

# NZ Police Biannual Tactical Options Research Report #6

1 January to 30 June 2014

Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation (RORE)

## Introduction

This Biannual Tactical Options Research Report covers the first six months of the 2014 calendar year (1 January to 30 June). It is part of an external tactical options reporting series produced by Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation, in Response and Operations, Police National Headquarters, for monitoring and accountability purposes.

## Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) data

The data in this report is derived from Tactical Options Reports, and presents Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) events. A TOR event is the reportable use of one or more tactical options, by one officer, against one individual. TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment, ie, the highest mode of use is reported. Modes of TASER deployment are: shows (presentation, laser painting or arcing); and discharges (discharge with probes and/or contact stun). Also, some TOR events involve the use of more than one tactical option; thus, the total number of TOR events is lower than the total number of tactical options used.

## Key findings

- Reported TOR events (n=2,944) accounted for approximately 0.19% of the over 1.5 million recorded face to face interactions police had with the public from 1 January to 30 June 2014. TASER TOR events accounted for approximately 0.04% of all recorded face to face interactions.
- TASER was deployed in a minority of Police apprehensions. From 1 January to 30 June 2014, TASER was shown at 0.70% of apprehensions, and discharged at 0.09% of apprehensions.
- From 1 January to 30 June 2014, TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 570 TOR events, at an average of 95 events per month. Overall, TASER was deployed at 19% of TOR events. Excluding minor probe wounds, there was no subject injury in 99% of TASER events. Seven TASER-related injuries were recorded for this period (one minor, ie, nil, self, or staff treatment; five moderate, ie, medical treatment (but no hospital admission); and one severe, ie, requiring hospital admission).
- In the majority (72%) of TASER events, officers used laser painting as the highest mode of deployment, followed by presentation (15%). Discharge was used in 12% of TASER events, while arcing was used in 1%. Overall, this equates to a show to discharge ratio of 8:1. The majority of TASER discharges (80%) and shows (81%) were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.

- TASER discharge events were typified by one or more of the following behaviours: physical violence towards police (46%), verbal threats towards police (43%), and the threat of weapons (27%). Weapons were used in 15% of discharge events. Verbal threats towards police (40%) and threat of weapons (25%) were also common in TASER show events. Note, people may display more than one type of behaviour at TOR events.
- TASER deployments (shows or discharges) involved people with one or more of the following characteristics: alcohol impairment (51%), a history of violence (40%), and a history of carrying weapons (23%).
- Mental illness and suicidal behaviours were factors at 17% and 12% of TASER TOR events respectively. Note, people may display more than one type of factor at TOR events. Of the 6,654 mental health (1M) events that Police attended in this period, TASER was shown in 1.1%, and discharged in 0.3% of events.
- Those against whom TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) were most often males (94%), and aged 30 years or younger (58%). TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) against Pacific Island peoples, Māori, and European, at 128, 87 and 63 TASER events per 10,000 apprehensions of these groups, respectively. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.

## View from the frontline...

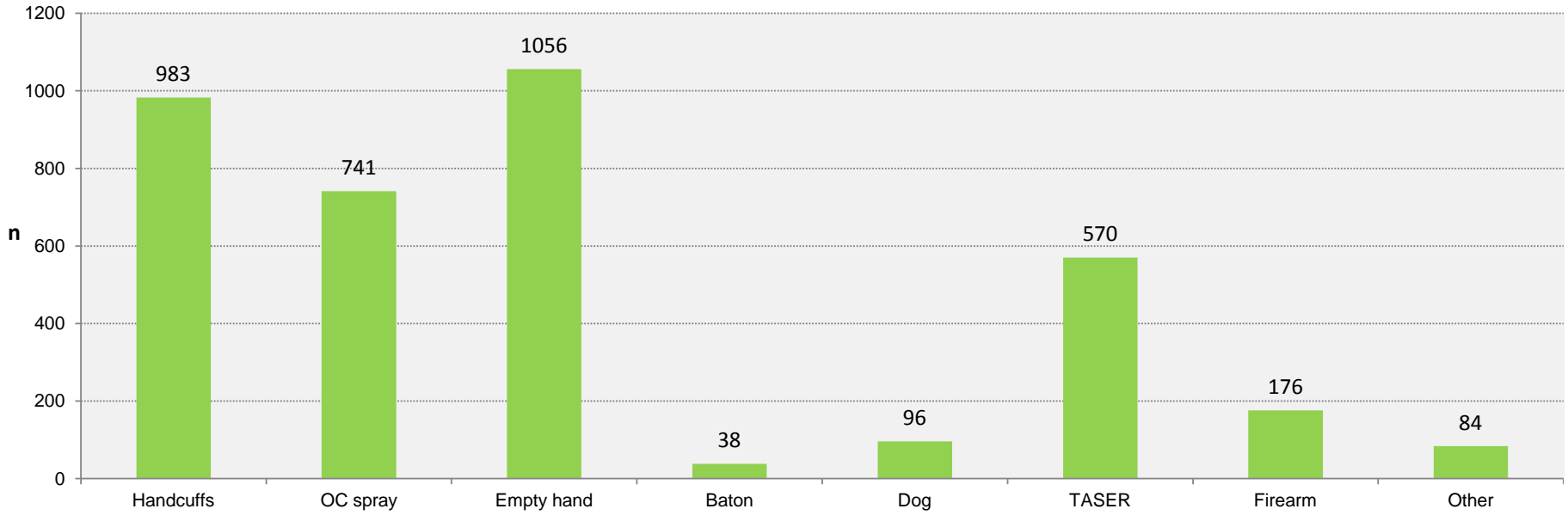
"[Subject] has managed to move the barricade to the front door put in place by the victim and let himself in using a key. Has gone to the victim's room unprovoked and stabbed the victim a number of times in the face and back (later discovered to be in excess of 10 stab wounds). The victim had escaped and taken himself to the neighbouring address. [Subject] secured himself inside the scene address and armed himself with a hammer and knives awaiting the inevitable arrival of Police...[Subject] was entirely unresponsive to instructions given to him by Police to surrender. [Subject] throws chair at window...Offender tasered"...with no further violence or injury to any person.

Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>1</sup>

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other
Northland	36	34	39	2	6	22	10	4
Waitemata	82	52	93	1	3	40	12	11
Auckland City	124	60	102	2	8	76	15	16
Counties Manukau	165	94	181	5	7	62	22	16
Waikato	68	89	82	4	9	50	6	5
Bay of Plenty	99	94	105	4	8	57	30	10
Eastern	60	62	66	0	10	36	8	4
Central	81	73	90	7	11	80	20	6
Wellington	100	60	106	4	14	39	19	4
Tasman	25	28	36	0	3	24	7	0
Canterbury	93	56	97	4	16	56	23	5
Southern	51	41	60	5	1	28	4	3
Total	983	741	1056	38	96	570	176	84
National average	82	62	88	3	8	48	15	7

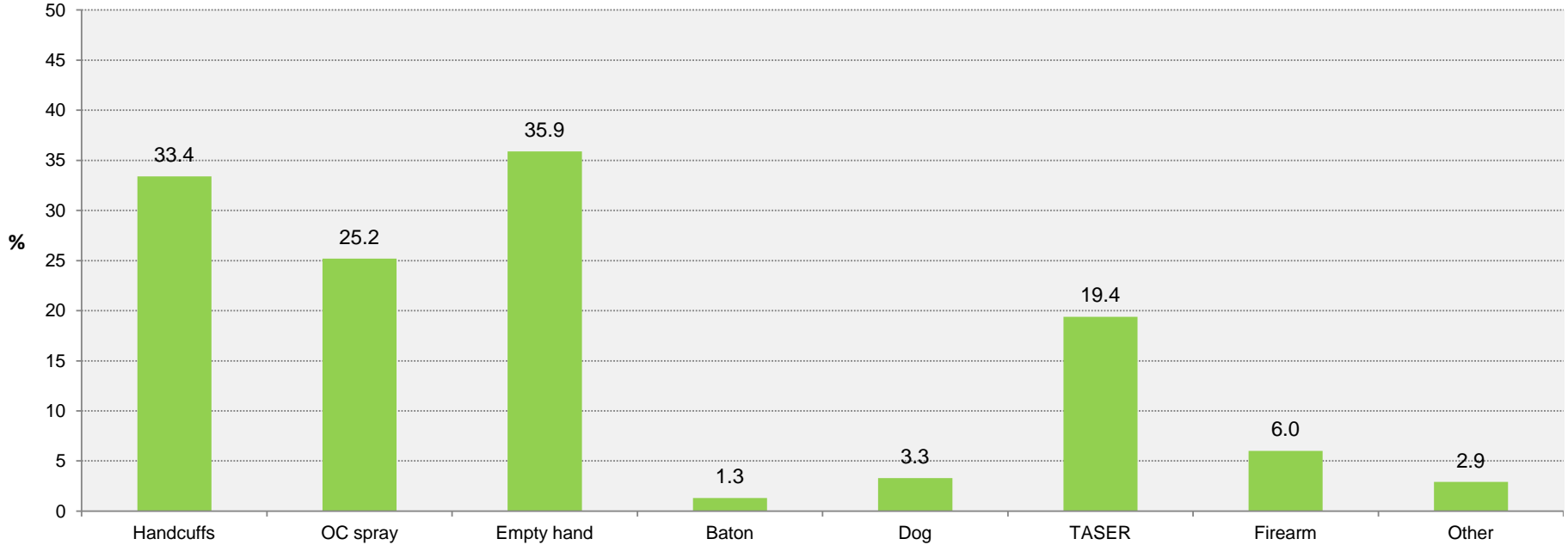
<sup>1</sup> An officer may use more than one tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event. Table 1, Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 count whether a particular tactical option was used at a TOR event, not the number of times that tactical option was used at that event. See page 9 for tactical options deployments that are reportable in a Tactical Options Report.

Figure 1. Number of tactical options used at TOR events, nationally (n=3,744) 1 January to 30 June 2014<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Officers may use more than one particular tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event, thus, the total number of TOR events is lower than the number of tactical options used.

