


TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS

 Proudly Policing Since 1841	SUBJECT Taser Energy Weapons	 Nationally Accredited 1986	
	CHIEF OF POLICE <i>Signature on File</i>		
NUMBER 7	ORIGINAL ISSUE 07/02/2007	CURRENT REVISION 12/11/2024	TOTAL PAGES 13

AUTHORITY/RELATED REFERENCES

FS Chapter 776, Justifiable Use of Force
 General Order 16, Digital Audio/Video Recording System
 General Order 19, Digital Evidence Capturing Devices
 General Order 42, Impounding and Control of Property and Evidence
 General Order 60, Response to Resistance
 General Order 61, Weapons, Firearms and Less-lethal Firearms
 General Order 63, Officer-Involved Action Resulting in Serious Injury or Death

ACCREDITATION REFERENCES

CALEA Chapter 4
 CFA Chapter 10

KEY WORD INDEX

Application Cautions and Prohibitions	Procedure III
Application Protocols	Procedure IV
Application Protocols – Aggressive Animals	Procedure VI
Authority to Carry and Training Requirements	Procedure I
Equipment and Maintenance Protocols	Procedure II
Evidence Collection Protocols	Procedure VIII
Medical Aid Protocols	Procedure V
Notifications, Reporting, and Downloads	Procedure VII
Supervisor and Watch Commander Responsibilities	Procedure IX

POLICY

Officers authorized to use a Taser Energy Weapon (TEW) shall adhere to the Department's response to resistance standards, TEW training, the protocols of this general order, and applicable Florida Statutes.

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEFINITIONS

Active Resistance: Physically evasive movements, with or without verbal resistance, to defeat an officer's attempt at control, but not intended to harm the officer. Examples include, but are not limited to, linking arms with others, bracing or tensing, attempts to push or pull away, and walking or running away.

Aggressive Resistance: Assaultive or attacking movements which present an imminent threat of physical harm (but not likely to cause death or serious injury) to any person (i.e., the officer, the person offering the resistance, others), and prevents the officer from placing the person under control and in custody. Examples include, but are not limited to, taking a fighting stance, punching, kicking, striking, biting, and attacking with weapons not likely to cause serious injury or death.

Cartridge: The replaceable unit for the TEW, which propels a barbed probe on thin connecting wires.

Apply/Application: When a TEW is fired at, a person or animal.

AVR: Digital Audio and Video Recording System.

Taser Energy Weapon (TEW): A Department-issued taser energy weapon, which is designed to affect the sensory and motor functions of the central nervous system.

Deployment: With the exceptions of training, inspection, or storage, anytime a TEW is drawn from its holster or displayed.

Function Test: An assessment of the proper operation of a TEW through a standardized procedure.

Hyperactive Delirium with Severe Agitation: Persons may present with increased/pronounced agitation, altered mental status (paranoia), elevated temperature and blood pressure, metabolic derangements, disorientation, aggressive words and/or actions, hallucinations, delusions, and occasionally combative or uncooperative behavior.

Less-lethal Force: Any force other than deadly force which is neither likely to cause, nor intended to cause, death or serious injury.

Objectively Reasonable: In the context of response to resistance encounters, officer's actions which are deemed appropriate in light of the facts and circumstances confronting them at the time. An officer's response to resistance actions is always

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

analyzed from the perspective of a reasonable officer possessing the same information and facing the same circumstances as the officer who actually used force.

Off-duty: When an officer is not engaged in on-duty or secondary employment activity.

On-duty: When an officer is working their regular duty assignment or any special assignment compensated by the Department.

Passive Resistance: Verbal and/or physical refusal to comply or cooperate with (or respond to) an officer's lawful directions, but taking no or only minimal physical action to prevent an officer from placing the person in custody and taking control. Examples include, but are not limited to, refusing to move or remaining stationary, and not moving when directed.

Probe: For the purposes of this policy, a metal dart propelled from the cartridge.

Propelled Probe Application: The primary application method of the TEW where the weapon's probes are fired at a person or an animal.

Secondary Employment: Employment of an officer by an entity other than the Department, where a condition of the employment is the actual or potential use of law enforcement powers by the employed police officer.

Trained Medical Professional: A paramedic, nurse, doctor or other certified medical services provider employed by a licensed medical facility or contracted medical provider.

Unintentional Discharge: A non-deliberate propelling of TEW probes.

PROCEDURES

I. AUTHORITY TO CARRY AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- A. Only sworn members are authorized to carry and utilize a TEW.
- B. Only officers who successfully complete the Training Section's initial TEW operator's certification course are authorized to utilize a TEW.
- C. TEW-certified officers must successfully complete the Training Section's annual TEW recertification course in order to continue utilizing a TEW.
- D. TEW-certified officers are authorized to carry the TEW only when on-duty or engaged in secondary employment.

