
Conducted Energy Weapon Guidelines

305.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the issuance and use of Conducted Energy Weapons.

305.2 POLICY

The AXON is intended to control a violent or potentially violent individual, while minimizing the risk of serious injury. The appropriate use of such a device should result in fewer serious injuries to officers and suspects.

305.3 ISSUANCE AND CARRYING CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPONS

Only members who have successfully completed department-approved training may be issued and carry the Conducted Energy Weapon.

Conducted Energy Weapons are issued for use during a member's assigned work shift or tour of duty. Officers shall be issued a Taser device from the department armory at the beginning of each work shift and return it to the armory at their end of watch.

Supervisors, Motor Officers, and Canine Officers may have a Taser device assigned to them while serving in those assignments. Those leaving a particular assignment shall return the device to the department's inventory.

Officers shall only use the Conducted Energy Weapon and cartridges that have been issued by the Department. Uniformed officers who have been issued the Conducted Energy Weapon shall wear the device in an approved holster on their person. Non-uniformed officers may secure the Conducted Energy Weapon in the driver's compartment/cab of their vehicle.

Members carrying the Conducted Energy Weapon should perform a spark test on the unit prior to every shift.

When carried while in uniform officers shall carry the Conducted Energy Weapon in a weak-side holster on the side opposite the duty weapon.

- (a) Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that their issued Conducted Energy Weapon is properly maintained and in good working order.
- (b) Officers should not hold both a firearm and the Conducted Energy Weapon at the same time.

305.4 VERBAL AND VISUAL WARNINGS

A verbal warning of the intended use of the Conducted Energy Weapon should precede its application, unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of officers or when it is not practicable due to the circumstances. The purpose of the warning is to:

- (a) Provide the individual with a reasonable opportunity to voluntarily comply.

Conducted Energy Weapon Guidelines

- (b) Provide other officers and individuals with a warning that the Conducted Energy Weapon may be deployed.

If, after a verbal warning, an individual is unwilling to voluntarily comply with an officer's lawful orders and it appears both reasonable and feasible under the circumstances, the officer may, but is not required to, display the electrical arc (provided that a cartridge has not been loaded into the device), or the laser in a further attempt to gain compliance prior to the application of the Conducted Energy Weapon. The aiming laser should never be intentionally directed into the eyes of another as it may permanently impair his/her vision.

The fact that a verbal or other warning was given or the reasons it was not given should be documented by the officer deploying the Conducted Energy Weapon in the related report.

305.5 USE OF THE CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPON

The Conducted Energy Weapon has limitations and restrictions requiring consideration before its use. The Conducted Energy Weapon should only be used when its operator can safely approach the subject within the operational range of the device. Although the Conducted Energy Weapon is generally effective in controlling most individuals, officers should be aware that the device may not achieve the intended results and be prepared with other options.

305.5.1 APPLICATION OF THE CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPON

The Conducted Energy Weapon may be used in any of the following circumstances, when the circumstances perceived by the officer at the time indicate that such application is reasonably necessary to control a person:

- (a) The subject is violent or is physically resisting.
- (b) The subject has demonstrated, by words or action, an intention to be violent or to physically resist, and reasonably appears to present the potential to harm officers, him/herself or others.

Mere flight from a pursuing officer, without other known circumstances or factors, is not good cause for the use of the Conducted Energy Weapon to apprehend an individual.

305.5.2 SPECIAL DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The use of the Conducted Energy Weapon on certain individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates that other available options reasonably appear ineffective or would present a greater danger to the officer, the subject or others, and the officer reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of using the device. This includes:

- (a) Individuals who are known to be pregnant.
- (b) Elderly individuals or obvious juveniles.
- (c) Individuals with obviously low body mass.
- (d) Individuals who are handcuffed or otherwise restrained.

Culver City Police Department

Culver City PD Policy Manual

Conducted Energy Weapon Guidelines

- (e) Individuals who have been recently sprayed with a flammable chemical agent or who are otherwise in close proximity to any known combustible vapor or flammable material, including alcohol-based oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray.
- (f) Individuals whose position or activity may result in collateral injury (e.g., falls from height, operating vehicles).

Because the application of the Conducted Energy Weapon in the drive-stun mode (i.e., direct contact without probes) relies primarily on pain compliance, the use of the drive-stun mode generally should be limited to supplementing the probe-mode to complete the circuit, 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 Conducted Energy Weapon shall not be used to psychologically torment, elicit statements or to punish any individual.

305.5.3 TARGETING CONSIDERATIONS

Reasonable efforts should be made to target lower center mass and avoid the head, neck, chest and groin. If the dynamics of a situation or officer safety do not permit the officer to limit the application of the Conducted Energy Weapon probes to a precise target area, officers should monitor the condition of the subject if one or more probes strikes the head, neck, chest or groin until the subject is examined by paramedics or other medical personnel.

305.5.4 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS OF THE CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPON

Officers should apply the Conducted Energy Weapon for only one standard cycle and then evaluate the situation before applying any subsequent cycles. Multiple applications of the Conducted Energy Weapon against a single individual are generally not recommended and should be avoided unless the officer reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the potentially increased risk posed by multiple applications.

