



What is
Taser?

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What is Taser?

A Taser is a less-lethal single shot weapon designed to temporarily incapacitate a subject through the use of an electrical current. It is a hand-held weapon similar in shape and size to a pistol, but is bright yellow in colour.

The X26 Taser, used only by trained North Wales Police officers, uses an electrical current which interferes with the body's neuromuscular system. It allows officers to deal with violent or potentially violent people at a distance so as to maximise protection for all involved.

Taser is usually held in a holster on an officer's belt (but can be carried in other positions) along with other officer safety equipment. It is clearly visible, being yellow and black, designed to stand out and be identified as a Taser.

Common Taser related terms are:

Cartridges - These contain a pair of wires with barbs attached that carry the electric current to the subject's body. The cartridge is clipped on to the front of the Taser. The Taser works by delivering an electrical charge to the body.

Draw - This is the removal of the Taser from its holster. It has the advantage of the officer being ready and letting the subject know the officer has a Taser.

Aim - Once removed from the holster, the Taser is pointed at the subject but not armed. This is used to let the subject know the officer has Taser and to desist from the actions which lead to the officer drawing Taser in the first instance.

Red Dot - The Taser has a laser sighting system which allows the officer to mark the subject with a red dot. This has the advantage of letting the officer know they are on target and also letting the subject know that they have been targeted.

Arcing - This is an action aimed at deterring a subject. This is achieved when the officer squeezes the trigger without the cartridge attached and the electric current flows between the two contacts at the end of the Taser. An audible and visual display of electricity crackling across the two contacts can be seen and heard.

Angled Drive Stun - Taser is designed to safely incapacitate a person at distance, sometimes distance cannot be achieved due to the subject being too close to the police officer. On some of these occasions it will be appropriate for an officer to incapacitate the subject by carrying out an angled drive stun. This involves activating the loaded Taser close to the subject's body and then placing the Taser against another part of their body to incapacitate them.

Drive Stun - Similar to the angled drive stun where distance cannot be achieved, but on this occasion the cartridge is removed from the front of the Taser. This will not incapacitate the subject but will cause pain. On some occasions it will be appropriate for an officer to use drive stun to gain control of a subject.

Discharge - This is the firing of the Taser causing the two barbs to be propelled from the cartridge towards the subject. This is used to deal with a subject at distance and will, under correct circumstances, incapacitate them.



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All North Wales Police officers who volunteer and are selected to use Taser must pass an intensive three day Taser training course prior to becoming qualified Taser operators. The course includes detailed assessments on decision making, scenario based incidents, use of force and the medical implications of the use of Taser.

Taser training in North Wales doesn't just focus on the Taser itself. It helps officers to fine tune existing skills and teaches them the importance of communication, justification and management of post use procedures. To date, around 80% of candidates successfully completed the course.

Before attending a course, officers must be up to date with Officer Safety Training, Emergency Life Support, pass a fitness test, have a valid eyesight test and have been recommended by their unit Inspector. Officers' professional standards records are checked too.

Practical scenarios aim to test the officer's decision making processes and application of the relevant legislation around the use of force. Officers are also tested in recognising medical emergencies and any adverse reactions arising from the use of force. Taser training in North Wales follows national standards and guidelines.

Taser Initial Course Contents

- How to use Taser - This is taught through drills in a shooting range environment and re-enforced in practical scenarios.
- When to use it - Lessons cover rationale, what your options are, looking at all the tactics available both as an individual or as part of a group. This is guided by the National Decision Model, Human Rights Act and domestic law.
- Post use procedure - How to retrieve and record evidence, including identification discs and dataport downloads.

Assessment

Officers are continuously assessed throughout the course. There are three specific tests :-

1. Qualification shoot - officers are tested in accuracy, handling the Taser and use of safety against static targets
2. A written exam
3. Scenarios - officers are tested in situations that resemble real life e.g. how to deal with someone armed with a knife

Refresher Training

Once qualified as a Taser user, officers must attend and successfully complete an annual one day refresher course.