Figure 2. Proportion (%) of tactical options used at TOR events, nationally (n=2,944), 1 January to 30 June 2014<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Officers may use more than one particular tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event, thus percentages may exceed 100%.

Figure 3. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 1 January to 30 June 2014

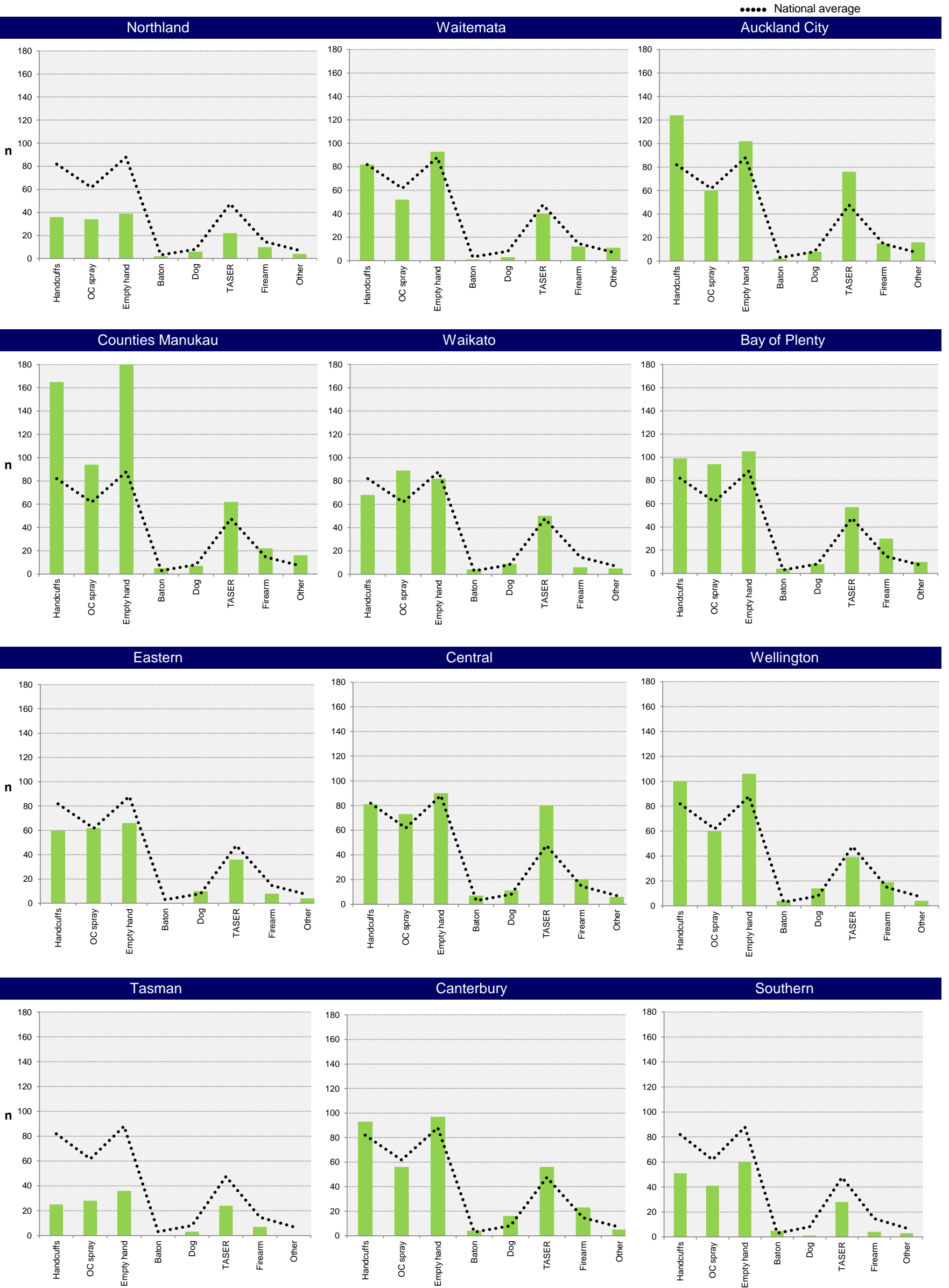


Table 2. TASER TOR events by highest mode of deployment<sup>4</sup> by district, 1 January to 30 June 2014