If the first application of the Conducted Energy Weapon appears to be ineffective in gaining control of an individual, the officer should consider certain factors before additional applications of the Conducted Energy Weapon, including:

- (a) Whether the probes are making proper contact.
- (b) Whether the individual has the ability and has been given a reasonable opportunity to comply.
- (c) Whether verbal commands, other options or tactics may be more effective.

Officers should generally not intentionally apply more than one Conducted Energy Weapon at a time against a single subject.

305.5.5 ACTIONS FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENTS

Officers shall notify a supervisor of all Conducted Energy Weapon discharges. The expended cartridge, along with both probes and wire, should be booked into evidence. The TASER number

Culver City Police Department

Culver City PD Policy Manual

Conducted Energy Weapon Guidelines

and cartridge serial number should be noted and documented on the evidence paperwork. The evidence packaging should be marked "Biohazard" if the probes penetrated the subject's skin.

305.5.6 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

The Conducted Energy Weapon 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.

305.5.7 OFF-DUTY CONSIDERATIONS

Officers are not authorized to carry department Conducted Energy Weapons while off-duty.

Officers shall ensure that Conducted Energy Weapons are secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control, in a manner that will keep the device inaccessible to others.

305.6 DOCUMENTATION

Officers shall document all Conducted Energy Weapon discharges in the related arrest/crime report. Notification shall also be made to a supervisor in compliance with the Use of Force Policy. Unintentional discharges shall be reported to a supervisor.

305.6.1 REPORTS

The officer should include the following in the arrest/crime report:

- (a) Identification of all personnel firing Conducted Energy Weapons
- (b) Identification of all witnesses
- (c) Medical care provided to the subject
- (d) Observations of the subject's physical and physiological actions
- (e) Any known or suspected drug use, intoxication or other medical problems

305.7 MEDICAL TREATMENT

Consistent with local medical personnel protocols and absent extenuating circumstances, only appropriate medical personnel should remove Conducted Energy Weapon probes from a person's body. Used Conducted Energy Weapon probes shall be treated as a sharps biohazard, similar to a used hypodermic needle, and handled appropriately. Universal precautions should be taken.

All persons who have been struck by Conducted Energy Weapon probes or who have been subjected to the electric discharge of the device shall be medically assessed prior to booking. Additionally, any such individual who falls under any of the following categories should, as soon as practicable, be examined by paramedics or other qualified medical personnel:

- (a) The person is suspected of being under the influence of controlled substances and/or alcohol.
- (b) The person may be pregnant.

Culver City Police Department

Culver City PD Policy Manual

Conducted Energy Weapon Guidelines

- (c) The person reasonably appears to be in need of medical attention.
- (d) The Conducted Energy Weapon probes are lodged in a sensitive area (e.g., groin, female breast, head, face, neck).
- (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 or medically evaluated prior to booking. If any individual refuses medical attention, such a refusal should be witnessed by another officer and/or medical personnel and shall be fully documented in related reports. If an audio recording is made of the contact or an interview with the individual, any refusal should be included, if possible.

The transporting officer shall inform any person providing medical care or receiving custody that the individual has been subjected to the application of the Conducted Energy Weapon.

305.8 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When possible, supervisors should respond to calls when they reasonably believe there is a likelihood the Conducted Energy Weapon may be used. A supervisor should respond to all incidents where the Conducted Energy Weapon was activated.

A supervisor should review each incident where a person has been exposed to an activation of the Conducted Energy Weapon. The device's onboard memory should be downloaded through the data port by a supervisor or Taser department administrators and saved with the related arrest/crime report. Photographs of probe sites should be taken and witnesses interviewed.

305.9 TRAINING

Personnel who are authorized to carry the Conducted Energy Weapon shall be permitted to do so only after successfully completing the initial department-approved training. Any personnel who have not carried the Conducted Energy Weapon as a part of their assignment for a period of six months or more should be recertified by a department-approved Conducted Energy Weapon instructor prior to again carrying or using the device.

Proficiency training for personnel who have been issued Conducted Energy Weapons should occur every year. A reassessment of an officer's knowledge and/or practical skill may be required at any time if deemed appropriate by the Personnel and Training Lieutenant. All training and proficiency for Conducted Energy Weapons will be documented in the officer's training file.

Command staff, supervisors and investigators should receive Conducted Energy Weapon training as appropriate for the investigations they conduct and review.

Officers who do not carry Conducted Energy Weapons should receive training that is sufficient to familiarize them with the device and with working with officers who use the device.

Culver City Police Department

Culver City PD Policy Manual

Conducted Energy Weapon Guidelines

The Personnel and Training Lieutenant is responsible for ensuring that all members who carry Conducted Energy Weapons have received initial and annual proficiency training. Periodic audits should be used for verification.

Application of Conducted Energy Weapons during training could result in injury to personnel and should not be mandatory for certification.

The Personnel and Training Lieutenant should ensure that all training includes:

- (a) A review of this policy.
- (b) A review of the Use of Force Policy.
- (c) Performing weak-hand draws or cross-draws to reduce the possibility of unintentionally drawing and firing a firearm.
- (d) Target area considerations, to include techniques or options to reduce the unintentional application of probes near the head, neck, chest and groin.
- (e) Handcuffing a subject during the application of the Conducted Energy Weapon and transitioning to other force options.
- (f) De-escalation techniques.
- (g) Restraint techniques that do not impair respiration following the application of the Conducted Energy Weapon.