

New Zealand Police Biannual TASER Report #2

1 January to 30 June, 2012

Tactical Options Research Team

Introduction

This biannual TASER report pertains to the first six months (1 January to 30 June) of the 2012 calendar year. It is part of an external TASER reporting series produced by the Tactical Options Research Team, in Operations Group, 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. 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; carotid hold; and weapons of opportunity.

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).

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 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.

Key findings

- From 1 January to 30 June 2012, TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 363 TOR events, at an average of 61 events per month. Overall, TASER deployment comprised 19% of tactical options used at TOR events.
- Central district reported the highest rate of TASER events per 10,000 Police apprehensions (n=61), followed by Northland (n=58). Eastern (n=18) and Southern (n=23) reported the lowest. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.
- In the majority (68%) of TASER events, officers used laser painting as the highest mode of deployment, followed by presentation (17%). Discharge was used in 14% of TASER events, while arcing was used in 1%. This equates to a show to discharge ratio of 6:1. The majority of TASER discharges (70%) and of shows (81%) were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.
- TASER discharge events were typified by verbal threats (56%) and physical violence towards police (48%). Officers were assaulted with weapons in 22% of discharge events. These factors were also common in TASER show events. Note, people may display more than one type of behaviour at TOR events.
- Those against whom TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) were most often males (94%), and aged 30 years or younger (52%). TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) against Pacific Island peoples, Māori, and European, at 52, 46, and 31 TASER events per 10,000 police apprehensions, respectively. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.
- The majority of TASER deployments (shows or discharges) involved those who were impaired by alcohol (59%) and/or other drugs (18%). Mental illness (27%) and suicidal behaviours (15%) were also common issues.
- Excluding minor probe injuries, in 99% of TASER events there was no subject injury. There were two TASER-related injuries of moderate injury severity.

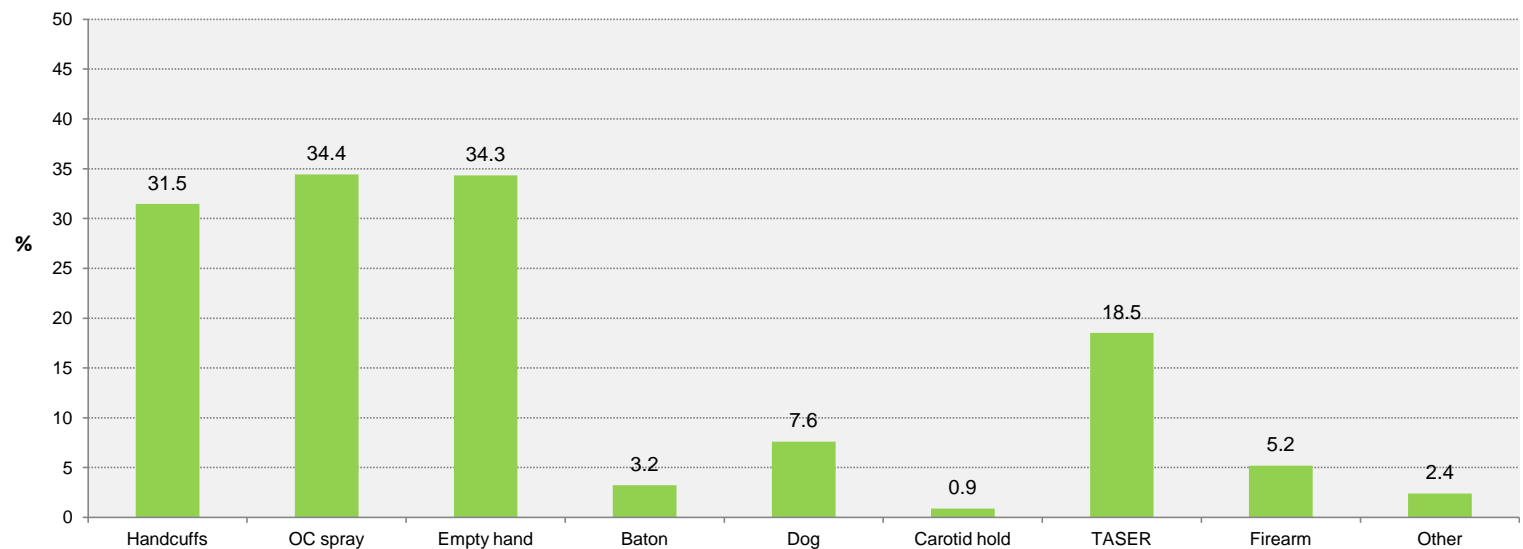
Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district and locality, 1 January to 30 June 2012 ¹

