arrest, or refusing to be taken into custody by exerting some degree of physical force in response to the lawful performance of an officer's duties.
- E. **Active Aggression:** Refers to any physically aggressive or combative movements displayed by a subject which may cause injury to the officer or another. This aggression may manifest itself through actions that include, but are not limited to, a fighting stance, punching, kicking, biting, pushing, threat of an instrument that may be perceived as a weapon or other actions which present an imminent threat of harm to the officer or another.
- F. **Battery Pack:** Every time the CEW is discharged, it stores downloadable information in the rechargeable battery pack.
- G. **CEW Cartridge:** A unit attached to the front of the CEW that contains probes and their ignition system.
- H. **De-escalation Tactics and Techniques:** Proactive actions and approaches used by a law enforcement officer to stabilize the situation so that more time, options, and resources are available to gain a person's voluntary compliance and reduce or eliminate the need to use force, including verbal persuasion, warnings, tactical repositioning techniques, slowing down the pace of an incident, waiting out a subject, creating distance between the officer and the threat, and requesting additional resources to resolve the incident.

IV. **ISSUANCE AND CARRY**

Only CEWs authorized or issued by the department may be carried. The CEW must be carried on the support hand side of the officer's belt (opposite side of the officer's firearm) in a straight-draw position in an approved holster.

- A. On-duty uniformed officers at the rank of Sergeant and below are required to carry the CEW as part of their regular duty gear, once trained on and issued a CEW.
- B. On-duty non-uniformed officers may secure the CEW in their vehicle's gun safe, locked trunk, or as otherwise specified by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, when it is not practical to carry.

- C. The CEW must be carried in the off position to ensure battery life with two cartridges properly inserted.
- D. Officers are authorized to carry the CEW when working police related secondary employment and all department related overtime assignments.
- E. Officers will not make any modifications to the CEW or its holster without authorization from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

V. USE OF THE CONDUCTED ELECTRICAL WEAPON:

In conjunction with General Order 4-1 – Response to Resistance and Aggression, force must be necessary and proportional based on the totality of the circumstances to achieve a legitimate law enforcement objective. The CEW will only be discharged to achieve a legitimate law enforcement objective when an objectively reasonable officer would conclude the circumstances present a risk of immediate danger that could be mitigated by the use of the CEW, the officer's presence and verbal dialogue has failed to bring about the subject's compliance, and the following conditions exist:

- A. The subject displays active aggression and/or active resistance, and
- B. Attempts to subdue the subject by other methods have been, or will likely be, ineffective in the situation at hand, or
- C. A reasonable expectation exists that it is unsafe for officers to approach the subject to effect an arrest.

VI. WARNINGS AND CEW APPLICATION:

Officers shall announce their intent to discharge the CEW unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of officers or when it is not practicable under the circumstances. Announcements let involved officers know the CEW is being discharged so it is not mistaken by sight or sound as a firearm and will also give the subject an opportunity to comply. Officers will document whether a verbal warning was given or the reasons it was not – on related reports.

- A. Officers who encounter a situation where the possibility of violence or resistance to lawful arrest or other legitimate law enforcement objective is present shall attempt to defuse the situation through advice, warning, verbal persuasion, or other de-escalation techniques when feasible.
- B. Officers will announce "TASER" when practical and reasonable to notify surrounding officers and the subject of their intention to discharge the CEW. When practical and reasonable, the officer will give direct verbal commands, such as: "Stop Resisting", "Get On The Ground", "Put Your Hands Behind Your Back", "You're Under Arrest", etc.
- C. Officers must be aware the CEW may not achieve the intended results and be prepared

with other force options. All individuals who have received a CEW exposure should be restrained in a manner and position that does not interfere with their breathing.

