

New Zealand Police Annual TASER Report #2

1 January to 31 December, 2013

Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation

Introduction

This annual TASER report pertains to the 2013 calendar year (1 January to 31 December). It is part of an external TASER 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 number of TOR events is lower than the number of tactical options used.

Key findings

- Of the over 2.8 million recorded face to face interactions police had with the public in 2013, TASER deployment by police was rare. Reported TASER events accounted for approximately 0.04% of such face to face interactions.
- TASER was deployed in a small minority of Police apprehensions. In 2013, TASER was shown at 0.5% of apprehensions, and discharged at 0.09% of apprehensions.
- TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 1,090 TOR events, at an average of 91 events per month. Overall, TASER was deployed at 21% of TOR events, with empty hand tactics (n=2,123; 41%), handcuffs and other restraints (n=1,951; 38%), and OC spray (n=1,391; 27%) the most commonly deployed tactical options. On average, there were six non-TASER tactical option uses, for every TASER use at TOR events.
- Laser painting was the highest mode of deployment in the majority (70%) of TASER events in 2013, followed by presentation (17%). Discharge was used in 14% of TASER events, and arcing in 1%. Overall, this equates to a show to discharge ratio of 6:1 (i.e. for every six shows of TASER there was one TASER discharge). The majority of TASER discharges (69%) and shows (83%) were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.

- TASER discharge events were typified by one or more of the following behaviours: verbal threats towards (43%) and physical violence (45%) against police. TASER show events were typified by one or more of the following behaviours: verbal threats towards police (39%) and non-police (22%) and the threat of weapons (26%). Note, people may display more than one type of behaviour at TOR events.
- In 2013, those against whom TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) were mostly male (94%), and aged 30 years or younger (57%). TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) against Pacific Island Peoples, Māori, and European, at 91, 74, and 50 events per 10,000 Police apprehensions of these groups, 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. Of the 12 TASER-related injuries 50% (n=6) were of minor severity, while 33% (n=4) were of moderate severity and 17% (n=2) were severe.

View from the frontline...

"I began to approach [the offender] and told him to put the weapon down. He had been threatening the victim but as he saw me approach, he told me if I took one more step closer he would kill her...At this point he raised the fire extinguisher higher and I believed he was going to bring it down onto her head...I activated the TASER and put the TASER dot and light onto him, at the same time I began yelling loudly at him, calling out 'Taser 50,000 volts' and then telling him to put the weapon down as I advanced towards him. The effect was immediate compliance. He stopped his motion of about to swing the extinguisher down onto the victim and complied with my instructions to lay on the floor with his hands behind his back."