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People are asking more questions now than ever before about the police use of Taser and what it means for policing and protecting the public. Find out more about how Taser works, when it can be used, follow up procedures and some of the other considerations and issues involved.

When was Taser introduced?

In 2004, following a trial in five forces, it was agreed to allow chief officers of all police forces in England and Wales to make Taser available to authorised firearms officers.

In July 2007 authorised police firearms officers were allowed to use Taser in a greater set of circumstances. These officers are now able to deploy Taser in operations or incidents where the use of firearms is not authorised, but where they are facing violence or threats of violence of such severity that they would need to use force to protect the public, themselves or the subject.

It was also announced in July 2007 that the deployment of Taser by specially trained police units who are not firearms officers, but who are facing similar threats of violence, would be trialed in ten police forces.

The 12-month trial commenced on 1 September 2007 and finished on 31 August 2008. It took place in the following forces: Avon & Somerset, Devon & Cornwall, Gwent, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, North Wales and West Yorkshire.

Following the success of the trial, from 1 December 2008, Taser use was extended to specially trained units.

When can North Wales Police officers use Taser?

Taser may be deployed and used as one of a number of tactical options only after application of the National Decision Model (NDM). When Taser, or any other force is used on an individual, a police officer will always have to justify their actions and every Taser use by a North Wales Police officer is internally scrutinised to ensure its use was proportionate, legitimate and absolutely necessary. Furthermore, uses of Taser, including the circumstances around its use are reported to the Home Office in great detail, including those where young people are involved.

Is every police officer in North Wales Police given a Taser?

No. Every Chief Constable makes a decision, based on an assessment of the risks in their own area, to train and deploy a proportionate number of officers to use Taser so that the public are kept safe and their officers are protected as far as possible.

Why does North Wales Police use Taser?

Taser is an additional tactical option that allows officers to manage situations where violence is threatened or likely from a safe distance. - In the vast majority of cases where Taser is deployed the mere sight of it has been enough to bring violent or potentially violent situations to a safe and peaceful resolution. In addition, officers who are trained and equipped with Taser must decide on the most reasonable and necessary use of force in the circumstances. The level of force used must be the minimum necessary to achieve the objective and officers are individually accountable in law for the amount of force they use on a subject.

The alternatives to Taser include a range of other measures such as physical restraint, batons and police dogs. Much will depend upon the circumstances, but Taser will often be less likely to cause injury than the use of a police baton or a police dog.

What happens to someone when Taser is used on them?

The normal reaction of a person exposed to the discharge of a Taser is the loss of some voluntary muscle control resulting in the subject falling to the ground or freezing on the spot. Recovery from the direct effects of the Taser should be almost instantaneous, once the discharge is complete.

Anyone arrested having been Tasered is routinely examined by a doctor.

After Taser is used on someone, are the medical implications taken into account?

Yes. The medical implications associated with Taser are closely monitored by an independent panel of medical advisers who also monitor other learning from elsewhere in the world. This enables North Wales Police and National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) to constantly review the guidance to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

In addition, NPCC guidance is supported by a detailed training curriculum which is delivered to all Taser officers and refreshed annually.

What happens if someone on drugs is Tasered?

Drug use is a common cause of violent dangerous and unpredictable behaviour, and Tasers can be a useful tool in safely subduing drug affected people who can otherwise be very difficult to restrain. Other more traditional methods can lead to injury to both the person and officers.

What happens if someone with a heart problem is Tasered?

Officers won't always know the people they are faced with or their medical history. The officers still have to deal with the circumstances presented to them. Some people who are violent may have a condition that not even they are aware of. What is important, is that the officer deals with the situation in a proportionate manner and only uses that force which is necessary in the circumstances.

If an officer becomes aware that the person they are dealing with is suffering from a condition, they will treat the person as a medical emergency and get them to hospital.

What happens if someone is Tasered more than once?