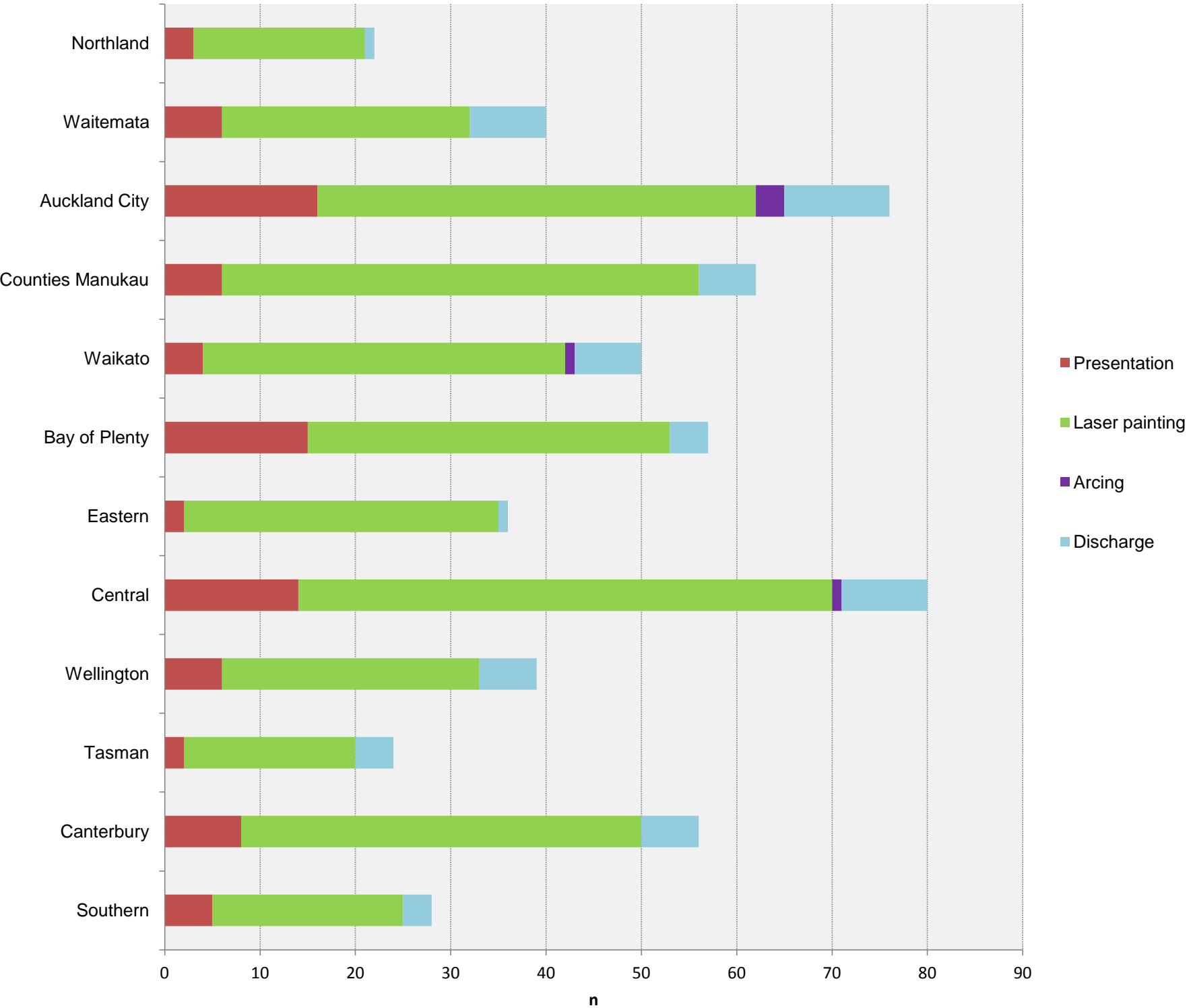
	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge <sup>5</sup>	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>6</sup>
Northland	3	18	0	1	22	62
Waitemata	6	26	0	8	40	70
Auckland City	16	46	3	11	76	121
Counties Manukau	6	50	0	6	62	70
Waikato	4	38	1	7	50	79
Bay of Plenty	15	38	0	4	57	71
Eastern	2	33	0	1	36	67
Central	14	56	1	9	80	123
Wellington	6	27	0	6	39	66
Tasman	2	18	0	4	24	65
Canterbury	8	42	0	6	56	75
Southern	5	20	0	3	28	59
National	87	412	5	66	570	79
District average	7	34	0.4	6	48	

<sup>4</sup> TASER data is presented by 'highest mode of deployment', ie, the highest mode of use (presentation, laser painting, arcing, or discharge) is reported. Where TASER discharge is the highest mode of deployment, any TASER show that preceded or followed the discharge is excluded from the data. This caveat applies to Table 2, Figure 4, Table 3, and Table 4.

<sup>5</sup> TASER discharge data in Table 2 counts the number of TOR events in which a discharge(s) (either discharge with probes and/or contact stun) occurred, but not the number of discharges or modes of discharge (see Table 4 and 5).

<sup>6</sup> Police apprehension data does not represent the number of offences or offenders, as one offender of may be apprehended for multiple offences, or multiple offenders may be apprehended for one offence.

Figure 4. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district (n=570), 1 January to 30 June 2014



