

VIRGINIA Sheriffs



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**VIRGINIA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
WELCOMES NEW SHERIFFS**

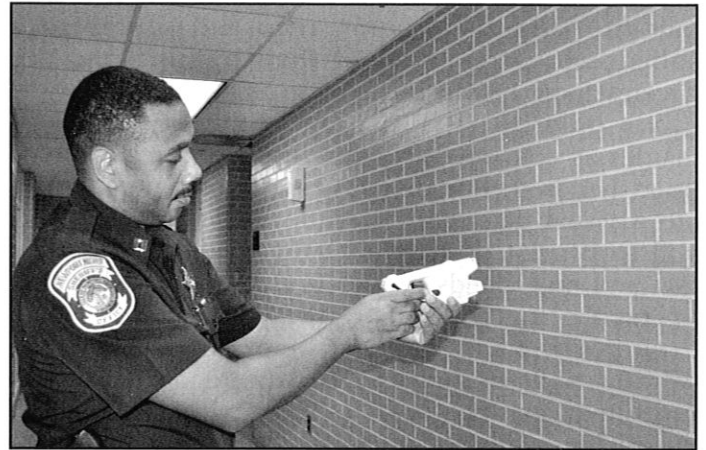
NNSO First Agency In Virginia To Deploy New TASER X2 ECD

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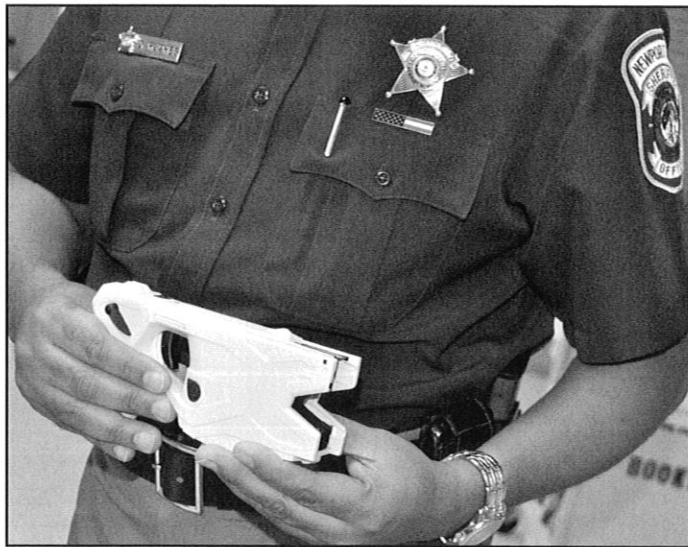
The Newport News Sheriff's Office is the first law enforcement agency in the Commonwealth of Virginia to purchase the latest electronic control device, or ECD, from TASER International, Inc. "We are excited to announce the first deployment of X2 ECDs in Virginia and welcome the Newport News Sheriff's Office as a first-time customer of our technology," said Rick Smith, CEO of TASER International.

The Newport News Sheriff's Office (NNSO) ordered 77 of the X2 model. They will be issued to Deputies assigned to civil enforcement, transportation and courts. The TASERs will also be issued to SERT members, the Sheriff's Emergency Response Team. Additional devices will be available for checkout for those Deputies working extra duty.

The technology provides another layer—an intermediate level—to the use of force continuum. "They are proven to reduce injuries to the suspect and to the officer if used properly," said Captain David Hughes. Department of Justice studies were



Captain David Hughes handles the X2, the latest ECD from TASER International, Inc.



The Newport News Sheriff's Office was the first Virginia law enforcement agency to purchase the TASER X2.

researched prior to the purchase of any ECD. Additionally, the NNSO contacted Sheriffs' offices and police departments throughout the area and found each agency to be happy with the product. Nobody indicated plans to discontinue their use.

Asked to describe what kind of scenarios could lead to deploying the energy conducting device, Hughes said court security Deputies will have the greater likelihood to use them. They have the most interaction with the public. A lot of times, friction between victim and suspect families has to be quelled. There have been brawls in the courtroom itself, the lobby of the courthouse and just outside the court building. In each of these cases, Deputies would have benefited from having an electronic control device. As for using them in a courtroom, they will be less disruptive than pepper spray because the spray contaminates the entire room. Court proceedings have to be interrupted in order for the chemical to clear. The TASER, on the other hand, incapacitates the suspect with a five-second burst of electricity without involving anyone else. Court can resume immediately upon controlling the situation.

Other models were available, not only through

TASER International, but other companies. The reason the NNSO chose the X2 model was because of its enhanced safety features. It has a dual-shot semi-automatic capability. It comes with two cartridges, so if the Deputy were to miss, the device can be immediately re-fired. There is also a dual-laser for improved accuracy. Two lasers enhance the probability that the top and bottom probes will hit their targets.

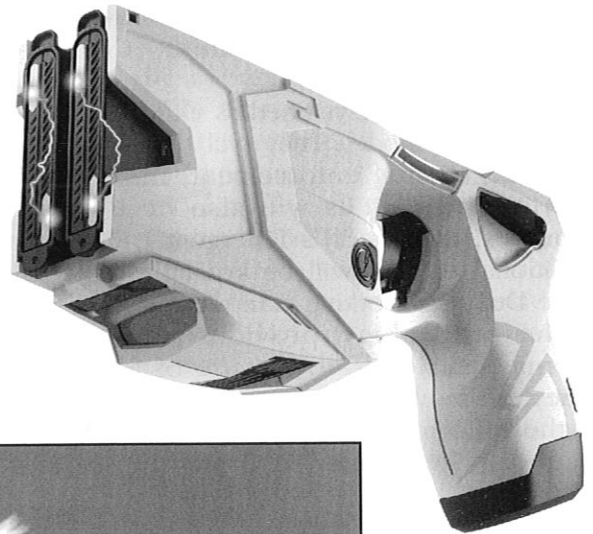
Each device is also equipped with a high definition camera. The camera is activated when the TASER is pulled from the holster and begins recording prior to the shot. "In reviews, we can watch the suspect's action before, during and after the TASER was fired. The camera is for the protection of the Deputy, the department and the public," explained Hughes. The fact the Deputy is being recorded serves as a subconscious reminder of their training and the circumstances in which use of an ECD is justified.

Not only do TASERS provide the least ratio of injuries as compared to other levels of force (bare or open hands techniques, OC spray or batons), they are a visual deterrent. "Just the threat of the TASER will stop a lot of actions," said Hughes. "They see that and their hands go up, as does their willingness to comply."

As in any study, not only were pros identified, so were cons. Secondary injuries were reported in some cases involving the use of TASERS. The most common were injuries suffered in a fall. That is why the NNSO is still reviewing their use inside the jail. The confined space and hard surfaces of a jail make their use more dangerous there than in a street setting.

There have been deaths reported after the use of a TASER. However, Hughes said there have been no cases where the taser alone caused the death. In all cases, the death was attributed to other contributing factors, like excited delirium. This syndrome is usually drug-related and has symptoms of bizarre and/or aggressive behavior, violence toward others and unexpected physical strength.

Training on the proper use of the TASER X2 ECD will begin in the fall once policy is finalized. Captain Hughes and three others at the department completed instructor school. Each was exposed to a TASER. Being hit by the probes and zapped by an electrical current as part of training helps improve an officer's judgment in deploying the device. They will consider what it will be like for the other person and use it only when justified. "It was the longest five seconds of my life. It hurts," he said, trying to find a diplomatic way to describe the feeling. "It was unlike anything I've ever experienced. I never want to feel it again."



TASER International, Inc., stock images.