

# New Zealand Police Annual TASER Report #1

1 January to 31 December, 2012

Tactical Options Research Team

## Introduction

The New Zealand Police Tactical Options Research Team, in Operations Group, Police National Headquarters, has established a TASER routine reporting system. It delivers an ongoing series of externally available biannual and annual TASER reports, for monitoring and accountability purposes. This inaugural annual TASER report pertains to the 2012 (1 January to 31 December) calendar year.

## Tactical Options Reporting 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).

## Key findings

- In the context of the over two million face to face interactions police had with the public in 2012, TASER deployment by police was rare. Reported TASER incidents accounted for approximately 0.04% of such face to face interactions.
- TASER was deployed in a very small minority of Police apprehensions. In 2012, TASER was shown in TOR 44 events per 10,000 Police apprehensions, and discharged in six TOR events per 10,000 Police apprehensions.
- TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 925 TOR events, at an average of 77 events per month. TASER deployment comprised 19% of tactical options used at TOR events, with empty hand tactics (n=1780; 37%), handcuffs and other restraints (n=1659; 35%), and OC spray (n=1532; 32%) the most commonly deployed tactical options by Police. On average, there were six non-TASER tactical option uses, for every TASER use at TOR events.
- In the majority (70%) of TASER events in 2012, officers used laser painting as the highest mode of deployment, followed by presentation (17%). Discharge was used in 12% of TASER events, and arcing in 1%. This equates to a show to discharge ratio of 7:1, that is, for every seven shows of TASER there was one TASER discharge. Nearly three quarters (74%) of TASER discharges were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.

- TASER discharge events were typified by verbal threats (54%), physical violence (45%), and assaults with weapons (32%), all against police. Verbal threats towards police (36%) and non-police (22%), and physical violence towards non-police (18%) were also common behaviours at TASER show events. Note, people may display more than one type of behaviour at TOR events.
- In 2012, those against whom TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) were mostly male (94%), and aged 30 years or younger (54%). TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) against Pacific Island Peoples, Māori, and European, at 63, 59, and 41 events per 10,000 Police apprehensions, respectively. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.
- Excluding minor probe injuries, TASER had one of the lowest injury rates; in 99% of TASER events there was no subject injury. There were ten TASER-related injuries. Most (80%; n=8) were of moderate injury severity.

## View from the frontline...

"Comms received a call from a female...who said that a male had forced his way inside and the female was advised to lock herself in a room...[On arrival] we could see two parties in the front ground floor bedroom, I could clearly see a male holding an axe to another male through the window. The axe was about 400-450mm in length and was pressed against the victim's chest... His behaviour suggested he may have been on some substance, as he was not responding to my demands to drop the axe. I feared for the victim's life...I presented the TASER at the offender...he moved to put down the axe...[and when] he turned to face me, I could see he no longer had the axe...I de-escalated my use of force...and the offender was placed under arrest..."

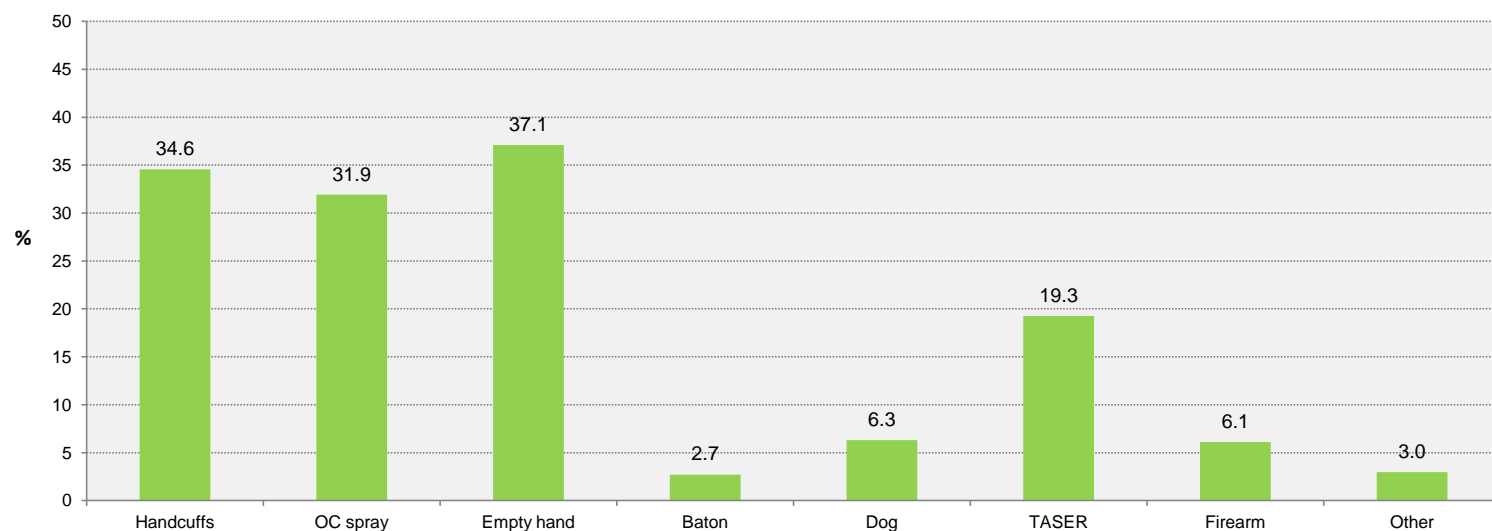
**Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district and locality, 1 January to 31 December 2012 <sup>1</sup>**