**Table 3. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district and area, 1 January to 30 June 2014**

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge	Total
<b>NORTHLAND</b>					
Far North	2	11	0	0	13
Whangarei	1	7	0	1	9
<b>WAITEMATA</b>					
Rodney	0	5	0	1	6
Waitakere	0	13	0	4	17
North Shore	6	7	0	3	16
Auckland Motorways	0	1	0	0	1
<b>AUCKLAND CITY</b>					
Auckland Central Area	10	21	2	2	35
Auckland East Area	4	16	1	6	27
Auckland West Area	2	9	0	3	14
<b>COUNTIES MANUKAU</b>					
Counties Manukau Central	3	11	0	1	15
Counties Manukau East	1	13	0	2	16
Counties Manukau South	0	11	0	1	12
Counties Manukau West	2	15	0	2	19
<b>WAIKATO</b>					
Hamilton City	3	16	1	4	24
Waikato East	0	8	0	3	11
Waikato West	1	14	0	0	15
<b>BAY OF PLENTY</b>					
Eastern Bay of Plenty	2	7	0	1	10
Rotorua	2	3	0	2	7
Taupo	4	9	0	0	13
Western Bay of Plenty	7	19	0	1	27
<b>EASTERN</b>					
Tairāwhiti	0	6	0	0	6
Hawkes bay	2	27	0	1	30
<b>CENTRAL</b>					
Manawatu	7	32	1	6	46
Taranaki	4	10	0	1	15
Whanganui	3	14	0	2	19
<b>WELLINGTON</b>					
Hutt Valley	4	10	0	1	15
Kapiti-Mana	0	8	0	1	9
Wairarapa	0	4	0	1	5
Wellington	2	5	0	3	10
<b>TASMAN</b>					
Marlborough	1	8	0	2	11
Nelson Bays	1	7	0	2	10
West Coast	0	3	0	0	3
<b>CANTERBURY</b>					
Canterbury Metro	8	31	0	4	43
Mid South Canterbury	0	11	0	2	13
<b>SOUTHERN</b>					
Otago Rural	0	4	0	0	4
Dunedin	3	3	0	1	7
Southland	2	13	0	2	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>570</b>

Table 4. Number of TASER discharges at each TASER TOR event, by district, 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>7</sup>

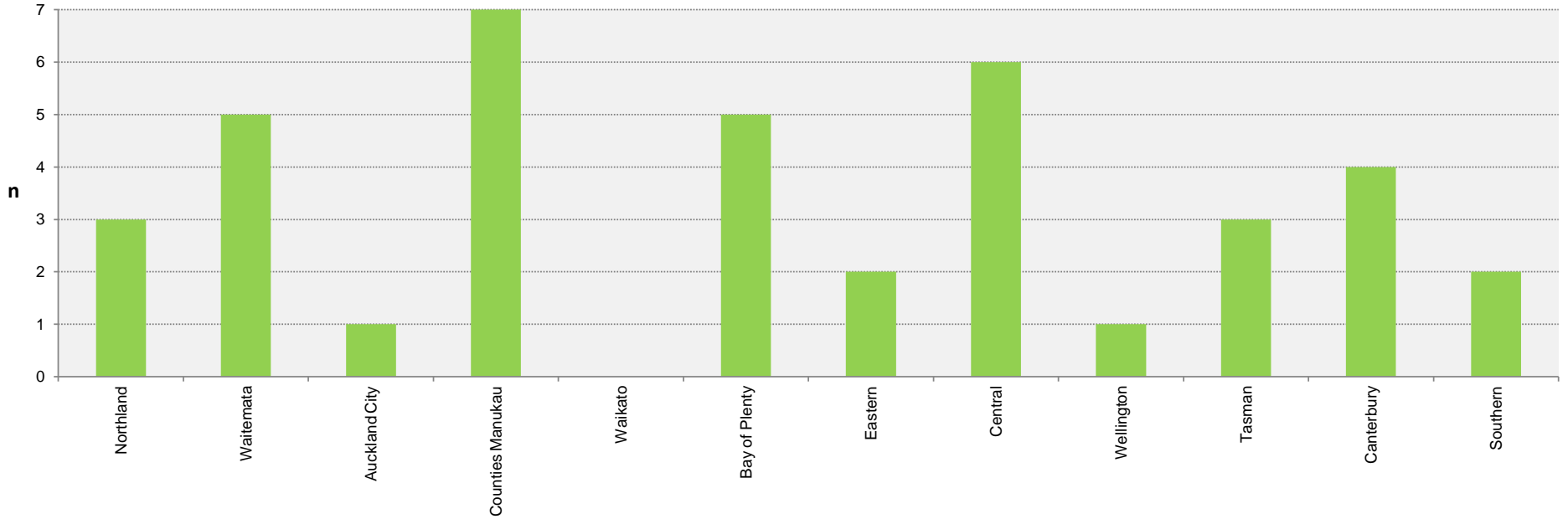
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	1	0	0	0	0	1
Waitemata	7	0	1	0	0	8
Auckland City	5	6	0	0	0	11
Counties Manukau	1	4	0	0	1	6
Waikato	5	1	1	0	0	7
Bay of Plenty	4	0	0	0	0	4
Eastern	1	0	0	0	0	1
Central	8	0	1	0	0	9
Wellington	5	1	0	0	0	6
Tasman	3	1	0	0	0	4
Canterbury	5	1	0	0	0	6
Southern	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total	46	16	3	0	1	66

<sup>7</sup>TASER discharge data in Table 4 includes all TASER discharges with probes and/or contact stuns. TASER may be discharged more than once in a TASER TOR event. In 46 TASER TOR events, TASER was discharged once, while in 16 events it was discharged twice. In three events it was discharged three times, and in one event it was discharged five times; thus, there were 91 discharges at the 66 TASER TOR discharge events. Where multiple discharges were deployed, 10% (n=2) of discharges had no or insufficient effect on the person

Table 5. Number of TASER discharges, by discharge mode and district, 1 January to 30 June 2014

	Contact stun	Discharge with probes	Total discharges
Northland	1	0	1
Waitemata	1	9	10
Auckland City	1	16	17
Counties Manukau	5	9	14
Waikato	2	8	10
Bay of Plenty	1	3	4
Eastern	0	1	1
Central	1	10	11
Wellington	0	6	6
Tasman	0	5	5
Canterbury	1	6	7
Southern	1	4	5
Total discharges	14	77	91

Figure 5. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=39), 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> All 39 unintentional discharges of TASER occurred in non-operational settings.

