

EFFECTS of the TASER X26 on POLICE SERVICE DOGS

By Terry Fleck

Since the implementation of the TASER X26, there have been questions about the usage of the TASER X26 and its potential effect on a police canine, if deployed on a suspect in conjunction with the dog bite (a simultaneous application).

As a TASER instructor and nationally recognized police service dog handler / trainer, I decided to conduct several tests to see the effect of the TASER X26 and police service dogs.

The results here reflect tests conducted with two retired police service dogs in several scenarios pertaining to deployment of a TASER X26. Although this study was conducted on only two retired police service dogs, both dogs were veteran dogs and both reacted to the experiments in the same manner.

1. TASER X26 Spark Test:

The dogs were exposed to the distraction of the X26 spark test.

RESULTS:

Neither dog was distracted after the initial spark test.

2. TASER Model #44205 TASER Simulation Cartridge:

The dogs were exposed to the distraction of the TASER Simulation Cartridge. The cartridge's nonconductive simulation probes were shot into the decoy, who was protected by a bite suit.

RESULTS:

Neither dog was distracted after the initial deployment by the probes, nor getting wrapped up in the two 21-foot wires.

3. TASER Model #85000 Demonstration Cartridge:

The dogs were exposed to the shot carried through the TASER #85000 Demonstration Cartridge. This cartridge shoots the X26 Shaped Pulse Technology via two alligator clips attached to two 21-foot wires. The alligator clips were attached to a bite suit or a concealed bite sleeve. The dogs bit the decoy in four locations on the protective equipment:

- A. Outside the probes;
- B. Between the probes;
- C. Outside the probes, coupled with a drive stun on the decoy;
- D. Between the probes, coupled with a drive stun on the decoy.

RESULTS:

Neither dog seemed to be affected by a five-second cycle. There was no change of behavior in the dogs. The bite strength on the decoy protective equipment remained the same before, during, and after a five-second cycle. The dogs were exposed to a total of four five-second cycles.

The decoy was wearing a bite suit.

I believe this test simulated the dog biting a suspect wearing heavy clothing.

4. TASER Model #44200 TASER Standard Air Cartridge:

The dogs were exposed to the X26 Shaped Pulse Technology shot using the standard 21-foot range probes (silver blast doors), #44200 Standard Air Cartridge, into to a bite suit and concealed bite sleeve. The dogs bit the decoy in four locations on the protective equipment:

- A. Outside the probes;
- B. Between the probes;

- C. Outside the probes, coupled with a drive stun on the decoy;
- D. Between the probes, coupled with a drive stun on the decoy.

RESULTS:

Neither dog seemed to be affected by a five-second cycle. There was no change of behavior in the dogs. The bite strength on the decoy protective equipment remained the same before, during, and after a five-second cycle. The dogs were exposed to a total of four five-second cycles. The decoy was wearing a bite suit.

I believe this test simulated the dog biting a suspect wearing heavy clothing in an actual X26 usage.

TASER International suggested two additional tests to insure full **conductivity** of the TASER X26:

5. A “dry” suspect, shot by a TASER Model #44200 TASER Standard Air Cartridge, shot from a TASER X26:

The two retired police service dogs bit a concealed bite sleeve (Ray Allen Model # RA11), drenched in .9% saline solution (similar to human sweat), wrapped in two layers of heavy duty aluminum foil (conductivity) and then wrapped in a **dry** chamois cloth. The dogs bit **between** the TASER probes. The exterior of the bite area was **dry**.

RESULTS: The dogs were not visibly affected by the TASER X26.

I believe this test simulated the dog biting a suspect, who was covered in sweat, wearing dry clothing.

6. A “sweaty” or “wet” suspect, shot by a TASER Model #44200 TASER Standard Air Cartridge, shot from a TASER X26:

The two retired police service dogs bit the concealed bite sleeve, drenched in .9% saline solution (similar to human sweat), wrapped in two layers of heavy duty aluminum foil (conductivity), wrapped in a chamois cloth and then **drenched** again in .9% saline solution again. The dogs bit **between** the TASER probes. The entire bite sleeve was **dripping wet** with saline solution.