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Non-TASER uses to TASER use ratio
Northland	85	97	88	10	17	54	11	12	6:1
Waitemata	155	104	151	9	21	89	39	23	6:1
Auckland City	178	117	202	18	28	75	32	17	8:1
Counties Manukau	247	203	241	20	25	121	65	20	7:1
Waikato	103	153	108	7	18	80	19	4	5:1
Bay of Plenty	180	188	190	14	30	106	39	10	6:1
Eastern	111	128	109	9	10	44	10	5	9:1
Central	136	117	152	9	24	100	17	9	5:1
Wellington	128	136	130	13	51	88	23	14	6:1
Tasman	60	67	67	0	11	55	10	7	4:1
Canterbury	160	136	222	11	51	68	13	14	9:1
Southern	116	86	120	10	17	45	15	7	8:1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1659</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>1780</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>6:1</b>
<b>National average</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	
Upper North <sup>2</sup>	665	521	682	57	91	339	147	72	7:1
Lower North	658	722	689	52	133	418	108	42	6:1
South	336	289	409	21	79	168	38	28	7:1

<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 1 for tactical options deployments that are reportable in a Tactical Options Report.

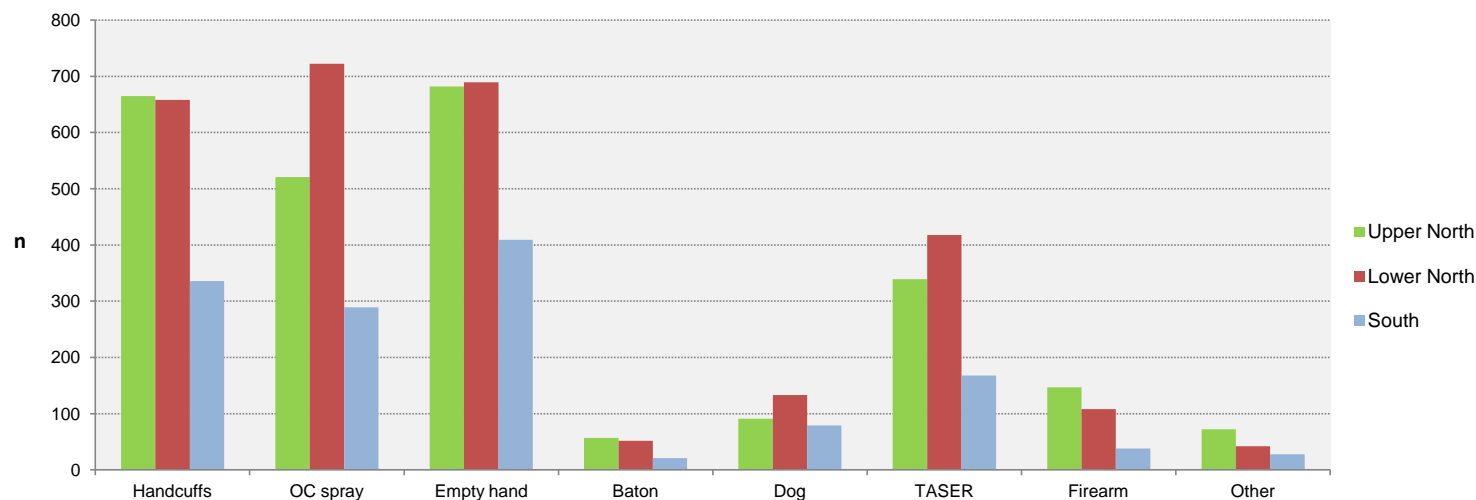
<sup>2</sup> There are three localities in New Zealand Police, each under the leadership of an Assistant Commissioner: 'Upper North', comprising Northland, Waitemata, Auckland City, and Counties Manukau; 'Lower North', comprising Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Eastern, Central, and Wellington; and 'South', comprising Tasman, Canterbury, and Southern.