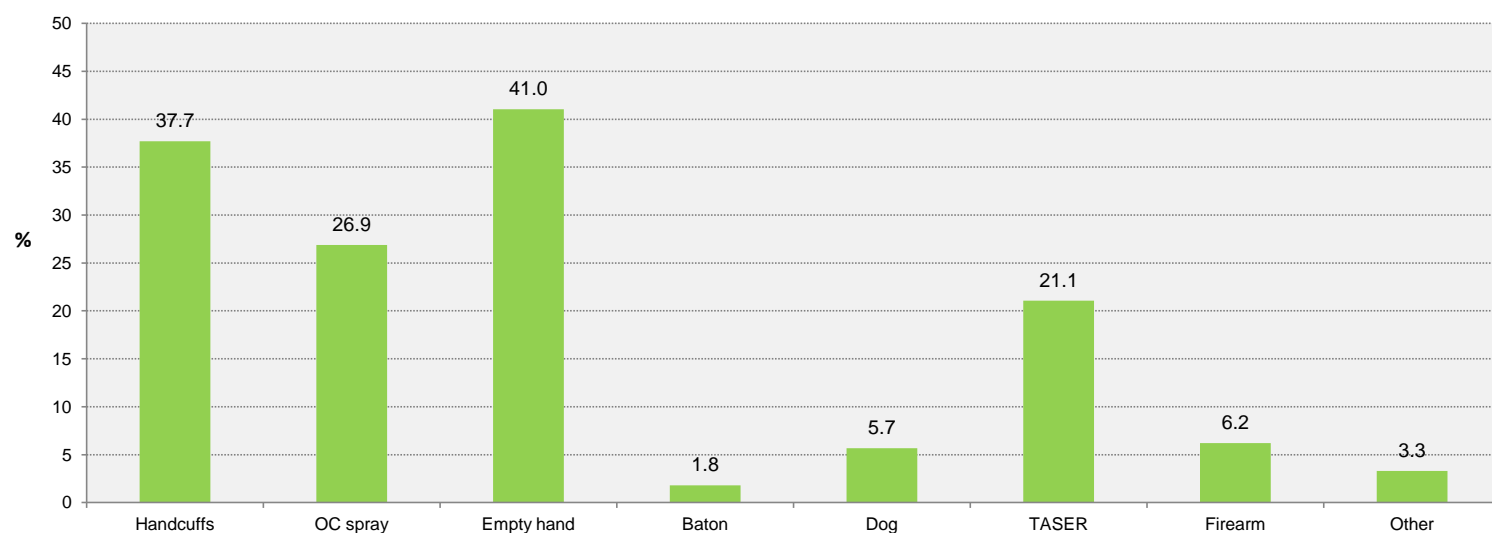
Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district and locality, 1 January to 31 December 2013 ¹

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Non-TASER uses to TASER use ratio
Northland	88	82	87	2	14	31	3	3	9:1
Waitemata	168	75	173	7	26	82	35	22	6:1
Auckland City	219	96	246	15	26	117	46	26	6:1
Counties Manukau	263	168	332	9	21	146	36	24	6:1
Waikato	126	130	128	9	24	85	29	10	5:1
Bay of Plenty	249	193	248	11	22	145	53	16	5:1
Eastern	155	153	158	9	22	78	18	9	7:1
Central	149	138	158	5	21	106	25	8	5:1
Wellington	179	139	198	12	51	107	39	21	6:1
Tasman	58	61	63	3	21	54	9	8	4:1
Canterbury	185	99	213	5	42	100	21	19	6:1
Southern	112	57	119	6	4	39	7	5	8:1
Total	1951	1391	2123	93	294	1090	321	171	6:1
National average	163	116	177	8	25	91	27	14	
Upper North ²	738	421	838	33	87	376	120	75	6:1
Lower North	858	753	890	46	140	521	164	64	6:1
South	355	217	395	14	67	193	37	32	6:1

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

² 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=5,173), 1 January to 31 December 2013 ³



