

Iowa Campus Uses Tasers

UI reports Taser use by UI police officers

By Casey Wagner - The Daily Iowan

After not using their long-sought-after new weapons for more than six months, UI police officers have used Tasers to subdue two individuals during the past five weeks.

The Tasers were only used because the circumstances were the most serious that the officers had encountered since they began carrying the weapons in April, said Chuck Green, the assistant vice president for the UI police. In both cases, he said, the officers were going to have to fight the suspects.

Officer Shawn Sharp "stun-Tased" Corey Mothershead, a University of Northern Iowa junior, on Nov. 10 in the parking lot north of Currier Residence Hall. Reports show that Mothershead, who blew 0.17 on a Breathalyzer and was allegedly found setting fire to a gas can, resisted arrest and verbally threatened the officer.

The second incident occurred Dec. 8, when Officer Bob Blockhus stun-Tased East Moline, Ill., resident Darnell Teague after he allegedly attempted to evade arrest by running away. He had to be wrestled to the ground during a routine traffic stop on U.S. Highway 6 near the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Teague blew 0.118 on a Breathalyzer; officers allegedly found a baggy of marijuana in his front pants pocket, reports show.

Tasers use compressed nitrogen to shoot two small probes up to 21 feet at a speed of 135 feet per second that transmit electrical pulses into the target's body. Or, officers can remove the probes in order to stun-Tase the perpetrator. The Taser is placed against the individual's body to induce the shock.

"We don't encourage our officers to use them," Green said. "But these times they got used because it got to the point where the officers were going to have to fight."

Meanwhile, UNI Public Safety has not stun-Tased anyone since receiving the weapons, but officers have Tased an individual.

Officers responded to a suicide attempt at the school's married-housing units and found a man wielding a large knife. The man did not obey orders to drop the knife, and then was Tased, said Dave Zarifis, the director of UNI Public Safety.

Zarifis said the situation was one the department envisioned when asking for regents' approval for Tasers. officers to carry eventually.

The Coralville City Council is considering adding Tasers after Police Chief Barry Bedford suggested the measure.

"Tasers offer another level of defense that other weapons can't," he said.



University of Iowa

reports Taser use by UI police officers

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IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) -- The stun guns carried by security officers at the three state-run universities, unused for more than six months, have been used to subdue two men at the University of Iowa in the last five weeks, officials said.

The weapons administer a debilitating electrical shock but leave the victim with no permanent injuries.

"We don't encourage our officers to use them," said Chuck Green, the assistant vice president for the university police. "But these times they got used because it got to the point where the officers were going to have to fight."

The circumstances were the most serious that the officers had encountered since they began carrying the weapons in May, he said.

Officer Shawn Sharp used a Taser to stun Corey Mothershead, a University of Northern Iowa junior, on Nov. 10, in the parking lot of a campus residence hall.

Reports allege that Mothershead attempted to set fire to a gas can, resisted arrest and verbally threatened Sharp. The report said a breath test indicated Mothershead had a blood alcohol level of 0.17. The state considers drivers legally drunk with a blood alcohol level of 0.10.

The second incident occurred Dec. 8 when officer Bob Blockhus stunned Darnell Teague, of East Moline, Ill., after he allegedly attempted to evade arrest by running away. Teague was wrestled to the ground during a routine traffic stop on U.S. Highway 6 near the Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Teague's blood alcohol level was measured at 0.118 by a breath analyzer. Blockhus' report said that marijuana was found in Teague's pants pocket.

Tasers shoot two small probes that transmit electrical pulses into the target's body. Officers can remove the probes and stun the perpetrator by holding the Taser against the individual's body to induce the shock.

At the University of Northern Iowa, officers stunned a man wielding a large knife when they responded to a call of a suicide attempt. The man did not obey orders to drop the knife, and then was stunned, said Dave Zarifis, the director of UNI Public Safety.

Zarifis said the situation was one the department envisioned when asking for approval from the Iowa Board of Regents for the stun guns.

Iowa State University have not publicly reported the use of a stun gun on campus.