**Figure 1. Proportion (%) of tactical options used at TOR events, nationally (n=4,799), 1 January to 31 December 2012 <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 2. Tactical options used at TOR events, by locality, 1 January to 31 December 2012**



**Table 2. TASER TOR events by highest mode of deployment,<sup>4</sup> by district and locality, 1 January to 31 December 2012**

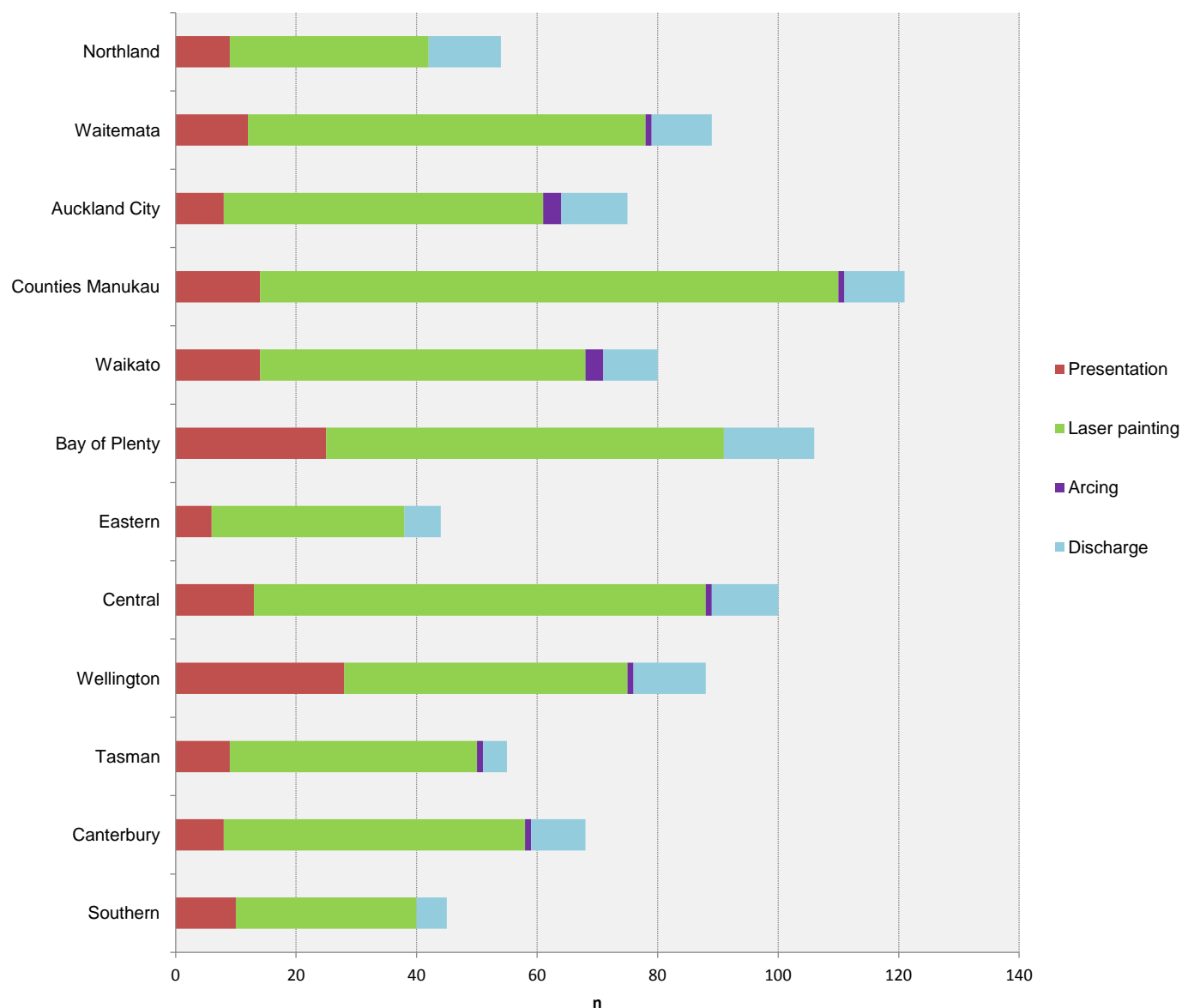
	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge <sup>5</sup>	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>6</sup>
Northland	9	33	0	12	54	64
Waitemata	12	66	1	10	89	57
Auckland City	8	53	3	11	75	44
Counties Manukau	14	96	1	10	121	52
Waikato	14	54	3	9	80	51
Bay of Plenty	25	66	0	15	106	56
Eastern	6	32	0	6	44	38
Central	13	75	1	11	100	70
Wellington	28	47	1	12	88	52
Tasman	9	41	1	4	55	58
Canterbury	8	50	1	9	68	33
Southern	10	30	0	5	45	35
National	156	643	12	114	925	50
District average	13	54	1	10	77	
Upper North	43	248	5	43	339	53
Lower North	86	274	5	53	418	54
South	27	121	2	18	168	39

