## Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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## **Tasers**



City of Norfolk police officers will soon have another tool to use in fighting crime in Norfolk. Tasers, an electronic control device, have recently been added to the police department's arsenal of weapons.

These devices use electrical currents to temporarily disrupt voluntary control of muscles. When hit by an electroshock gun the perpetrator will many times fall to the ground, drop whatever weapon they were holding and readily submit themselves to the officer.

With stun guns, the device has to make contact with the individual to deliver the shock. Taser devices work the same basic way except the two

charge electrodes aren't permanently joined inside of the gun. Instead, the electrodes are at the ends of long conductive wires, attached to the device's electrical circuit. Pulling the trigger of the Taser breaks open a compressed gas cartridge inside the gun. The expanding gas builds pressure behind the electrodes, launching them through the air with the attached wires trailing behind. The two electrodes each have a small barb on them so that they will grab onto the perpetrator's clothing. Once the electrodes are attached to the person's clothing, the current makes a complete circuit giving the person an electronic jolt.

Tasers deliver a lot of volts, but very few amps. The high voltage ensures that the pulse will reach its target at the other electrode, but the very low amperage keeps it from doing any lasting damage. The electrical pulse is designed to go through clothing and skin. There has proven to be no long term dangers to the health of someone who has been "shot" by a Taser gun.

"Tasers are classified as a non-lethal weapon explicitly designed and primarily used to incapacitate a person while minimizing the potential for death and permanent injury. The use of Tasers has proven to reduce injuries for both law enforcement officers and the people they are confronting," said City of Norfolk Police Chief Bill Mizner.

The city's officers are currently undergoing training in how to use the Tasers most effectively.

The Taser can also be used as a stun gun in that at close range it can be directly applied to an individual rather than requiring that the two electrodes are "shot" at the person.

Mizner said the Tasers could also be used by officers who are in danger of being attacked by a dog.

"The Taser provides our officers with another option in situations where use of force may be necessary," Mizner said.