



## Reporter Learns Firsthand Of Taser's Power, Pain

Joel Iwanaga, KOIN 6 News  
March 3, 2003

**PORTLAND, OR** -- Shoot to kill may soon change to shoot to stop.

On Monday, Portland's police chief will hear the results of a **ADVANCED TASER** pilot program.



Last week, the Multnomah County sheriff introduced **TASER** guns into his arsenal. Reporter Joel Iwanaga learned firsthand what it's like to be stunned by the electric-shock weapon.

If you're the intended target, watch out. **TASERs**, which shoot 50,000 volts of electricity, are the latest painful, yet non-lethal, weapon carried by some Multnomah County sheriff's deputies. "And it's another tool for us to use on the streets, whether it's someone who wants to fight us or suicidal," Deputy Ryan Burkeen said.

Portland police have been using these electrical shock weapons since last year. A woman described as distraught and suicidal was shot by the **ADVANCED TASER** in her St. Johns home.

"The best option for us is to do less-than lethal to control individuals who are out of control," Lt. Michael Shults said.

Here's how the **ADVANCED TASER** works. It uses two metal darts connected by a wire. When fired, it delivers the painful electrical voltage through the person's clothing and disrupts the brain's ability to control the body for 5 seconds.

Sgt. Robert Robinson demonstrated.

"Stinging, burning, and you can feel the electricity going through you," he explained.

Officers like the guns because they're easy to carry, useable at a distance, and capable of immobilizing a person without causing permanent injury.

Curiosity got the best of this reporter. I had to try the powerful electrical shock for myself. Deputies taped the two probes to my body then flanked me for the charge. And yes, it hurt!

Deputies are required to take a 10-hour training course before carrying a **ADVANCED TASER**. Other local agencies, such as the Sandy Police Department, also use the guns.