<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, and Figure 3.

<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 3 and 4).

<sup>6</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.

**Figure 3. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district (n=925), 1 January to 31 December 2012**



**Table 3. Number of TASER discharges at each TASER TOR event, by district <sup>7</sup>**

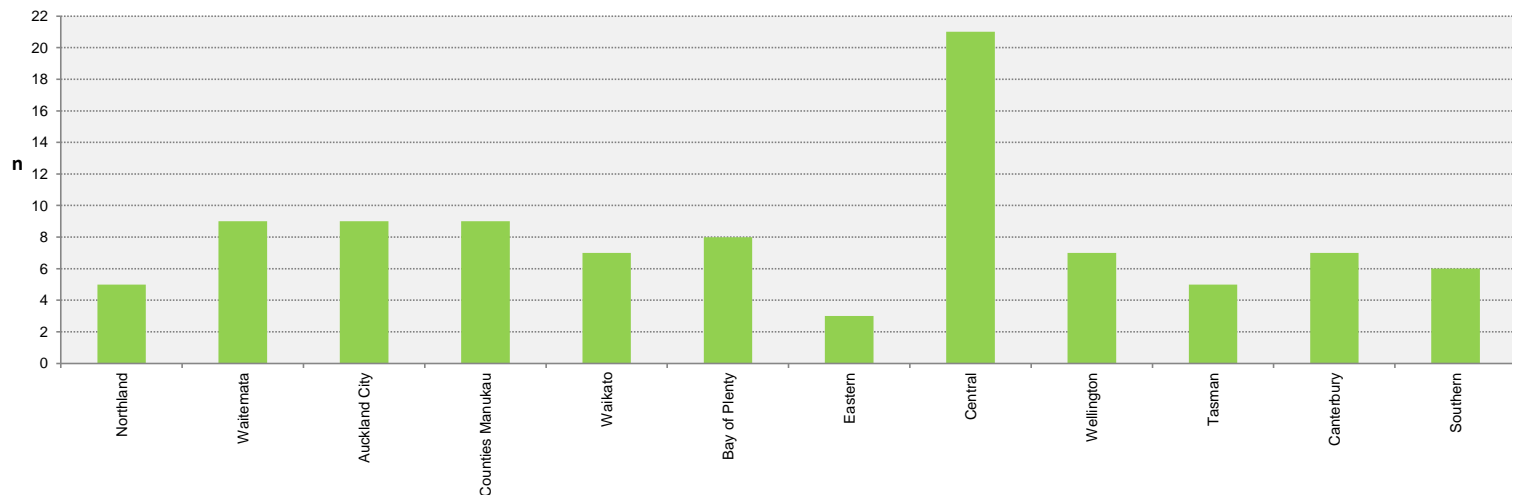
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	9	2	1	0	0	12
Waitemata	6	3	1	0	0	10
Auckland City	9	2	0	0	0	11
Counties Manukau	9	1	0	0	0	10
Waikato	4	3	0	1	1	9
Bay of Plenty	10	4	1	0	0	15
Eastern	5	1	0	0	0	6
Central	6	5	0	0	0	11
Wellington	9	2	1	0	0	12
Tasman	3	1	0	0	0	4
Canterbury	5	4	0	0	0	9
Southern	4	1	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>114</b>