RESULTS:

Both the dogs would **disengage** the bite during the TASER activation. The dogs did not yelp or whine, nor show any negative behavior. They simply stopped biting.

The dogs would **immediately** re-engage the bite when the TASER was turned off. Both dogs did **not bite the same area, as the original bite.** I'm assuming they both intentionally avoided the original bite area. In addition, the dogs' bite was harder than before.

Both dogs did **not** suffer any after effect. Their post experiment behavior was normal and they would continue to bite the concealed bite sleeve, when presented. The only avoidance both dogs showed was while the TASER was activated. As soon as the TASER was turned off, they **immediately** bit again. The TASER could then be reactivated and the dogs continued to bite the decoy, harder than before, **not biting the same area, as the original bite.**

I believe this test simulated the dog biting a suspect, who was sweaty or wet.

ACTUAL FIELD DEPLOYMENTS:

Since this testing, I have talked with dozens of canine handlers who have actually deployed a police dog on a **real** suspect bite, while a TASER X26 was deployed on the suspect simultaneously.

Only **one** of these handlers experienced any negative behavior from their dog. In that case, the police service dog bit the suspect **between** the probes and “jumped back” when the TASER X26 was activated. The dog did not yelp or whine, nor show any negative behavior, and **immediately** re-engaged when the TASER was turned off. His post bite behavior was normal and he would continue to bite a suspect.

In all other bites, the dogs continued to bite the suspect, while the TASER X26 was applied simultaneously. The problem is, since those bites were in actual deployments, it is difficult to conclude that the dogs bit between or outside the probes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It appears through this study that a police dog can bite a suspect, or at least a decoy, while the TASER X26 has been deployed simultaneously. The dogs were not visibly affected, nor did the bite diminish, **outside the probes**.

In one test, **the dogs were affected if they bit inside the probes**. Both the dogs would **disengage** the bite during the TASER activation. The dogs did not yelp or whine, nor show any negative behavior. They simply stopped biting. The dogs would **immediately** re-engage the bite when the TASER was turned off. Both dogs did **not bite the same area as the original bite**. In addition, the dogs' bite was harder than before.

It appears the only potential concern with using both a TASER X26 and a police service dog on a suspect simultaneously is **inadvertently shooting the dog** with the TASER device. Therefore:

- **OPTION #1:**
The TASER probes should be on the suspect before a police service dog is applied, to prevent accidental shooting of the dog.
- **OPTION #2:**
The other option is to dramatically decrease the distance from the TASER operator and the suspect, to make absolutely sure the suspect, not the dog, is shot. This may even require stabilization of a suspect, if the dog is spinning him.

Once the dog is on the bite, the TASER X26 may be applied additionally in a drive stun mode. **The drive stun did not affect the dogs in this study.**

If the dog disengages a bite on a suspect, the suspect is probably sweaty or wet **and** the dog has bitten between the probes. The handler should then make a decision which use of force is more effective on the suspect, the police service dog or the TASER X26. **This test showed both could be applied simultaneously, also with coupled with a drive stun (three simultaneous less lethal uses of force).**

TASER International has at least one video of a non-police dog, a Rottweiler, being shot with a TASER device. The dog was definitively affected by the TASER's five-second cycle. Due to animal rights concerns, no retired police service dog was shot by a TASER X26.

DECOY SAFETY NOTICE:

It should be noted that the decoy was unaffected by the TASER Shaped Pulse Technology both in the bite suit. **The decoy was affected by the TASER Shaped Pulse Technology while in the concealed bite sleeve.** The decoy experienced **full conductivity** from the TASER, both with the probes and drive

stun. As departmental policies vary regarding exposure to the TASER technology while in training, **your agency guidelines should be followed.**