³ 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 2013

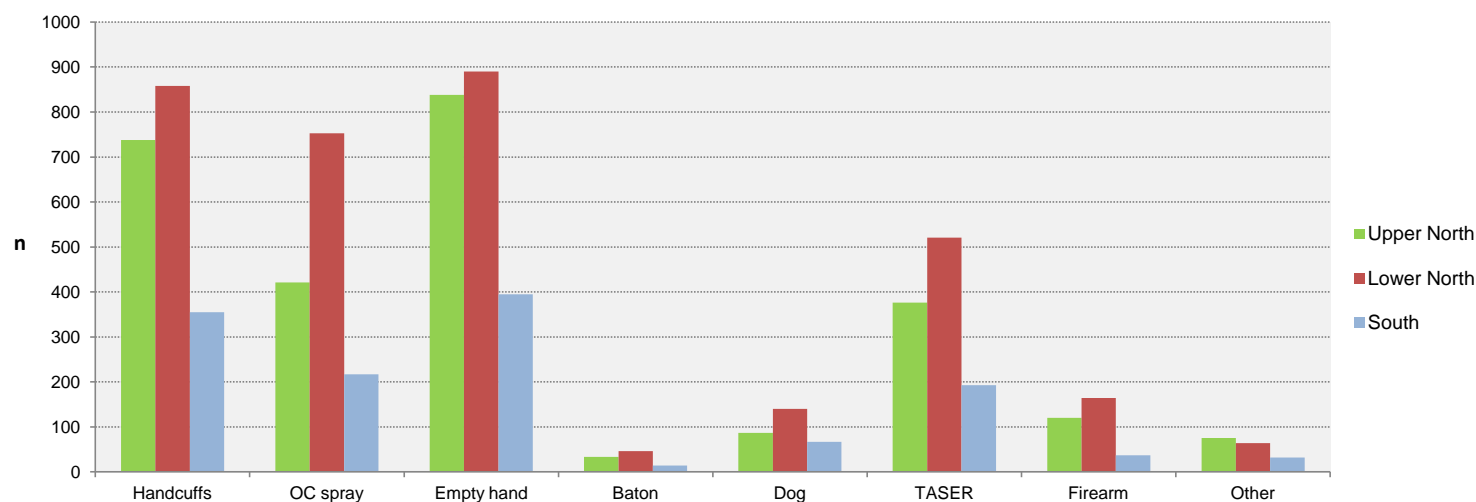


Table 2. TASER TOR events by highest mode of deployment,⁴ by district and locality, 1 January to 31 December 2013

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge ⁵	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ⁶
Northland	7	21	0	3	31	37
Waitemata	8	55	0	19	82	56
Auckland City	19	83	1	14	117	76
Counties Manukau	13	103	0	30	146	66
Waikato	10	61	2	12	85	53
Bay of Plenty	40	88	0	17	145	83
Eastern	7	62	0	9	78	65
Central	18	76	0	12	106	72
Wellington	18	82	0	7	107	83
Tasman	16	29	1	8	54	66
Canterbury	12	76	2	10	100	54
Southern	12	22	0	5	39	34
National	180	758	6	146	1090	63
District average	15	63	1	12	91	
Upper North	47	262	1	66	376	62
Lower North	93	369	2	57	521	71
South	40	127	3	23	193	51

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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).

⁶ 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=1,090), 1 January to 31 December 2013