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- E. When off-duty, TEW-certified officers shall ensure their TEW is stored in a prudent and safe manner, and not utilize their TEW except for:
 - 1. Training,
 - 2. Inspections, and
 - 3. Function testing (as outlined in subsection II E below),

II. EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE PROTOCOLS

- A. Only Department-issued TEWs are authorized for use by officers.
- B. Officers are responsible for maintaining their assigned TEW in a state of operational readiness, to include the proper maintenance and care of its air cartridges, battery and holster, and officers shall adhere to the following:
 - 1. Not make changes, alterations, or modifications to the TEW except as authorized by the Training Section,
 - 2. Forward all requests for TEW repairs and accessories to the Training Section,
 - 3. Not utilize a malfunctioning or uncharged TEW, and
 - 4. Return inoperable or defective TEWs to the Training Section.
- C. The TEW shall be carried loaded with a cartridge containing 10 probes of the type and in the manner specified by the Training Unit, and in an approved holster at all times.
 - 1. While in uniform and wearing the TEW on the duty belt, it shall be placed on the support side in a cross-draw manner, and
 - 2. Officers wearing the TEW on a raid vest or any other type of outer vest carrier shall adhere to the TEW carry method and training methodology approved by the Training Section.
- D. Commanders of specialty and support units shall adopt a TEW carry method and training methodology approved by the Training Section.
- E. Officers should conduct a function test, if worn, before the beginning of their tour of duty to ensure the TEW is functioning properly.

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. The function test does not require the completion of a Response to Resistance Report.
2. The function test shall be completed in accordance with TEW training provided by the Training Section.
3. Failure to function test the TEW as directed by the Training Section could result in progressive discipline.

III. TEW APPLICATION CAUTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS

- A. Officers are prohibited from utilizing a TEW in any manner contrary to Department training or the protocols of this written directive.
- B. The application of a TEW is not authorized to overcome passive resistance.
- C. To use a TEW on a fleeing person, an officer must reasonably believe they have lawful authority over that person. The TEW application must be objectively reasonable based on the totality of the information known or perceived at the time.
- D. A TEW should not be applied to a handcuffed person unless doing so is necessary to prevent the person from causing serious injury to themselves or others **and** lesser attempts of control are reasonably determined to be futile or have proven ineffective.
- E. Absent a deadly force situation, officers applying a TEW shall not intentionally target a person's head, face, neck or groin.
- F. Absent a deadly force situation, officers shall not apply a TEW on a person who is:
 1. Pregnant (when known or apparent),
 2. A young child (i.e., pre-teen),
 3. Visibly frail and/or elderly,
 4. In danger of falling from a noticeable height,
 5. In close proximity to a body of water, or
 6. In contact with known or perceived combustible or flammable liquids or gases.

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- G. Unless necessary to prevent imminent physical harm to another person, officers shall not apply a TEW to a person in physical control of a:
1. Moving motor vehicle, bicycle, moped or other conveyance.
 2. Stationary motor vehicle, moped or other motorized conveyance when the conveyance is capable of moving once the person is affected by the TEW.

IV. TEW APPLICATION PROTOCOLS

As with any other level of control/force in a response to resistance encounter, officers shall use a TEW application only when it is objectively reasonable to overcome resistance in order to accomplish lawful objectives and effectively bring the incident under control.

- A. The application of a TEW is less-lethal force.
- B. Less-lethal force is utilized to compel compliance by a person displaying *aggressive resistance* (e.g., punching) and in some cases, *active resistance* (e.g., running away).
- C. Officers may use a TEW application to overcome a person's *active resistance* in arrest, custodial and detention situations **only** when:
1. The officer reasonably believes the person has the apparent ability, and the apparent intent, to physically harm any person, or
 2. The person has taken some overt physical action in an attempt to flee, escape, or otherwise avoid/prevent detention or apprehension.
- D. In making the decision if it is objectively reasonable to apply a TEW, officers are responsible for assessing the totality of the circumstances, known or perceived at that time and the person's ability, to include:
1. The person's size, weight and apparent age, and
 2. The person's likelihood of causing imminent physical harm to themselves or others, and
 3. The opportunity to successfully use other control techniques.
- E. When feasible, the officer should give a verbal warning intended for both the person and other officers prior to applying the TEW.