Table 6. TASER TOR events, by work group <sup>9</sup>

Work group	n
AOS	0
CIB/Enquiries	11
Community Relations	0
Dog Section	1
General Duties Branch	515
Road Policing	27
Rural	9
Other	7
Total	570

<sup>9</sup> Table 6 presents TASER TOR events by work group (work groups represented may change in future TASER reports if TASER is deployed by other work groups).

Table 7. TASER TOR events, by location type <sup>10</sup>

Location type	n
Commercial property	1
Gang premises	6
Non-police vehicle	3
Outdoor public area	106
Police premises	8
Police vehicle	1
Residence	270
Street, highway, motorway	176
Other	40
Total	611

<sup>10</sup> More than one location type may be reported for each TOR event, thus the total in this table exceeds the number of TASER TOR events (n=570).

Table 8. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>11</sup>

	Shows <sup>12</sup>	% of shows	Discharges <sup>12</sup>	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Threaten police	200	40%	28	43%	229	40%
Threaten non-police	92	18%	6	9%	98	17%
Violence towards police	63	13%	31	46%	94	16%
Violence towards non-police	70	14%	4	7%	75	13%
Had and used a weapon	26	5%	9	15%	36	6%
Had a weapon but did not use it	127	25%	18	27%	145	25%
Other aggressive behaviours	38	8%	2	3%	40	7%
Resist and / or obstruct police	42	8%	2	3%	44	8%
Evade and / or escape police	22	4%	0	0%	22	4%
Threatened or actual self-harm	9	2%	3	4%	12	2%
Other	53	11%	5	7%	58	10%
Total	742		111		853	

<sup>11</sup> Table 8 presents subject behaviours displayed at TASER TOR events; eg, in 46% of TASER TOR events where discharge was the highest mode of deployment, there was violence towards police. Subjects may display more than one type of behaviour at a TOR event, thus percentages may exceed 100%.

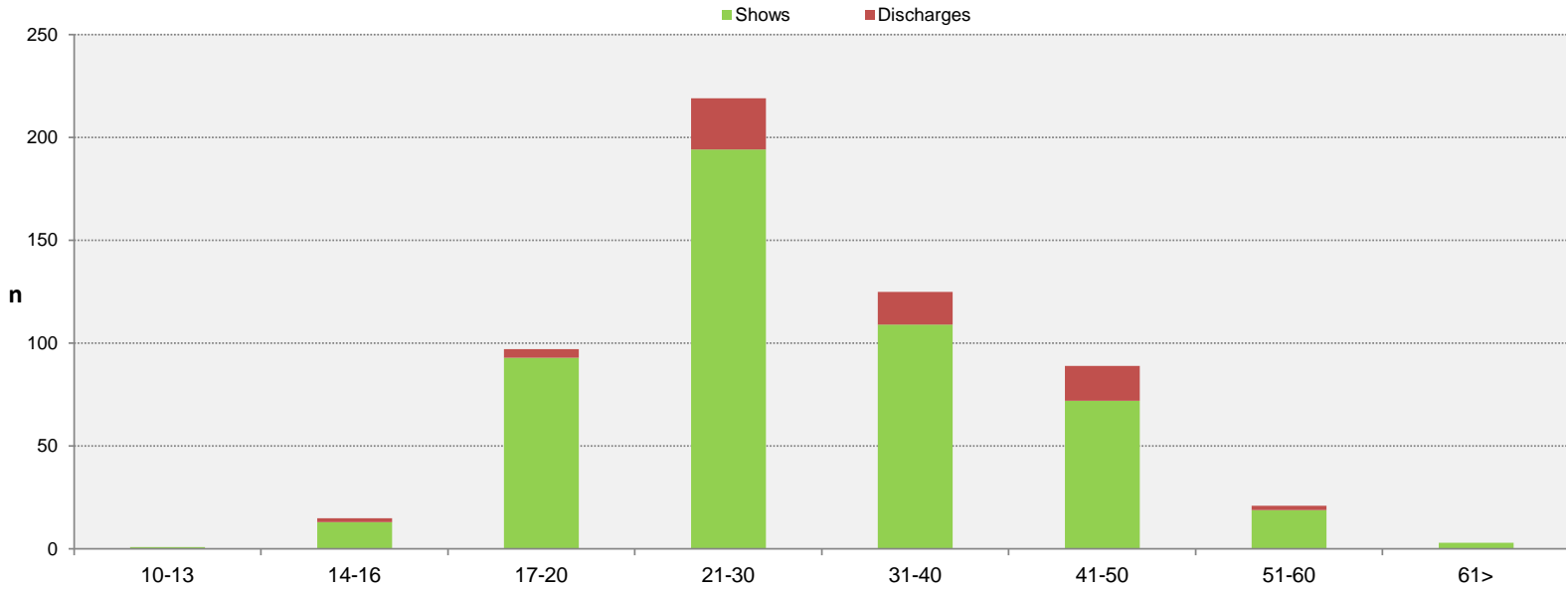
<sup>12</sup> TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