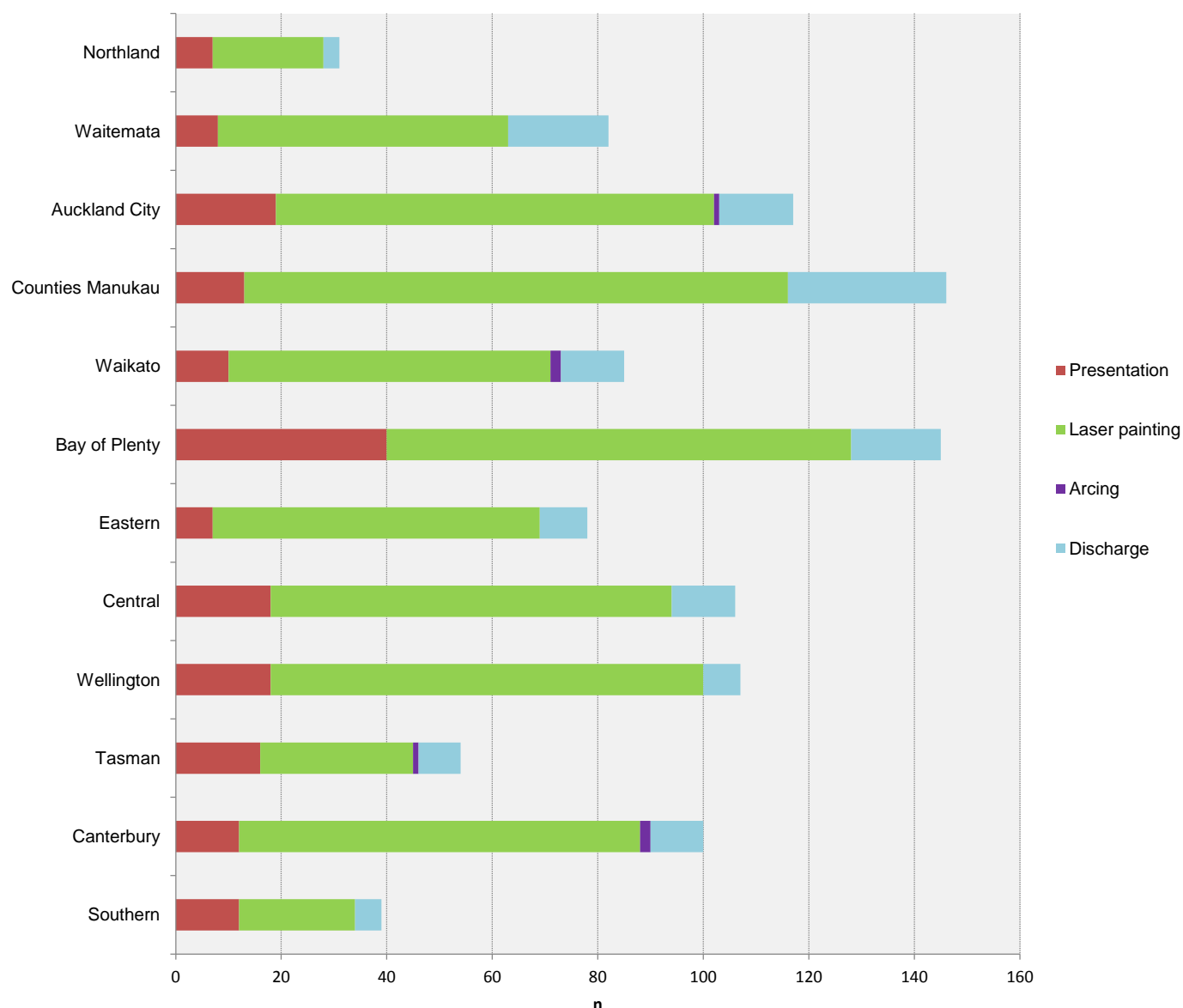


Table 3. Number of TASER discharges at each TASER TOR event, by district ⁷

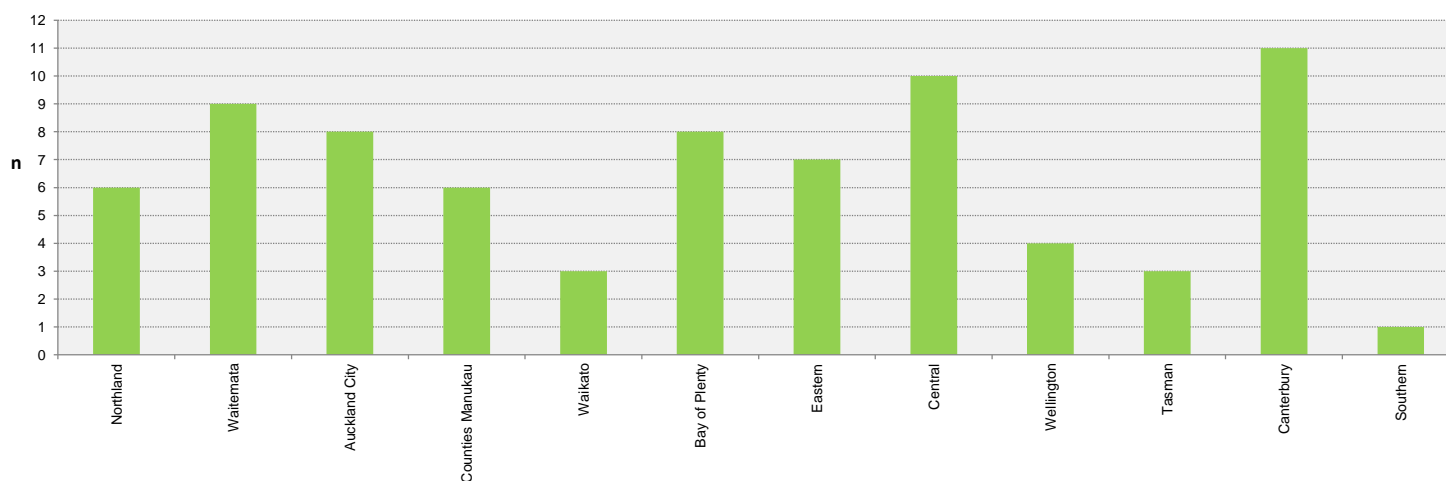
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	2	1	0	0	0	3
Waitemata	15	3	1	0	0	19
Auckland City	9	4	1	0	0	14
Counties Manukau	15	10	4	1	0	30
Waikato	8	3	1	0	0	12
Bay of Plenty	10	6	1	0	0	17
Eastern	6	1	0	2	0	9
Central	8	3	1	0	0	12
Wellington	6	0	0	1	0	7
Tasman	7	0	1	0	0	8
Canterbury	9	0	1	0	0	10
Southern	2	2	1	0	0	5
Total	97	33	12	4	0	146