<sup>7</sup> TASER discharge data in Table 3 includes all TASER discharges with probes and/or contact stuns. TASER may be discharged more than once in a TASER TOR event. In 79 TASER TOR events TASER was discharged once, while in 29 events it was discharged twice, in four events it was discharged three times, in one event it was discharged four times, and in one event it was discharged five times; thus, there were 158 discharges at the 114 TASER TOR events (see Table 4). Note, that multiple TASER discharges may occur where a discharge, or discharges, had no or insufficient effect on the person.

**Table 4. Number of TASER discharges, by discharge mode and district**

	Contact stun	Discharge with probes	Total discharges
Northland	4	12	16
Waitemata	3	12	15
Auckland City	5	8	13
Counties Manukau	3	8	11
Waikato	6	13	19
Bay of Plenty	2	19	21
Eastern	3	4	7
Central	0	16	16
Wellington	2	14	16
Tasman	0	5	5
Canterbury	8	5	13
Southern	2	4	6
<b>Total discharges</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>158</b>

**Figure 4. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=96)**



**Table 5. TASER TOR events, by work group <sup>8</sup>**

Work group	n
AOS	3
CIB/Enquiries	15
Community Relations	5
Dog Section	3
General Duties Branch	821
Road Policing	39
Rural	20
Other	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>925</b>

<sup>8</sup> Table 5 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 6. TASER TOR events, by location type <sup>9</sup>**

Location type	n
Commercial property	16
Gang premises	8
Non-police vehicle	5
Outdoor public area	145
Police premises	13
Police vehicle	7
Residence	546
Street, highway, motorway	197
Other	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>988</b>

<sup>9</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 = 925).

**Table 7. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 31 December 2012 <sup>10</sup>**

	Shows <sup>11</sup>	% of shows	Discharges <sup>11</sup>	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Threaten police	289	36	62	54	351	38
Threaten non-police	180	22	21	18	201	22
Violence towards police	98	12	51	45	149	16
Violence towards non-police	145	18	15	13	160	17
Weapon used against police	76	9	17	15	93	10
Had weapon but did not use it	47	6	3	3	50	5
Other aggressive behaviours	51	6	12	11	63	7
Resist and / or obstruct police	54	7	2	2	56	6
Evade and / or escape police	26	3	4	4	30	3
Threatened or actual self-harm	34	4	7	6	41	4
Other	165	20	12	11	177	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1165</b>		<b>206</b>		<b>1371</b>	

<sup>10</sup> Table 7 presents subject behaviours displayed at TASER TOR events; eg, in 45% 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%.

