WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

Subject: Taser Policy		Policy # 1.3.11
Accreditation 1.3.4		
Effective Date: February 4, 2008	Revised Date:	
By Authority Of: Chief A. Dale Mabry	Signature: ADMabry	

1.3.11 TASER POLICY

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidance and direction on the use of the X-26 Taser.

B. POLICY

It is the policy of this agency to use only that level of force that reasonably appears necessary to control or otherwise subdue violent or potentially violent individuals Electronic control weapons may be used by authorized and trained personnel in accordance with this use of force policy and additional guidelines established herein.

The X-26 Taser, manufactured by Taser International, is available to the members of this department for use to control a dangerous or violent subject when deadly force is NOT justified and attempts to control the subject by other tactics have been ineffective or there is a reasonable expectation that it is unsafe for the officer(s) to approach within contact range of the subject. The X-26 Taser may be used to subdue individuals who pose an immediate risk to themselves or others or to safely affect an arrest. The X-26 Taser will be assigned to all officers of this department upon successful completion of training by a certified Taser International Instructor. This department will hold the right to revoke the carrying privileges for officer(s) who misuse or demonstrate lack of proficiency with the weapon.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. **X-26 TASER**: An Electro-Muscular Disruption (EMD) weapon that utilizes compressed nitrogen to shoot two small probes up to 21 feet. These probes are connected to the weapon by high-voltage insulated wires. When the probes make contact with the subject, they transmit an electrical pulse along the wires and into the body through up to two and a quarter inches of clothing. The probes do not have to penetrate flesh or cause bodily harm to be effective. The X-26 Taser may also be used as a contact device.

2. **ELECTRO-MUSCULAR DISRUPTION (EMD):** Electrical signal, which overrides the central nervous system and directly controls the skeletal muscles. The EMD effect causes an uncontrollable contraction of the muscle tissue, debilitating

the subject regardless of pain tolerance or mental focus. The output does not damage an implanted pacemaker and there is a slight risk of loss of bladder and/or bowel control.

3. **DATAPORT:** Every time the X-26 Taser is fired, it stores the downloadable time, date, and duration and battery power on a data port located at the back of the unit.

4. **AFID CARTRIDGE TRACKING:** Every time an air cartridge is fired, up to 40 small confetti-like microdot ID tags called AFIDS are ejected. Each AFID is printed with the serial number of the cartridge fired, allowing the department to identify which officer fired the cartridge.

D. PROCEDURES

1. Authorized Users/Training

   Only officers who have successfully completed the approved Taser International training course sponsored by a certified Taser International Instructor shall be authorized to carry the X-26 Taser. Training consists of specific training courses and demonstrated competency under hands-on testing that has been monitored by a certified X-26 Taser Instructor. X-26 Taser training shall be conducted annually.

2. Weapon Readiness

   a. The device will be carried in an approved holster consistent with department training. The holster shall be worn on the officers support (non-gun) side or if worn on the officers gun side the holster shall be mounted in a cross draw fashion so that the X-26 Taser may only be drawn by the officers non-gun hand.
   b. The device shall be carried fully armed with the safety on in preparation for immediate use when authorized.
   c. Officers authorized to use the device shall be issued a minimum of one spare cartridge as a back-up in case of cartridge failure, the need for redeployment, or in case the first cartridge's leads break during engagement. The spare cartridges shall be stored and carried in a manner consistent with training and the cartridges replaced consistent with the manufacturer's expiration requirements.
   d. Only agency approved battery power sources shall be used in the X-26 Taser. Each officer shall ensure that the batteries of the X-26 Taser are properly charged at the beginning of their duty shift.

3. Deployment

   a. The X-26 Taser is generally analogous to the Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray On the use of force continuum and decisions to use the X-26 Taser involve the same basic justification. As such, the device is prohibited from being used:

i. In a punitive or coercive manner.
ii. On a handcuffed/secured prisoner, absent overtly assaultive behavior that cannot be reasonably dealt with in any other less intrusive fashion.
iii. On any suspect who does not demonstrate their own overt intention (1) to use violence or force against the officer or another person or (2) to flee in order to resist/avoid detention or arrest (in cases where officers would pursue on foot).
iv. In any environment where an officer knows that a potentially flammable, volatile, or explosive material is present (including but not limited to OC spray with volatile propellant, gasoline, natural gas, or propane)
iv. In any environment where the subject's fall could reasonably result in death (such as in a swimming pool or on an elevated structure).

b. In preparation for firing the X-26 Taser shall be pointed in a safe direction, taken off safe, and then aimed. Center mass of the subject's back should be the primary target where reasonably possible; center mass of the chest or the legs is the secondary targets. The X-26 Taser **SHALL NOT** be aimed at the head or the face of the subject.
c. Fixed sights should be used as the primary aiming device and the laser dot as the secondary aiming device. When practical loud verbal commands shall be used prior to discharging the X-26 Taser.
e. Upon firing the device, the officer shall energize the subject the least number of times and no longer than necessary to accomplish the legitimate operational objective. The subject may be secured as soon as practical while disabled by the X-26 Taser power to minimize the number of deployment cycles.
f. The device may also be used in certain circumstances in a "touch stun" mode.This involves removing the cartridge and pressing the unit against an appropriate area of the body based on training. It is important to note that when the device is used in this manner it is:

i. Primarily a pain compliance tool due to lack of probe spread.
ii. Minimally effective when compared to conventional cartridge type deployments.
iii. More likely to leave marks on the subject's skin.
iv. Subject to the same deployment (use) guidelines and restrictions as that of the X-26 Taser in cartridge deployments.

g. The X-26 Taser shall be pointed at the ground in a safe direction with the Safety activated during loading, unloading, or when handled in other than an operational deployment.
h. When practical, the officer armed with the Taser shall announce "Taser, Taser" to the other officers on the scene prior to discharging the X-26 Taser.

4. Aftercare

a. The X-26 probes shall be removed after the discharging officer has visually

Inspected the contact site. If the probes penetrated the skin, the discharging officer shall remove the probes as outlined in training.

b. Photographs of the contact site shall be taken if the probes penetrated the skin. Photographs shall also be taken if any injury occurs as a result of a secondary fall.
c. Once the probes have been removed, they will be treated as a biohazard sharps.
d. The discharging officer shall enter the photographs, expended cartridge with Probes and a limited number of microdots into evidence.
e. The discharging officer shall complete a Use of Force report.
f. Any subject exposed to the X-26 Taser's probes or contact points who receives an electrical charge must be offered the opportunity to be examined by medical personnel, either EMS on the scene, or emergency room personnel. Thoroughly document the subject's acceptance or refusal of the offer for medical treatment.

5. Signing out the X-26 Taser

   a. The X-26 Taser shall be signed out at the beginning of the shift and the serial number shall be written on the daily activity log. The X-26 Taser shall be returned at the conclusion of the shift.

6. Training/Certification Requirements

   a. The authorization to carry and/or use the X-26 Taser is granted by the department to officers based upon the completion of specified training courses and demonstrated competency under hands-on testing that has been monitored by a certified X-26 Taser Instructor. The certification of the X-26 Taser will be conducted annually.