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	Carotid hold	TASER	Firearm	Other
Northland	35	45	42	6	11	0	24	5	5
Waitemata	60	46	56	3	9	1	33	15	8
Auckland City	66	54	85	8	14	1	30	7	6
Counties Manukau	86	94	78	8	15	1	57	24	4
Waikato	40	63	41	3	11	0	24	6	1
Bay of Plenty	79	87	82	9	16	2	35	16	3
Eastern	31	40	34	4	7	1	11	4	0
Central	53	52	57	5	9	1	45	4	3
Wellington	48	74	50	6	22	1	44	6	6
Tasman	24	29	29	0	7	1	19	5	5
Canterbury	55	54	76	6	21	8	26	2	6
Southern	40	37	43	5	7	0	15	8	0
Total	617	675	673	63	149	17	363	102	47
National average	51	56	56	5	12	1	30	9	4
Upper North ²	247	239	261	25	49	3	144	51	23
Lower North	251	316	264	27	65	5	159	36	13
South	119	120	148	11	35	9	60	15	11

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 1 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=1,961), 1 January to 30 June 2012 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 30 June 2012

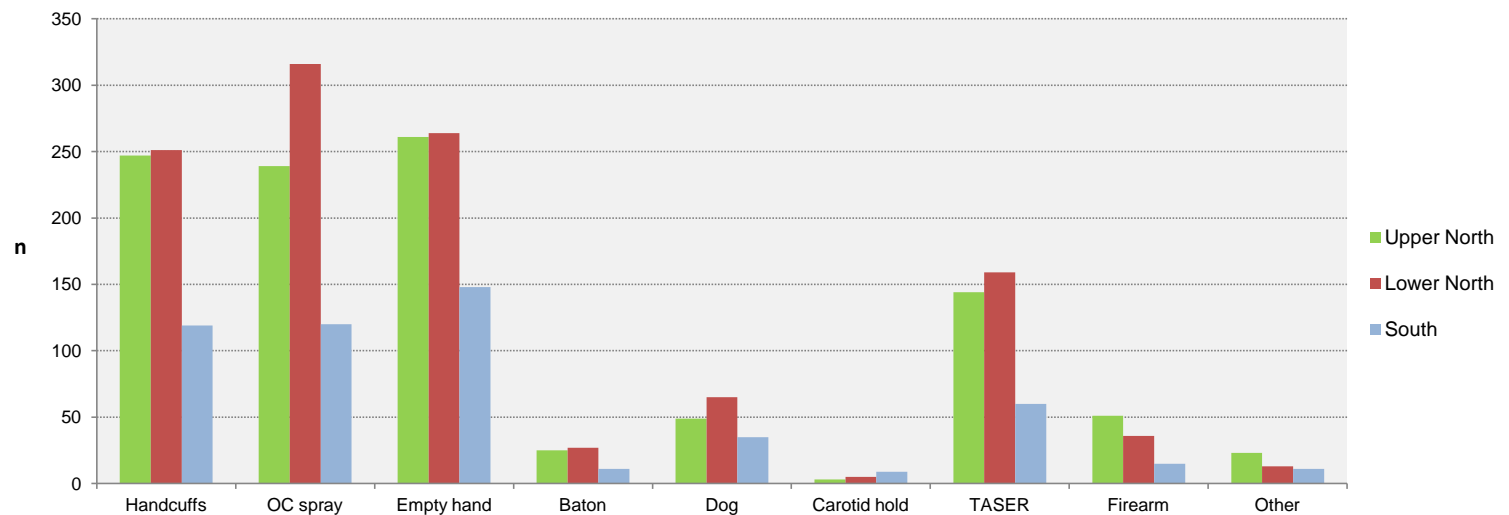


Figure 3. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 1 January to 30 June 2012