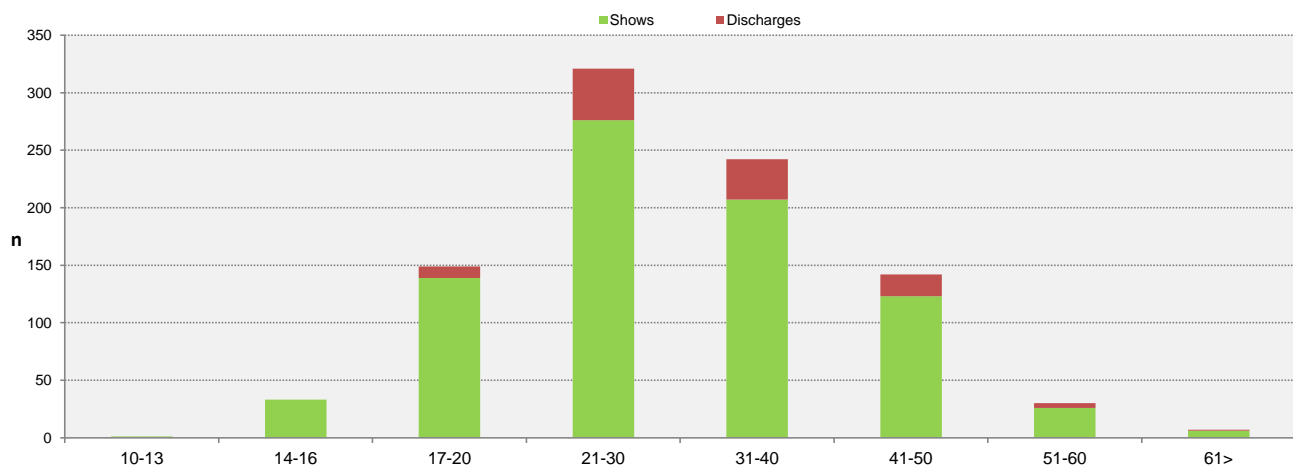
<sup>11</sup> TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

**Table 8. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 31 December 2012 <sup>12</sup>**

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	184	23	28	25	212	23
Suicidal	99	12	14	12	113	12
Alcohol	457	56	76	67	533	58
Drugs	150	18	31	27	181	20
Excited delirium	54	7	8	7	62	7
History of carrying weapons	207	26	33	29	240	26
History of violence against police	209	26	36	32	245	26
History of violence	373	46	61	54	434	47
Medical condition	34	4	5	4	39	4
Other	105	13	6	5	111	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>1872</b>		<b>298</b>		<b>2170</b>	

<sup>12</sup> Table 8 presents broader factors relevant to TASER TOR events; eg, in 67% 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 5. TASER TOR events by age range, 1 January to 31 December 2012 <sup>13</sup>**



<sup>13</sup> The youngest person who had TASER discharged against them was aged 17 years, while the oldest person was aged 68.

**Table 9. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 January to 31 December 2012**

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>14</sup>
European	295	36	32	28	327	41
Māori	394	49	68	60	462	59
Pacific Island peoples	99	12	13	11	112	63
Other	23	3	1	1	24	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>925</b>	

<sup>14</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. The data in Table 9 does not account for subject behaviours at TOR events.

**Table 10. TASER TOR events, by sex, 1 January to 31 December 2012**

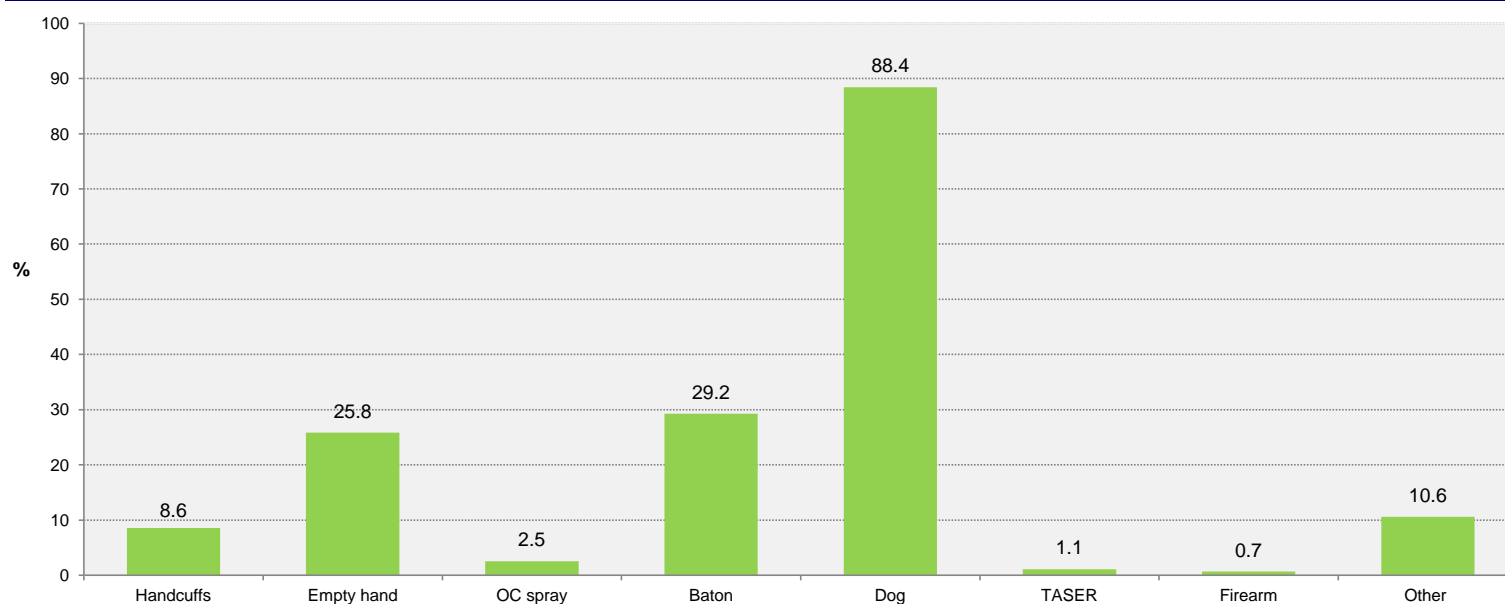
	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>14</sup>
Male	763	94	108	95	871	60
Female	47	6	6	5	53	14
Unknown	1	0	0	0	1	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>925</b>	