- D. Officers shall apply the CEW for one cycle (5-seconds) and evaluate the situation before applying subsequent cycles. CEW exposures exceeding a cumulative of 15-seconds may increase the risk of death or serious injury. Every application of the CEW must be independently justified, and the application of additional cycles must be weighed against other force options (justification examples: probe miss, clothing disconnect, CEW/cartridge malfunction, poor shot placement failing to bring about NMI and compliance).
- E. Officers will secure the subject as soon as practical and administer only the minimum number of CEW cycles necessary to achieve control. When available and practicable, officers will move in and “cuff under power” at the direction of the officer discharging the CEW.
- F. Officers will order and direct the subject, as the incident requires, in an effort to minimize the number of CEW cycles needed for compliance. Officers must recognize the subject may not be able to respond to commands while under the effects of the CEW cycle and give the subject an opportunity to comply with orders and continually assess the situation to ensure the continued application of force is appropriate.
- G. Officers are reminded “fleeing” shall not be the sole justification for discharging the CEW. The discharge of a CEW against a fleeing subject is limited to:
 - 1. Instances where the subject is reasonably suspected to have committed a crime of violence;
 - 2. Instances where the subject is reasonably suspected of being armed; or
 - 3. Instances where failure to quickly apprehend the subject poses a risk of immediate danger to officers or others.
- H. The CEW is not a substitute for deadly force and generally should not be used in those situations. If an officer is faced with a deadly force situation and utilizes the CEW, they must have another officer present to provide deadly force cover.
- I. Officers may discharge the CEW at an animal that reasonably appears to pose a threat to public safety, a person, or another animal.

VII. SPECIAL DISCHARGE CONSIDERATIONS:

The use of the CEW on certain subjects should be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates the potential benefit of using the device reasonably outweighs the associated risks.

A. The following are circumstances/risk factors to consider in the discharge of a CEW:

1. Visibly Pregnant Women
2. Elderly Persons
3. Children
4. Subject (s) under medical care/visibly frail
5. Subject (s) in large pools of water
6. Subject (s) location (stairway, near busy roadway, etc.)
7. Subject (s) running
8. Subject (s) operating motor vehicles
9. Subject (s) in elevated positions

VIII. RESTRICTED USE:

As with all law enforcement equipment, the CEW has limitations and restrictions requiring consideration before its use.

- A. Officers are not permitted to aim a CEW (painting with laser) or perform/display an “ARC warning” unless they reasonably believed such action would de-escalate the situation in an effort to gain compliance.
- B. Officers will not use the CEW in a punitive or coercive manner to inflict unnecessary pain and/or injury and will only use the CEW under the guidelines set forth in General Order 4-1 – Response to Resistance and Aggression and this policy.
- C. The CEW will not be discharged on subjects who display passive resistance, nor will it be used in a flammable environment to include subjects exposed to flammable O.C. Spray or flammable liquids (explosive materials).
- D. Multiple CEWs will not be simultaneously discharged against a person unless exigent circumstances exist. If multiple CEW are discharged their use must be fully justified and articulated (e.g., Probe miss, clothing disconnect, CEW/cartridge malfunction, poor shot placement failing to bring about NMI and compliance).
- E. CEWs will not be used in the pain compliance (drive-stun) mode unless it is necessary to complete the incapacitation circuit (three-point contact) or when the probe mode has been or would be ineffective.
- F. Officers shall not hold a firearm and the CEW at the same time; holding both weapons at the same time may lead to a sympathetic hand response and an unintentional discharge.

IX. BWC ACTIVATION, UPLOADS, AND INSPECTIONS:

- A. BWC Activation: When the CEW is armed, BWCs within close proximity will automatically activate. Officers must be cognizant of their BWC status (buffer mode) and of arming their CEWs within 30 feet of places where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists (e.g., locker rooms, restrooms).
- B. Upload to Evidence.com: All TASER 7 batteries will be docked and uploaded to Evidence.com every 30 days and after every field discharge by the assigned officer to document an accurate record of use, allow for applicable firmware updates, and recharging. Officers are required to dock the batteries of their assigned CEW after all discharges, as soon as practicable, and prior to the end of their shift/assignment. All event logs associated with a Use of Force/discharge will be attached to the completed Response to Resistance and Aggression form with all associated documentation on the incident.
- C. Inspections: Shift Supervisors will conduct monthly inspections on CEWs assigned to personnel under their charge. Supervisors will inspect the CEW CID for battery life, malfunction icons, and ensure the weapon is arcing properly with a functionality test. Any malfunction will be documented on a TASER Inspection Report and forwarded to the department's Senior TASER Instructors for further inspection and removal from field use.

X. MEDICAL EVALUATION:

Officers must study the subject's behavior before and after a CEW exposure to ensure proper medical treatment. The events that may lead to death and/or injury are frequently set in motion hours, days, even weeks before police are called or summoned. Officers shall render first aid to the subject as soon as it is safe to do so and promptly request medical assistance after CEW exposure. Anyone subjected to CEW exposure shall be medically evaluated by Fire Rescue personnel and taken to a medical facility as soon as possible if deemed necessary by Fire Rescue. Officers will continually monitor the subject while in police custody for medical distress following a CEW exposure. Probes that have penetrated the skin will not be removed by a law enforcement officer; the probes may only be removed by Fire Rescue or medical personnel. All medical release paperwork must be given to Corrections Officials upon presentation and a copy retained by the Rockville City Police Department.

