



The Police Commission

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Frequently Asked Questions: Conducted Energy Devices (CEDs)

What is a CED?

Conducted Energy Devices or CEDs are commonly referred to as Tasers, after Taser International the manufacturer producing the most commonly used devices.

According to the guidelines put out by the U.S. Department of Justice and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), Tasers are considered as less-lethal weapons meant to help control persons violently resisting authority or displaying assaultive behavior.

Thousands of American police agencies have purchased CEDs for their officers, and as of 2010 industry representatives reported that more than 15,500 law enforcement agencies in more than 40 countries were using them as part of their toolkits.

CEDs are just one of a number of tools that police have available to do their jobs, and they should be considered one part of an agency's overall use-of-force policy.

How Does a CED Work?

Activating a CED causes compressed nitrogen to project two probes outwards as far as 25 feet. An electrical signal transmits through a thin filament to where the probes make contact with the body or clothing. The result is neuromuscular incapacitation inhibiting voluntary action. The electrical current is only effective if both probes make contact.

The device uses an automatic timing mechanism to apply the electric charge. This cycle is often no more than 5 seconds per activation.

Why is this important and why is this being discussed now?

Previously, the San Francisco Police Department along with the San Francisco Police Commission have debated whether deployment of CEDs is a viable intermediate Use of Force.

This current discussion is part of the ongoing reform efforts laid out by the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The report states as part of its findings and recommendations:

Finding 16

Currently, SFPD officers are not authorized to carry electronic control weapons (ECW, i.e., Tasers). These tools are less-lethal weapons that are meant to help control persons who are acting aggressively.

Many police agencies use these tools and report that they have helped reduce injury to officers and community members and lead to fewer officer-involved shootings. Promising practices suggest that the use of ECWs can result in less use of force.

Recommendation 16.1

Working with all key stakeholders and community members, the SFPD and the Police Commission should make an informed decision based on expectations, sentiment, and information from top experts in the country.

Recommendation 16.2

The City and County of San Francisco should strongly consider deploying ECWs

L. JULIUS M. TURMAN
President

THOMAS MAZZUCCO
Vice President

DR. JOE MARSHALL
Commissioner

PETRA DeJESUS
Commissioner

SONIA MELARA
Commissioner

BILL ONG HING
Commissioner

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Commissioner

Sergeant Rachael Kilshaw
Secretary

What is the purpose of these meetings?

As part of the consideration process, the Police Commission along with the SFPD and with the facilitation support of the Human Right's Commission is inviting community members to weigh in, ask questions, share perspectives and voice concerns about whether CEDs should be considered as a force option for the Police Department. The meetings are also a platform to provide input on the draft policy to be presented for discussion at a future Police Commission meeting.

What happens next?

Community input from the various public meetings will be collected and shared with the Police Department for review and possible inclusion in the next iteration of the draft policy. The ideas and concerns raised and questions posed will also be provided to the entire Commission as they consider and discuss the deployment of CEDs.

All policy proposals will be forwarded to the Police Commission acting as a body to discuss and vote on adoption.

How else can I provide input and track progress?

If you are unable to attend the community meetings you can email sfpd.commission@sfgov.org or provide input via Facebook and/or Twitter.

To track progress visit <http://sanfranciscopolice.org/conducted-energy-devices>