Table 9. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>13</sup>

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	75	15%	22	33%	97	17%
Suicidal	57	11%	12	18%	69	12%
Alcohol	256	51%	36	55%	293	51%
Drugs	101	20%	20	31%	122	21%
Excited delirium	25	5%	6	9%	30	5%
History of carrying weapons	111	22%	20	31%	132	23%
History of violence against police	98	19%	23	36%	122	21%
History of violence	197	39%	31	48%	229	40%
Medical condition	16	3%	3	4%	19	3%
Other	73	14%	5	7%	78	14%
Total	1009		178		1191	

<sup>13</sup> Table 9 presents broader factors relevant to TASER TOR events; eg, in 55% of TASER TOR events where discharge was the highest mode of deployment, the subject was impaired by alcohol. Subjects may display more than one relevant factor at a TOR event, thus percentages may exceed 100%.

Figure 6. TASER TOR events by age range, 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>14</sup>



<sup>14</sup> The youngest person who had TASER discharged against them was aged 14 years, while the oldest person was aged 55.

Table 10. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 January to 30 June 2014

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>15</sup>
European	168	34%	14	21%	182	63
Māori	256	51%	33	51%	290	87
Pacific Island peoples	67	13%	16	24%	83	128
Other	10	2%	3	4%	13	-
Total	501	100%	66	100%	568	

<sup>15</sup> Police apprehension data does not represent the number of offences or offenders, as one offender may be apprehended for multiple offences, or multiple offenders may be apprehended for one offence. Note, the data in Table 10 does not account for subject behaviours at TOR events.

Table 11. TASER TOR events, by sex, 1 January to 30 June 2014

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>15</sup>
Male	471	93%	62	94%	534	94
Female	32	6%	4	6%	36	23
Unknown	1	0%	0	0%	1	-
Total	504	100%	66	100%	570	



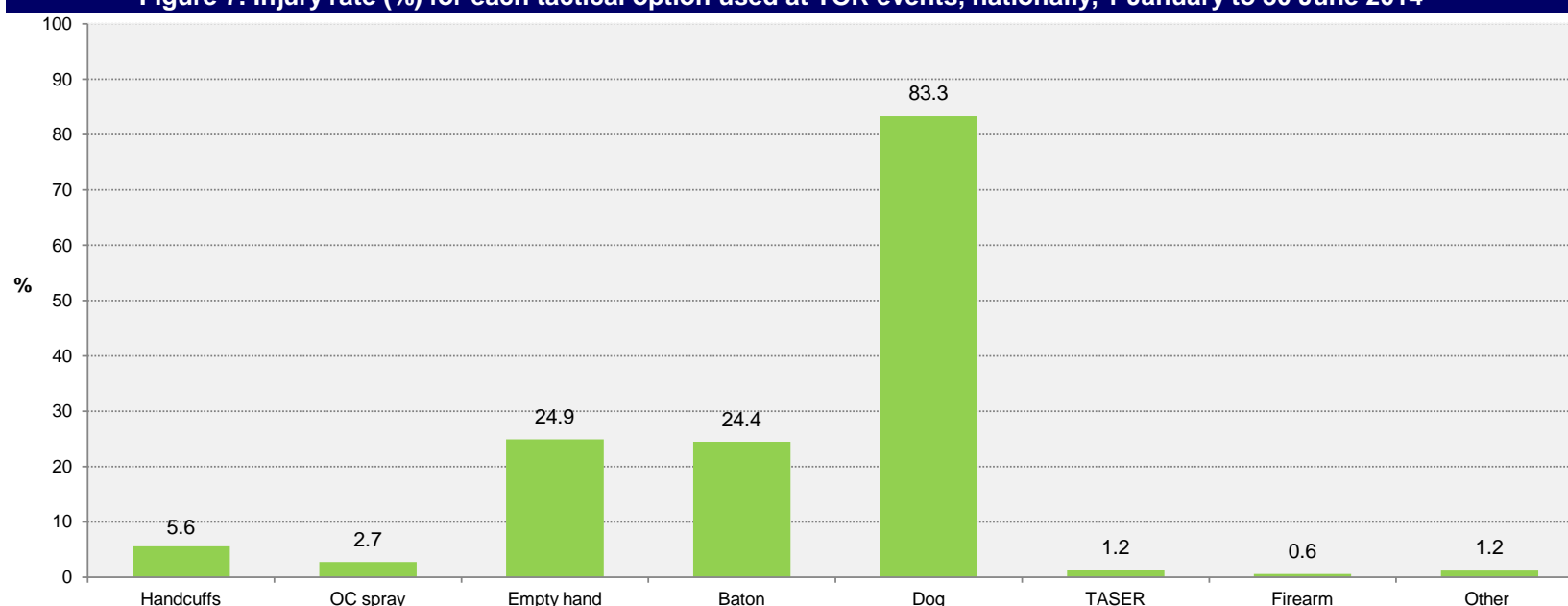
**Table 12. Number of tactical options used resulting in subject injuries, by district, 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>16</sup>**