**Table 11. Number of tactical options used resulting in subject injuries, by district <sup>15</sup>**

	Handcuffs	Empty hand	OC spray	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Total	%
Northland	10	30	1	3	16	1	0	1	62	6
Waitemata	5	33	4	2	22	2	0	2	70	7
Auckland City	13	40	3	3	27	0	0	1	87	9
Counties Manukau	26	65	8	7	19	4	1	1	131	13
Waikato	6	24	4	3	15	1	0	1	54	6
Bay of Plenty	22	57	6	3	24	0	0	2	114	12
Eastern	10	27	4	5	9	1	0	1	57	6
Central	11	36	1	4	19	0	0	2	73	7
Wellington	11	36	3	3	46	0	0	2	101	10
Tasman	6	17	2	0	9	1	0	1	36	4
Canterbury	8	61	3	2	48	0	1	1	124	13
Southern	14	34	0	3	14	0	0	0	65	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>% of all injuries</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	

<sup>15</sup> More than one subject injury may be reported as a result of a TASER TOR event. Table 11 presents injuries caused by each tactical option, as a number and proportion of all injuries caused by all tactical options.

**Figure 6. Injury rate (%) for each tactical option used at TOR events, nationally <sup>16</sup>**



<sup>16</sup> Figure 6 shows the injury rate (%) for each tactical option eg, 88% of dog bites resulted in subject injury. As the injury rate for each tactical option is independent, percentages cannot be summed.

**Table 12. Subject injuries resulting from TASER discharges, by severity, and district <sup>17</sup>**

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	1	0	1
Waitemata	1	0	1	2
Auckland City	0	0	0	0
Counties Manukau	0	4	0	4
Waikato	0	1	0	1
Bay of Plenty	0	0	0	0
Eastern	0	1	0	1
Central	0	0	0	0
Wellington	0	0	0	0
Tasman	0	1	0	1
Canterbury	0	0	0	0
Southern	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>

<sup>17</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 13. Staff injuries at TASER TOR events, by severity, and district <sup>18</sup>**

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	1	1	2
Waitemata	3	0	0	3
Auckland City	6	1	0	7
Counties Manukau	2	0	0	2
Waikato	3	4	0	7
Bay of Plenty	5	0	0	5
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	6	0	0	6
Wellington	1	0	0	1
Tasman	3	0	0	3
Canterbury	4	0	0	4
Southern	3	1	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>44</b>

<sup>18</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.



## Tactical Options Research Team

This report was compiled by the Tactical Options Research Team, in Operations Group, Police National Headquarters. The Team 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) 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. Some TOR events involve the use of more than one tactical option; thus, the number of TOR events is lower than the number of tactical options used.

The following deployments of tactical options are reportable: shows and discharges of a TASER and/or firearm (with 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 annual reports and districts.

## 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.

## Contact

**Ross Henderson, Chief Media Adviser**

Tel: 04 474 9499

[ross.henderson@police.govt.nz](mailto:ross.henderson@police.govt.nz)