- A. **Secondary Injuries:** The use of the CEW causes incapacitation and strong muscle contractions making secondary injuries a possibility to include cuts, bruises, impact injuries, and strained muscles. Officers should be aware of the potential side effects of a CEW exposure when evaluating their prisoners.

Possible side effects are as follows:

- 1. Critical stress amnesia (point in time can be skewed)

2. Involuntary muscle contraction
3. Clinched fists
4. Locked arms
5. Screaming or yelling
6. Freezing in place with locked legs
7. Feeling dazed
8. Potential vertigo
9. Falling to the ground unable to catch themselves

XI. REPORTING PROCEDURES:

The post incident documentation of a CEW discharge requires the justification for the application of force, the collection of witness statements, photographs, evidence, and related reports. All field discharges of the CEW (drive stun and probe) will be documented on a Response to Resistance and Aggression Report (RRAR) and a Taser Deployment Report by the discharging officer and forwarded for review in accordance with General Order 4-1 – Response to Resistance and Aggression, Section X.

- A. **Show of Force:** “ARcing” the CEW or “painting” an individual with the laser from a CEW in an effort to de-escalate an incident will be reported on an RRAR.
- B. **Unintentional Discharge:** Unintentional discharges will be investigated and recorded in accordance with General Order 4-1 – Response to Resistance and Aggression, Section V111. Within 72-hours of the discharge, the officer will be re-educated on the CEW and must successfully complete CEW training. Any remedial or disciplinary action related to the incident will be investigated in accordance with department policy and procedure.
- C. **Death or Serious Injury:** While instances of death or serious injury proximal to a CEW discharge are rare, they can occur. In all cases where serious injury or death occurs, immediate notification will be made to the Chief of Police via the Chain of Command and procedures set forth in accordance with General Order 4-1 – Response to Resistance and Aggression, Section XII through XIV.
- D. **RRAR will outline:**
 1. CEW application and justification;
 2. Subject’s resistance;
 3. CEW serial number;
 4. Cartridge serial number if discharged;
 5. Number of cycles delivered;

6. Effectiveness in gaining compliance;
7. Additional cycles delivered once taken into custody/restrained;
8. Type of medical treatment and where treatment occurred; and
9. Malfunctions during field discharges.

E. Additionally, officers must:

1. Notify a Supervisor;
2. Photograph all CEW exposure sites (if possible);
3. Report all injuries to include secondary injuries;
4. Obtain all medical paperwork;
5. Recover spent cartridges, probes, wires, and place them into evidence; and
6. Complete all applicable reports and Response to Resistance and Aggression report in accordance with GO 4-1 – Response to Resistance and Aggression prior to the end of their shift unless the respective officer is incapacitated (Md. Code PS § 3-514)

F. Supervisor Responsibilities:

1. Conduct monthly inspections on CEWs assigned to personnel under their charge;
2. Immediately respond to all CEW discharges and ensure all aspects of CEW protocols and procedures are followed in a manner consistent with policy and applicable law;
3. Ensure proper medical attention is provided for injured parties;
4. Ensure the post incident investigation includes the collection of evidence to include witness statements, photographs, and a canvass for any cameras that may have captured the incident;
5. Review, approve, and forward all related reports through the proper chain of command; and
6. Ensure all notifications are made in accordance with General Order 2-16, Chief of Police Notifications.

XII. TRAINING:

- A. **Initial Training Certification:** Officers who carry the CEW must complete an initial 6-hour course of instruction prescribed by AXON/MPTSC, pass a written exam carried out by a certified instructor, and pass a practical exam firing (2) cartridges of each cartridge

type in a high stress training scenario on a pass/fail basis, and a review of all TASER informational updates.

B. **Re-Certification:** All officers must be re-certified annually and complete a 6-hour course of instruction and continue to show proficiency in the use of the CEW through a written exam with a passing score, a practical exam firing (2) cartridges of each cartridge type in a high stress training scenario on a pass/fail basis, and a review all TASER informational updates.

C. **Instructor Certification:** TASER instructors must complete the TASER Instructor certification course taught by AXON and obtain MPTSC instructor certification. TASER Instructors must re-certify biennially.

XIII. **CANCELLATION:** This policy cancels, supersedes, and replaces any policy or directive that conflicts with it regarding CEWs.