⁷ 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 97 TASER TOR events TASER was discharged once, while in 33 events it was discharged twice, in 12 events it was discharged three times, and in four events it was discharged four times; thus, there were 215 discharges at the 146 TASER TOR events (see Table 4). Note, where multiple discharges were deployed, 44% (n=21) of 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	0	4	4
Waitemata	7	17	24
Auckland City	5	15	20
Counties Manukau	13	38	51
Waikato	1	16	17
Bay of Plenty	2	23	25
Eastern	5	11	16
Central	5	12	17
Wellington	1	9	10
Tasman	2	8	10
Canterbury	0	12	12
Southern	5	4	9
Total discharges	46	169	215

Figure 4. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=76)⁸



⁸All 76 unintentional discharges of TASER occurred in non-operational settings.

Table 5. TASER TOR events, by work group ⁹

Work group	n
AOS	3
CIB/Enquiries	26
Community Relations	5
Dog Section	3
General Duties Branch	940
Road Policing	67
Rural	25
Other	21
Total	1090

⁹ 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 ¹⁰

Location type	n
Commercial property	11
Gang premises	20
Non-police vehicle	8
Outdoor public area	179
Police premises	11
Police vehicle	5
Residence	593
Street, highway, motorway	281
Other	57
Total	1165

¹⁰ 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 = 1090).

Table 7. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 31 December 2013 ¹¹

	Shows ¹²	% of shows	Discharges ¹²	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Threaten police	370	39	63	43	433	40
Threaten non-police	210	22	26	18	236	22
Violence towards police	108	11	65	45	173	16
Violence towards non-police	160	17	18	12	178	16
Had and used a weapon	61	6	21	14	82	8
Had a weapon but did not use it	249	26	43	29	292	27
Other aggressive behaviours	197	21	21	14	218	20
Resist and / or obstruct police	118	13	9	6	127	12
Evade and / or escape police	59	6	5	3	64	6
Threatened or actual self-harm	31	3	15	10	46	4
Other	152	16	6	4	158	14
Total	1715		292		2007	

¹¹ 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%.