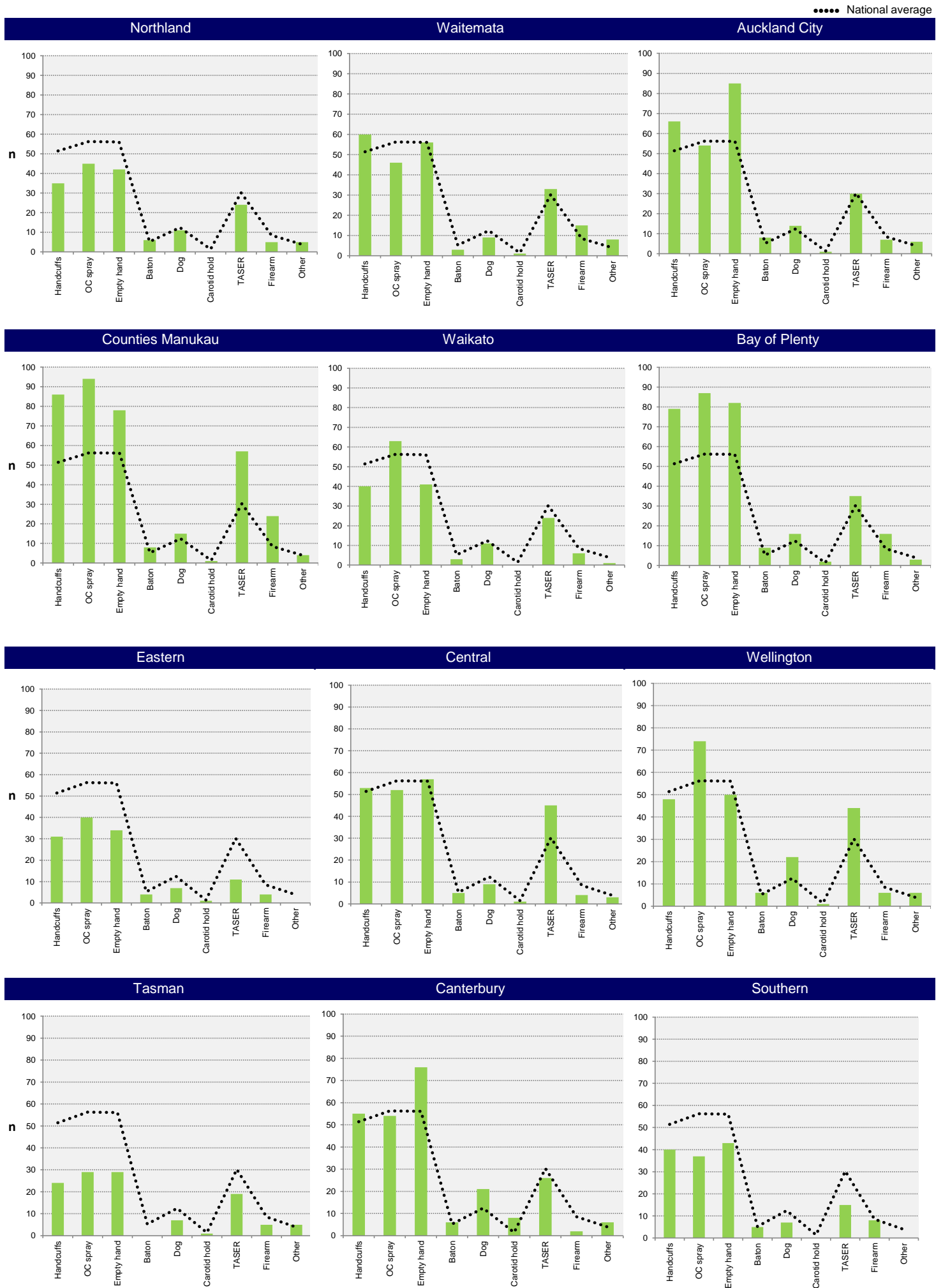


Table 2. TASER TOR events by highest mode of deployment,⁴ by district and locality, 1 January to 30 June 2012

