

City of Hampton
Animal Control
Administrative Guidelines

Title: Use of Force and Related Equipment	Guideline Number: OP-100
References: Hampton Police Division Policy #533 Use of Force, City Attorney's Office	Date Issued: September 15, 2011

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Policy is to provide guidance on the use of physical force and to ensure that members of Animal Control use only the force reasonably necessary to accomplish lawful objectives and to explain issued equipment that may be used in response to physical threats.

II. Policy

Hampton Animal Control Officers shall exert only the minimum amount of force necessary to reduce the level of resistance to law enforcement efforts. Use of Force applies to the equipment issued by the City of Hampton, as well as any other items which could be used as a weapon, including a motor vehicle.

III. Procedure

- A. The use of physical, non-deadly force is authorized in circumstances when:
1. An escalation of force is justified by the actions of a subject.
 2. In self-defense of a third party or if circumstances warrant the immediate use of force.
- B. When use of physical force results in injury, it shall be reported appropriately and the injury treated.
- C. Only equipment issued or approved by the Animal Control Supervisor may be carried by officers.

IV. Approved Equipment

- A. O/C Spray
1. All field officers are required to carry O/C spray while on duty.
 2. Officers are authorized to carry O/C spray while off duty.
 3. O/C spray should be discharged at a distance of three (3) to ten (10) feet from the intended subject.

4. O/C spray should be discharged in two (2) one second bursts directed towards the eyes of the intended subject. No more than four (4) one (1) second bursts may be fired directly into the eyes, unless the officer is in immediate danger of serious injury or death.
5. Medical treatment: Animals are not required to be transported to a veterinarian unless the animal is in need of medical treatment. Individuals who have been exposed to O/C spray in other than a controlled training environment, shall be transported to the hospital for treatment as soon as possible after exposure.

B. ASP Tactical Baton

1. Only non-lethal areas may be struck with the ASP Tactical Baton unless deadly force is justified.
2. Medical treatment: Any subject who has obviously been injured or any person who claims to have been injured shall be transported to a hospital for medical treatment. Any animal that has obviously been injured shall be transported to a licensed veterinarian for treatment.

C. Taser

1. Animal Control Officers will be issued Tasers after they have completed the required initial training in the proper operation and maintenance of the device, and they will receive re-certification annually.
2. All Animal Control Officers will conduct the appropriate testing as required or according to manufactures specifications of the Taser at the beginning of their shift and document the test was completed and any problems noted. Failure to complete a daily test will result in disciplinary action.
3. Use of Taser on Animals
 - a) Animal Control employees will use the lowest level of force necessary to capture or immobilize animals. Authorized Animal Control Officers may employ Tasers whenever they determine that it is the appropriate level of force necessary to capture animals and to protect the public or themselves from animals that may be aggressive or vicious. A Taser device should never be pointed at an animal unless there is justification for its anticipated use.
 - b) When an officer determines that an animal is going to be shot with the Taser, the following actions will be taken:
 - 1) Either another Animal Control Officer or a Hampton Police Officer should be present, and standing by with a Ketch-Pole.

- 2) Prior to firing the Tasers, officers need to shout in a loud manner “Taser, Taser, Taser” to alert anyone in the area of the imminent deployment/use.
 - 3) Officers will be alert to human beings in the immediate vicinity to minimize the risk of human contact with the deployment of the Taser.
- c) Once the animal has been shot with the Taser, it can be secured and controlled by use of the Ketch-Pole. The only exception to this is when the Taser is used to protect the public or an officer from an imminent attack from an aggressive animal.
 - d) Officers should avoid directly aiming at the head or face of an animal. The projectiles may cause significant damage to the eye if they impact directly. Officers should rotate the Taser so it is perpendicular to the ground before discharging the weapon. This procedure will give the darts a greater probability of striking along the body of the animal avoiding the head and face area.
 - e) After an animal has been shot with the Taser, and secured by the Ketch-Pole if possible, the officer is to remove the hooks from an animal.
 - f) Once the animal has been secured in the Animal Control Vehicle, the officer must evaluate the animal to see if it is in any immediate distress as a result of the Taser use. This is done so that if the animal is in need of veterinary treatment, information can be provided regarding any medical concerns.
 - g) Whenever the Taser is discharged, Officers will notify a supervisor as soon as possible. The discharge incident will be documented on a special report describing the incident in detail. If there is an accidental discharge, this occurrence will also be documented on a special report. The spent cartridge should be removed from the Taser whenever it is fired, and will be given to a supervisor. Reports shall be completed by the end of the officer's shift.
 - h) In addition to the special report, a Taser Use Report must be completed and should include witness information, approximate distance from animal, distance between the two probes, whether the probes caused any visible injuries, number of cycles applied, and animal's response to the use of the device, and the animal's condition immediately afterwards.
 - i) Tasers are to be utilized for smaller animals and are not intended for use against animals weighing over 200 to 300 pounds.
 - j) Officers are not permitted to carry Tasers while off duty.

4. Use of Tasers on Human Beings

- a. Officers will not discharge Tasers at people except in extreme circumstances. Officers may use any weapon, object or means available to defend their life in any situation where the degree of violence has progressed to the point where a reasonable officer in the same circumstances would have concluded that a threat existed justifying the particular use of force.
- b. A Taser should not generally be used against or around, pregnant women, elderly persons, young children, and visibly frail persons unless exigent circumstances exist.
- c. Individuals, who have been Tased, other than in a controlled training environment, shall be transported to the hospital for treatment as soon as possible after exposure – officers will contact Communications to have medical personnel respond to the scene.

D. Knives

- 1. Knives are not issued by the Animal Control Division. However, officers are authorized to carry a folding knife in a pocket or in a sheath on the belt.

Authorized by: 	Revision Date:
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