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- F. Officers should apply a TEW for one standard cycle (five seconds) and then evaluate the situation to determine if subsequent cycles are necessary.
1. Any subsequent applications must be independently justifiable, and
 2. The risk (of subsequent applications) should be weighed against other force options.
- G. Officers applying a TEW are responsible for being aware of the injury risk from the person falling down and, if feasible prior to the application of the weapon, should observe the area for potential dangers.
- H. In the decision to utilize a TEW, officers are to be mindful of the information below.
1. TEW exposure causes certain effects, including physiologic and metabolic changes, stress and pain.
 2. In some persons, the risk of death or serious injury may increase with cumulative TEW exposure.
 3. Repeated, prolonged or continuous TEW applications may contribute to cumulative exhaustion, stress, cardiac, physiologic, metabolic, respiratory, and associated medical risks which could increase the risk of death or serious injury.
- I. To reduce the risk of injury to the person receiving a TEW application, officers should adhere to the following targeting protocols:
1. Use preferred target areas –
 - a. Below the neck area for back shots and the lower center mass (below the chest) for front shots.
 - b. The preferred target areas increase dart-to-heart distance and reduce cardiac risks.
 - c. Back shots are preferable to front shots when practicable.
 2. Avoid sensitive areas –

In addition to the mandate of subsection III F above (i.e., *not intentionally targeting a person's head, face, neck or groin absent a deadly force situation*), when practicable, avoid intentionally applying the TEW to

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

sensitive areas of the body such as the throat, chest area (area of the heart), breast or known pre-existing injury areas.

- J. To secure the person who received the TEW application, officers should:
 - 1. Begin attempts to complete the control and handcuffing during the application of the TEW, and
 - 2. If unable to complete the control and handcuffing, observe the person for compliance prior to subsequent TEW applications.

V. MEDICAL AID PROTOCOLS

- A. Officers should be aware there is a higher risk of sudden death in persons under the influence of drugs and/or exhibiting symptoms associated with hyperactive delirium.
- B. Officers shall provide appropriate initial medical aid to the person who received a TEW application and regularly and continually monitor them while they are in Department custody.
- C. When a person has received a TEW application, the officer shall summon a trained medical professional to provide appropriate medical aid to the person prior to transport to a receiving facility.
- D. When a person has received more than 15 seconds of continuous or repeated TEW applications, the officer is responsible for ensuring the person is transported to an emergency medical facility for evaluation.
- E. In both situations cited in subsections C and D above, the officer is responsible for informing the trained medical professional of the TEW application so they can better evaluate the need for medical treatment.
- F. Officers may remove the TEW probes in accordance with training procedures and, when doing so, shall adhere to the following:
 - 1. Do not remove the probes until the person is restrained or otherwise under physical control,
 - 2. Do not remove probes embedded in sensitive tissue areas of the person's body (e.g., groin, eyes, female breasts, face and neck),
 - 3. Probe wires may be cut or broken for persons requiring EMS transport for probe removal (allowing for enhanced stability of the embedded probe),

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

4. Wear nitrile gloves when removing TEW probes, and
 5. Handle the probes and probe wires as biohazard material.
- G. When a person who has received a TEW application is transferred to a receiving facility (e.g., Leon County Detention Facility, Juvenile Assessment Center, TMH Behavioral Health Center) the transporting officer is responsible for ensuring:
1. Facility personnel are informed of the application, and
 2. Notation of the TEW application is made on any transfer of custody document (e.g., Arrest/Probable Cause Affidavit).

VI. TEW APPLICATION – AGGRESSIVE ANIMALS

- A. Officers are authorized to apply a TEW against an aggressive animal (i.e., one which poses an imminent threat of physical harm to any person).
- B. The TEW application against an aggressive animal does not preclude an officer from shooting the animal with a firearm if it is objectively reasonable to do so to protect any person from an imminent threat of physical harm.
- C. Officers shall complete a Response to Resistance Report for any TEW application to an aggressive animal.
- D. The evidence collection protocols for a TEW application to an aggressive animal are as follows:
1. If feasible, take photographs or a video recording (via a Department-issued cellular telephone and/or an AVR) of any probe impact, or other related injuries (and if no photographs/recordings are taken, document the reason in the related offense report). All evidence collected shall be handled in accordance with General Order 42 (Impounding and Controlling of Property and Evidence).
 2. After a TEW probe application, and only when the animal is restrained or otherwise under physical control, the following items should be collected and disposed of as biohazard material:
 - a. Probes (in accordance with training procedures and while wearing latex gloves),
 - b. The probe wires.