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge ⁵	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ⁶
Northland	6	16	0	2	24	58
Waitemata	5	24	1	3	33	40
Auckland City	4	19	0	7	30	35
Counties Manukau	5	50	1	1	57	48
Waikato	4	16	1	3	24	30
Bay of Plenty	4	22	0	9	35	36
Eastern	1	7	0	3	11	18
Central	6	30	1	8	45	61
Wellington	16	22	1	5	44	46
Tasman	4	13	0	2	19	38
Canterbury	2	19	0	5	26	27
Southern	4	9	0	2	15	23
National	61	247	5	50	363	38
District average	5	21	0.4	4	30	
Upper North	20	109	2	13	144	44
Lower North	31	97	3	28	159	39
South	10	41	0	9	60	28

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, Figure 4, Table 3, and Table 4.

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 4 and 5).

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 4. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district (n=363), 1 January to 30 June 2012

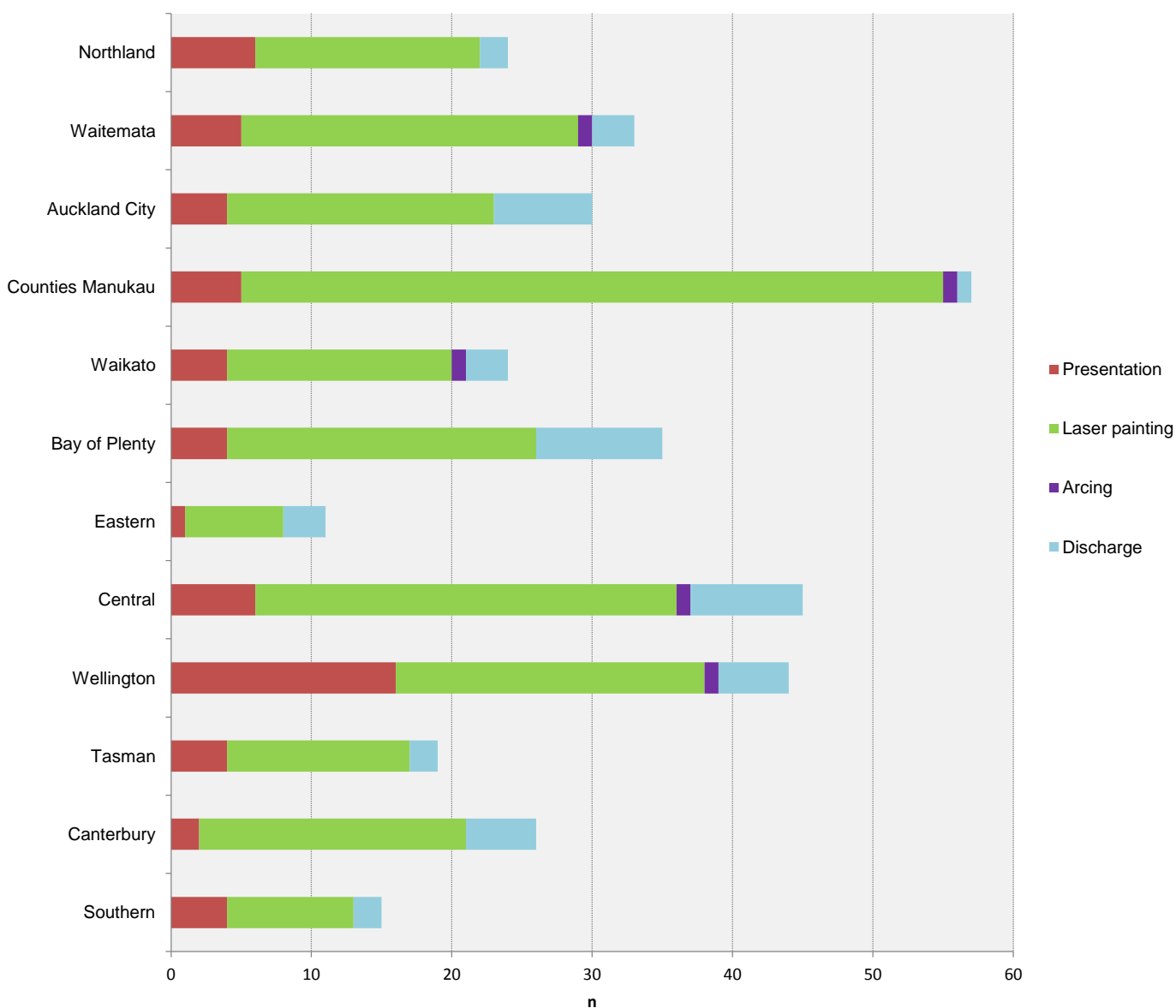


Table 3. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district and area

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge	Total
NORTHLAND					
Far North	1	11	0	0	12
Whangarei	5	5	0	2	12
WAITEMATA					
Rodney	0	7	0	2	9
Waitakere	2	12	0	0	14
North Shore	3	5	1	1	10
Auckland Motorways	0	0	0	0	0
AUCKLAND CITY					
Auckland Central Area	2	7	0	3	12
Auckland East Area	2	1	0	0	3
Auckland West Area	0	11	0	4	15
COUNTIES MANUKAU					
Counties Manukau Central	2	16	0	1	19
Counties Manukau East	1	6	0	0	7
Counties Manukau South	0	14	1	0	15
Counties Manukau West	2	14	0	0	16
WAIKATO					
Hamilton City	3	4	0	2	9
Waikato East	1	6	0	1	8
Waikato West	0	6	1	0	7
BAY OF PLENTY					
Eastern Bay of Plenty	0	3	0	1	4
Rotorua	2	3	0	1	6
Taupo	1	10	0	5	16
Western Bay of Plenty	1	6	0	2	9
EASTERN					
Tairāwhiti	1	2	0	2	5