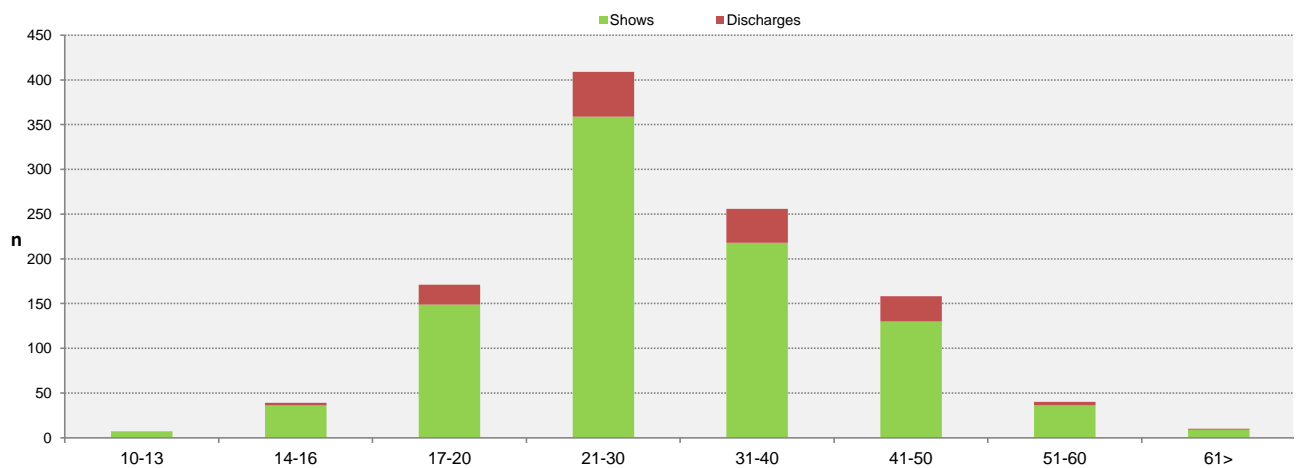
¹² TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

Table 8. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 31 December 2013 ¹³

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	217	23	38	26	255	23
Suicidal	110	12	26	18	136	12
Alcohol	512	54	93	64	605	56
Drugs	206	22	40	27	246	23
Excited delirium	52	6	6	4	58	5
History of carrying weapons	276	29	38	26	314	29
History of violence against police	235	25	49	34	284	26
History of violence	459	49	76	52	535	49
Medical condition	45	5	4	3	49	4
Other	133	14	23	16	156	14
Total	2245		393		2638	

¹³ Table 8 presents broader factors relevant to TASER TOR events; eg, in 64% 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 2013 ¹⁴



¹⁴ The youngest person who had TASER discharged against them was aged 15 years, while the oldest person was aged 69.

Table 9. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 January to 31 December 2013

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁵
European	302	32	45	31	347	50
Māori	503	53	76	52	579	74
Pacific Island peoples	120	13	21	14	141	91
Other	19	2	4	3	23	–
Total	944	100	146	100	1090	