There are instances where people have been subjected to more than one use of the Taser in the UK with no ill effect.

Tasers have been called '50,000 volt stun guns'. Are people hit with 50,000 volts?

No. It is not correct to say Tasers use 50,000 volts to stun people, that is not how they operate. At the top of a Taser there are two contact points which need to link together. In order to do this, the Taser generates a maximum peak voltage of 50,000 volts for less than a second to allow the arc to jump a gap so the two contact points meet. The Taser also does this in incidents where a probe lodges in clothing and must jump the gap to the body. When travelling across the human body, the peak voltage drops to 1,200 volts. It should also be pointed out that volts are not dangerous. The average current a Taser emits is 0.0021amps.

A Taser works not by power, but by the way it sends the current into the body and how the muscles respond. For example, the energy delivered per pulse is 0.07 joules compared to a cardiac defibrillator which typically delivers 150-400 joules per pulse, which is 2,000 to 5,000 times more powerful.

Which Taser do trained and qualified North Wales Police officers use?

The X26 Taser.

How can police be confident the right amount of current comes out of a Taser?

The manufacturer carries out thorough tests on all of its Tasers, which are guaranteed by an internationally recognised quality assurance body to ensure they meet operational specifications before they are supplied. Tasers are also checked before being taken out by the officers to ensure they are functioning correctly

How can I make a complaint about Taser use by a North Wales Police officer?

Details can be found on the North Wales Police Internet page.