VII. NOTIFICATIONS, REPORTING, AND DOWNLOADS

- A. Whenever an officer applies a TEW, or has an unintentional discharge *while on-duty or engaged in secondary employment*, the officer shall ensure notification is made to the appropriate on-duty sworn supervisor contemporaneous to the event.
- B. Whenever an officer has an unintentional discharge *while off-duty*, the officer shall ensure notification is made to the Watch Commander contemporaneous to the event.
- C. Officers shall complete a Response to Resistance Report for any of the following TEW-involved situations:
 - 1. Application,
 - 2. Unintentional discharge, or
 - 3. Deployment with a subsequent encounter with a person involving one of the following:
 - a. The TEW is pointed knowingly and intentionally at the person, or
 - b. The TEW is visible to the person while any officer is giving verbal commands for compliance.
- D. Officers are responsible for uploading their assigned TEW and replacing expended cartridges in the following situations:
 - 1. At the end of their shift unless approved by the Watch Commander. In this case, the battery must be replaced, and cartridges replaced before the officer's next shift.
 - 2. At the direction of a supervisor due to a complaint involving its use or for another legitimate Department purpose.

VIII. EVIDENCE COLLECTION PROTOCOLS

- A. The protocols listed in this section are only applicable for TEW applications to a person (see subsection VI above for applications to an aggressive animal).

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- B. The officer who applies a TEW shall, if feasible, ensure photographs or a video recording (via a Department-issued cellular telephone and/or AVR) are taken of the probe impact or area and other related injuries.
- C. If the probe impact or other related injuries (or any claim of injury) are in the groin or buttocks area of a man or the groin, buttocks or breast area of a woman, the officer shall not take photographs/recordings, but document the information in the related offense report.
- D. Any photographs/recordings taken shall be handled as outlined in General Order 16 (Digital Audio/Video Recording System) for AVR or General Order 19 (Digital Evidence Capturing Devices) for Department-issued cellular telephones.
- E. If photographs/recordings are not taken, the officer shall document the reason in the related offense report.
- F. After a TEW probe application, and only when the person is restrained or otherwise under physical control, the officer utilizing the TEW is responsible for ensuring the collection of the following items:
 - 1. Expended cartridges,
 - 2. The probe wires.
- G. Probes removed by a trained medical professional shall be collected as soon as practical by the appropriate member (e.g., officer or forensic specialist) and properly disposed of as biohazard material.
- H. Items collected as described in subsection F above, as well as any TEW probe removed from a person by an officer, shall be properly disposed of as biohazard material.
- I. Expended TEW cartridges, probes, and/or probe wires will not be impounded as evidence unless there is a reasonable belief the cartridge and attached probes cause significant/permanent injury or there was an identifiable, consequential malfunction of the cartridge.

IX. SUPERVISOR AND WATCH COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Supervisors should conduct a mandatory function test during each line inspection of officers under their command.

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- B. Upon notification of an off-duty unintentional discharge, the Watch Commander shall determine if a supervisory response to the scene is needed. Factors to consider in making such a decision include, but are not limited to:
1. Persons present,
 2. Injuries sustained, and
 3. Property damaged.
- C. A supervisor is responsible for promptly responding to the scene of the following TEW-involved situations to conduct an initial review of the circumstances:
1. Applications,
 2. Unintentional discharges when the officer is on-duty or engaged in secondary employment, and
 3. Off-duty unintentional discharges as directed by the Watch Commander.
- D. In conducting the initial review of the circumstances of the TEW application or unintentional discharge, supervisors shall ensure:
1. The medical aid protocols in section V above are implemented when any person received a TEW application,
 2. The incident is properly documented,
 3. Reviewing, if available, photographs and/or video recordings from Department-issued cellular telephones and/or AVR, and
 4. The Watch Commander is provided all pertinent information regarding the incident.
- E. In incidents where a supervisor is the officer who applied the TEW – or is an active participant in the response to resistance encounter precipitating the TEW application by another officer – a non-involved supervisor is responsible for responding to the incident scene and conducting the initial review of the circumstances.

TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- F. A supervisor directly involved in a TEW/Response to Resistance encounter is relieved of their responsibility to review and approve/disapprove the incident's Response to Resistance Report and any related offense reports.
- G. In incidents as described in subsections E and F above, the Watch Commander is responsible for ensuring the review process is directed to a supervisor not directly involved in the incident.
- H. The Watch Commander or designee may, under circumstances deemed necessary, seize and impound an officer's TEW.
- I. The Watch Commander shall direct the Training Section's Supervisor and/or their designee to respond to incidents involving a TEW application or unintentional discharge whenever:
 - 1. The person who received the application (whether intentionally or an unintentional discharge) subsequently dies or is seriously injured, or
 - 2. Any other circumstances exist requiring the expertise of the Training Section's Supervisor, the TEW Coordinator, and/or their designee.

History: initial title (*assignment orientation*) – issued 07/15/1985, revised 01/05/1996, retired 11/05/2001. second title (*electronic control device*) – issued 07/02/2007, revised 01/15/2009, 08/03/2012, 02/12/2016 (title change – *conducted electrical weapons*), 07/16/2020, 08/15/2022, 04/02/2024, and 12/11/2024 (title change).