¹⁵ 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 2013

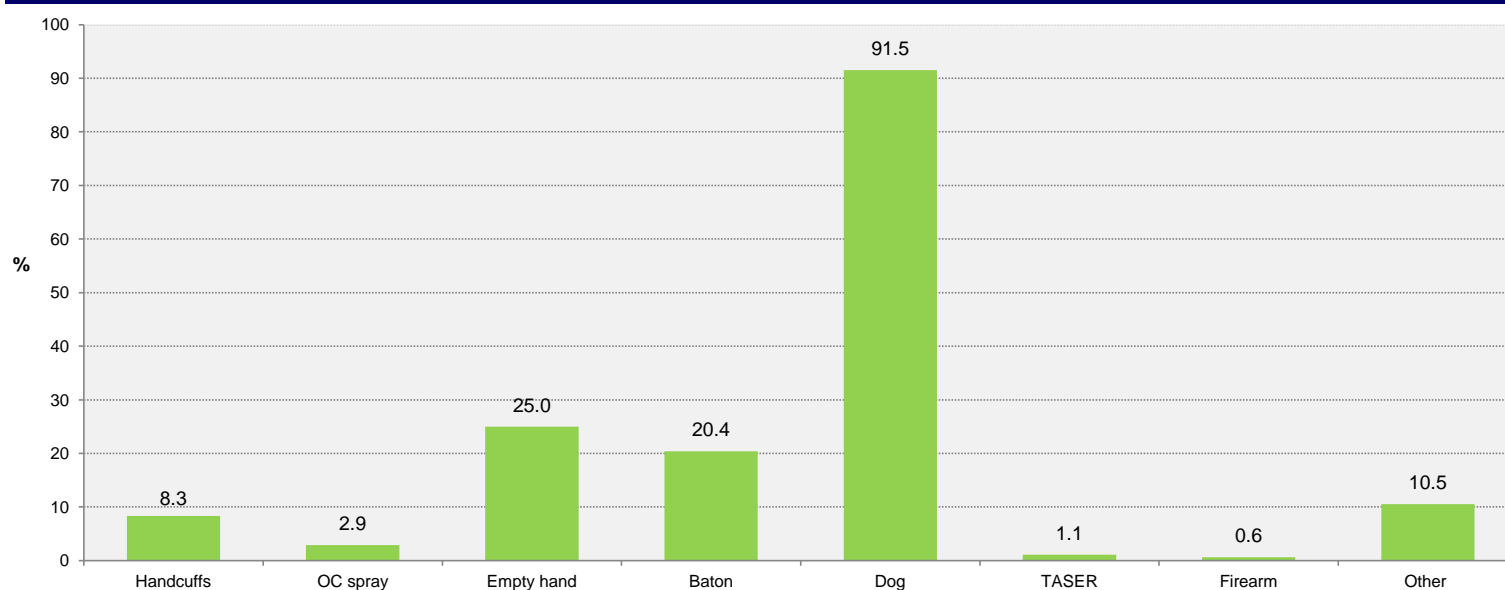
	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁵
Male	879	93	141	97	1020	162
Female	64	7	5	3	69	42
Unknown	1	0	0	0	1	–
Total	944	100	146	100	1090	

Table 11. Number of tactical options used resulting in subject injuries, by district ¹⁶

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Total	%
Northland	8	3	20	0	14	1	0	1	47	4
Waitemata	9	1	42	2	24	7	0	2	87	8
Auckland City	10	0	64	2	25	1	0	2	104	10
Counties Manukau	15	4	69	1	19	3	0	1	112	11
Waikato	9	3	25	3	19	0	0	1	60	6
Bay of Plenty	41	10	69	1	21	0	0	5	147	14
Eastern	10	4	48	0	19	0	0	0	81	8
Central	15	3	38	2	19	0	1	1	79	8
Wellington	12	6	69	5	47	0	1	3	143	14
Tasman	5	3	21	0	16	0	0	1	46	4
Canterbury	17	3	38	2	42	0	0	1	103	10
Southern	10	1	28	1	4	0	0	0	44	4
Total	161	41	531	19	269	12	2	18	1053	100
% of all injuries	15	4	50	2	26	1	0	2	100	

¹⁶ 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 ¹⁷



¹⁷ Figure 6 shows the injury rate (%) for each tactical option eg, 91% 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 ¹⁸

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	0	0	0
Waitemata	3	2	2	7
Auckland City	2	0	0	2
Counties Manukau	1	2	0	3
Waikato	0	0	0	0
Bay of Plenty	0	0	0	0
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	0	0	0	0
Wellington	0	0	0	0
Tasman	0	0	0	0
Canterbury	0	0	0	0
Southern	0	0	0	0
Total	6	4	2	12

¹⁸ 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 ¹⁹

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	1	0	0	1
Waitemata	3	1	1	5
Auckland City	6	3	0	9
Counties Manukau	3	1	0	4
Waikato	2	1	0	3
Bay of Plenty	4	1	1	6
Eastern	4	0	0	4
Central	2	2	0	4
Wellington	3	2	0	5
Tasman	0	0	0	0
Canterbury	3	0	0	3
Southern	0	0	0	0
Total	31	11	2	44

¹⁹ 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

This report was compiled by Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation, 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 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.

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