



**LANCASTER BUREAU OF POLICE**  
**Lancaster, Pennsylvania**

SUBJECT: Electronic Control Weapons		NO. 409.01
EFFECTIVE DATE: 29 May 2009	REVIEW DATE:	
REFERENCES:		

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to provide Bureau of Police personnel and/or with guidance and direction on the use of electronic control weapons (ECWs).

**POLICY:** It is the policy of this agency to use ECWs only where it reasonably appears necessary to control or otherwise subdue violent or potentially violent individuals. ECWs may be used by authorized and trained personnel in accordance with this policy and approved departmental training.

**DEFINITIONS:**

*Electronic Control Weapon (ECW):* A weapon designed to disrupt a subject's central nervous system by deploying battery-powered electrical energy sufficient to cause uncontrolled muscle contractions and override voluntary motor responses.

*AFIDs:* Confetti-like pieces of paper that are expelled from the cartridge when fired. Each anti-felon identification (AFID) tag contains an alpha-numeric identifier unique to the cartridge used.

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. Authorized Users**

Only officers who have satisfactorily completed this agency's approved training course shall be authorized to carry ECWs.

**B. Weapon Readiness**

1. The device will be carried in an approved holster on the side of the body opposite the service handgun. Officers not assigned to uniformed patrol may utilize other department-approved holsters and carry the weapon consistent with department training.
2. The device shall be carried fully armed with the safety on in preparation for immediate use when authorized.
3. Officers authorized to use the device shall be issued a minimum of one spare cartridge as a backup in case of cartridge failure, the need for redeployment, or in case the first cartridge's leads break during engagement. The spare cartridges shall

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be stored and carried in a manner consistent with training and the cartridges replaced consistent with the manufacturer's expiration requirements.

4. Only agency-approved battery power sources shall be used in the ECW.

### **C. Deployment**

1. The ECW is generally analogous to oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray in use-of-force options. Decisions to use an ECW involve the same basic justification. As such, it is forbidden to use the device as follows:
  - (a) In a punitive or coercive manner.
  - (b) On a handcuffed or secured prisoner, absent overtly assaultive behavior that cannot be reasonably dealt with in any other less intrusive fashion.
  - (c) 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).
  - (d) In any environment where the subject's fall could reasonably result in death (such as in water or on an elevated structure).
  - (e) Use of an ECW is permitted where reasonable suspicion or probable cause exists.
  - (f) Use of an ECW is permitted in cases of self defense or defense of third persons where officer presence and/or verbal commands have failed to control the situation or are otherwise inappropriate.
2. As in all uses of force, certain individuals maybe more susceptible to injury. Officers should be aware of the greater potential for injury when using an ECW against children, the elderly, persons of small stature irrespective of age, or those who the officer has reason to believe are pregnant, equipped with a pacemaker, or in obvious ill health.
3. 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.
4. The subject should be secured as soon as practical while disabled by ECW power to minimize the number of deployment cycles. In determining the need for additional energy cycles, officers should be aware that an energized subject may not be able to respond to commands during or immediately following exposure.

5. In preparation for firing, the ECW 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 are the secondary targets. This does not exclude the display and aiming of the device to deescalate a situation to avoid actual use of the device.
6. Fixed sights should be used as the primary aiming device and the laser dot as the secondary aiming device.
7. The device may also be used in certain circumstances in a "touch stun" mode. This involves pressing the unit, with or without a cartridge, 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:
  - (a) Primarily a pain compliance tool due to a lack of probe spread.
  - (b) Minimally effective compared to conventional cartridge-type deployments.
  - (c) More likely to leave marks on the subject's skin.
  - (d) Subject to the same deployment (use) guidelines and restrictions as those of the ECW in cartridge deployments.
8. The ECW shall be pointed at the ground in a safe direction with the safety on during loading, unloading, or when handled in other than an operational deployment.
9. The ECW should not be used in a situation where deadly force is clearly justifiable unless another officer is present and capable of providing deadly force to protect the officer deploying the ECW.

#### **D. Aftercare**

1. The ECW darts may be removed from the subject after the subject is restrained following procedures outlined in training.
2. Individuals who have been incapacitated by an ECW will be checked by emergency medical personnel as soon as tactically safe to do so. At minimum this will involve and EMT checking the subject's vital signs. Transportation to a medical facility is not automatically required.

3. The following persons shall be transported to a medical facility for examination following exposure to an ECW. Any person who:
  - (a) requests medical attention; -officers shall ask persons if they desire medical attention,
  - (b) is hit in a sensitive area (e.g., face, head, female breasts, male groin),
  - (c) from whom officers have difficulty removing the probes (owing to probe or barb separation),
  - (d) does not appear to recover properly after being energized,
  - (e) is in a potentially susceptible population category as defined in IV.C.2 of this policy,
  - (f) has been energized more than three times,
  - (g) has had more than one ECW effectively used against him or her in any given incident,
  - (h) has been subjected to a continuous energy cycle of 15 seconds or more, or
  - (i) has exhibited signs of excited delirium prior to ECW exposure.
4. Photographs of the affected area should be taken after the darts are removed.
5. When the device has been used operationally, the officer shall collect and dispose of the cartridge, wire leads, darts, and AFIDs as per departmental training.

## **E. Reporting**

1. The deploying officer, whether the discharge was intentional or accidental, shall notify his or her supervisor as soon as practical after using the device, and complete a use-of-force report.
2. Officers shall specifically articulate the rationale in their use-of-force report for any instance in which: an ECW is energized more than three times, an energy cycle longer than 15 seconds in duration is used, more than one ECW is used against a subject in any given incident, or an ECW is used against an individual designated to be in a “susceptible population” per section C.2. of this policy.
3. The training office will handle downloading of data from all ECWs on a regular basis. Information from the downloaded data will be used to validate submitted Use of Force reports and to aid in review and validation of the training.

4. Use of an ECW on an animal does not require a Use of Force report. A copy of the Offense Report must be submitted to the training office.

**“This online policy or procedure is the only accurate/official policy or procedure.”** All copies of this policy or procedure or other drafts of this policy and procedure are not officially recognized.

**A definitive policy to cover all eventualities for mandating the use of ECWs cannot be created. This policy is meant to serve as a guide for employees to follow when operating any vehicle while on duty. It further serves to explain the expectations that the City of Lancaster has for employees.**

By Order of: \_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Sadler  
Chief of Police