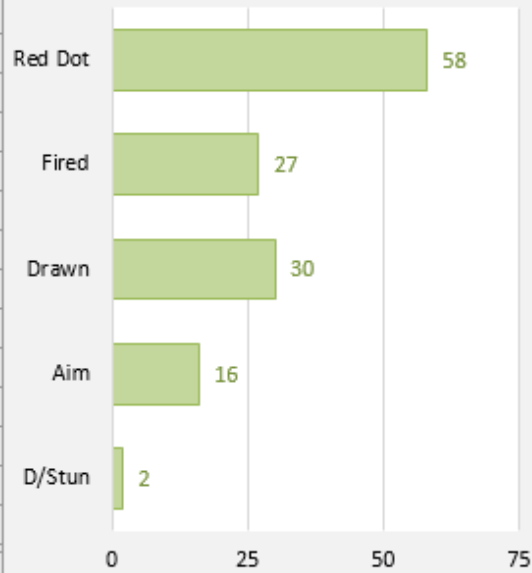


Taser Usage

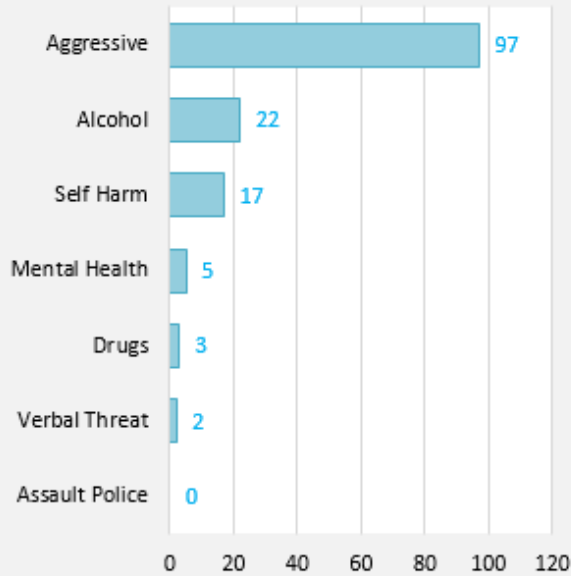
Jan-16 to Dec-16

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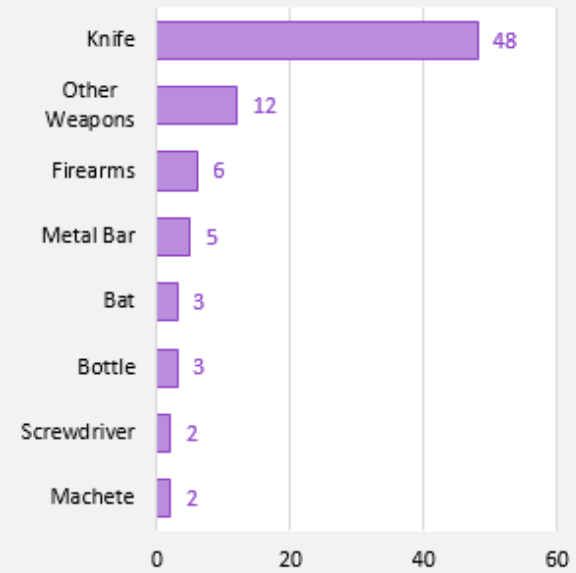
Type of Use YTD



Contributory Factors for Taser Use YTD*



Weapons Present YTD



**An individual taser use may have multiple contributory factors. The total number of factors will therefore exceed the individual number of uses.*

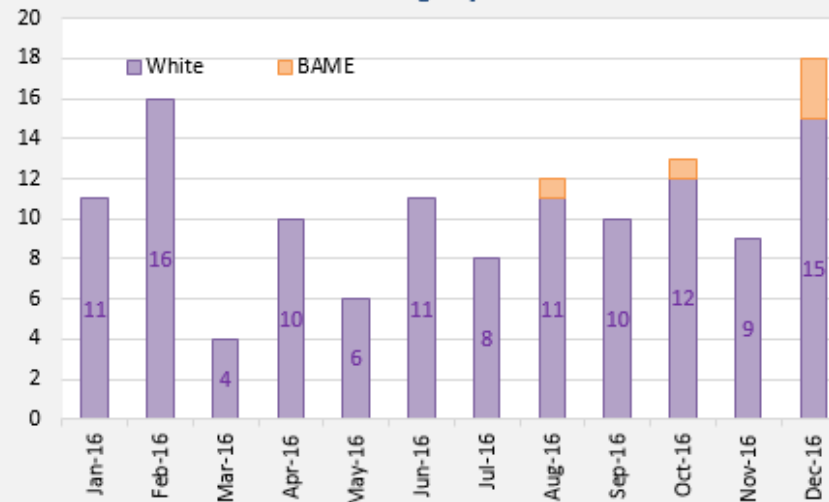


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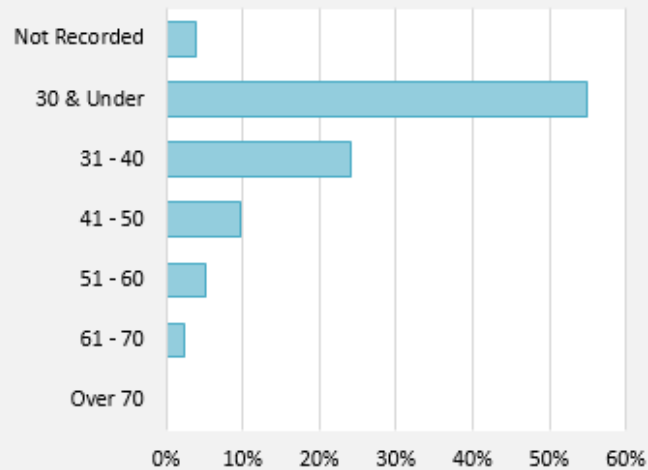
Taser Usage by Type of Use

Usage Type	White	BAME	Not Recorded	Total
Aim	15	0	1	16
Drawn	26	2	2	30
Red Dot	57	1	0	58
Fired	23	2	2	27
D/Stun	2	0	0	2
Total	123	5	5	133

Taser Usage by Month



Taser Usage YTD by Age



Taser Usage by Gender

Gender	Total No. of Uses
Male	123
Female	6
N/A	4
Total	133

Taser Usage by Area

Area	Total No. of Uses
Western	32
Central	53
Eastern	48
Total	133