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Total	%
Northland	0	0	8	0	7	2	0	0	17	4%
Waitemata	6	2	24	1	7	1	0	1	42	10%
Auckland City	3	1	22	2	14	2	0	0	44	10%
Counties Manukau	8	3	33	4	8	0	0	0	56	13%
Waikato	5	0	21	1	4	0	0	0	31	7%
Bay of Plenty	9	4	26	0	8	0	0	0	47	11%
Eastern	4	1	18	1	6	0	0	0	30	7%
Central	3	2	28	1	1	0	0	0	35	8%
Wellington	7	2	33	0	3	0	0	0	45	10%
Tasman	2	1	5	1	8	0	1	0	18	4%
Canterbury	7	2	25	0	3	0	0	0	37	8%
Southern	1	2	20	0	11	2	0	0	36	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>100%</b>

% of all injuries      12.6%      4.6%      60.0%      2.5%      18.3%      1.6%      0.2%      0.2%      100.0%

<sup>16</sup> More than one subject injury may be reported as a result of a TASER TOR event. Table 12 presents injuries caused by each tactical option, as a number and proportion of all injuries caused by all tactical options.

**Figure 7. Injury rate (%) for each tactical option used at TOR events, nationally, 1 January to 30 June 2014 <sup>17</sup>**



<sup>17</sup> Figure 7 shows the injury rate (%) for each tactical option eg, 83.3% of dog bites resulted in subject injury. As the injury rate for each tactical option is independent, percentages cannot be summed.

**Table 13. Subject injuries resulting from TASER discharges, by severity, and district <sup>18</sup>**

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	0	0	0
Waitemata	0	0	0	0
Auckland City	0	2	0	2
Counties Manukau	0	0	0	0
Waikato	0	0	0	0
Bay of Plenty	0	1	0	1
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	0	0	0	0
Wellington	0	1	1	2
Tasman	0	0	0	0
Canterbury	1	1	0	2
Southern	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

<sup>18</sup> More than one subject injury may be reported as a result of a TASER discharge.

Minor = nil, self, or staff treatment; moderate = medical treatment (but no hospital admission); severe = hospital admission.

**Table 14. Staff injuries at TASER TOR events, by severity, and district <sup>19</sup>**

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	1	0	1
Waitemata	2	1	0	3
Auckland City	6	0	0	6
Counties Manukau	5	0	0	5
Waikato	3	3	0	6
Bay of Plenty	0	0	0	0
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	1	1	0	2
Wellington	0	0	0	0
Tasman	4	0	0	4
Canterbury	2	0	0	2
Southern	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>

<sup>19</sup> Officers can only report one injury and injury severity type received at a TASER TOR event. Minor = nil, self, or staff treatment; moderate = medical treatment (but no hospital admission); severe = hospital admission.





## Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation (RORE)

This report was compiled by Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation (RORE), in Response and Operations, Police National Headquarters. A key role of this team is to undertake research, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of police use of force, to provide accountability and assist evidence-based decision making, to improve police and public safety.

### Tactical Options Reporting (TOR)

The following deployments of tactical options are reportable: shows and discharges of a TASER and/or firearm (noting the exemptions below); handcuffs with pain compliance, or without pain compliance when used with another reportable tactical option; OC spray bursts; empty hand tactics; baton strikes; dog bites and/or injuries; and weapons of opportunity.

The Armed Offenders Squad (AOS) and Special Tactics Group (STG) are exempted from reporting shows (but not discharges) of TASER and firearms. Fatalities associated with the use of force are also not reported in a TOR form, but are instead the subject of internal and external investigations. Accordingly, some use of force data is not included in this report.

### TASER Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) data limitations

TASER TOR data presents a quantitative overview of TASER deployment; it does not provide a nuanced understanding of factors that influence TASER deployment, and thus, TOR data. Further, where the numbers in these reports are small, slight increases or decreases in these numbers may result in large percentage differences. Accordingly, caution should be exercised when interpreting TOR data, including when comparing TOR data across biannual reports, districts and areas.

### Disclaimer

TOR data in this publication is provisional, and is the most accurate available at time of extraction. Data entry errors were corrected where possible; however, given the large number of data categories in the TOR database, some data entry errors may remain. As such, data from the TOR database - like all large administrative databases - cannot be regarded as absolutely accurate. While some data inaccuracies may remain, however, New Zealand Police is confident that the data is more than sufficiently accurate to monitor and describe reported TASER deployment by police. Police makes no warranty, expressed or implied, nor assumes any legal liability or responsibility, for the accuracy, correctness, completeness, or use of, the data or information in this publication. Further, New Zealand Police shall not be liable for any loss or damage arising directly or indirectly from reliance on the data or information presented in this publication.

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