Hawkes bay	0	5	0	1	6
CENTRAL					
Ruapehu	0	3	0	0	3
Palmerston North City	1	6	0	1	8
Palmerston North Rural	3	9	1	2	15
Taranaki Rural	0	5	0	4	9
Wanganui	0	4	0	0	4
New Plymouth	2	3	0	1	6
WELLINGTON					
Hutt Valley	3	8	0	3	14
Kapiti-Mana	1	5	0	0	6
Wairarapa	2	2	0	0	4
Wellington	10	7	1	2	20
TASMAN					
Marlborough	3	6	0	1	10
Nelson Bays	1	2	0	1	4
West Coast	0	5	0	0	5
CANTERBURY					
Northern Canterbury	1	5	0	0	6
Christchurch Central	1	5	0	2	8
Southern Canterbury	0	3	0	3	6
Mid South Canterbury	0	6	0	0	6
SOUTHERN					
Otago Rural	1	2	0	0	3
Dunedin	2	1	0	0	3
Southland	1	6	0	2	9
Total	61	247	5	50	363

Table 4. Number of TASER discharges at each TASER TOR event, by district ⁷

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	1	1	0	0	0	2
Waitemata	2	1	0	0	0	3
Auckland City	6	1	0	0	0	7
Counties Manukau	1	0	0	0	0	1
Waikato	2	1	0	0	0	3
Bay of Plenty	7	1	1	0	0	9
Eastern	3	0	0	0	0	3
Central	5	3	0	0	0	8
Wellington	5	0	0	0	0	5
Tasman	2	0	0	0	0	2
Canterbury	3	2	0	0	0	5
Southern	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total	38	11	1	0	0	50

⁷ 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 38 TASER TOR events TASER was discharged once, while in 11 events it was discharged twice, and in one event it was discharged three times; thus, there were 63 discharges at the 50 TASER TOR events (see Table 5). Note, that multiple TASER discharges may occur where a discharge, or discharges, had no or insufficient effect on the person.

Table 5. Number of TASER discharges, by discharge mode and district

	Contact stun	Discharge with probes	Total discharges
Northland	2	1	3
Waitemata	0	4	4
Auckland City	2	6	8
Counties Manukau	0	1	1
Waikato	0	4	4
Bay of Plenty	1	11	12
Eastern	0	3	3
Central	0	11	11
Wellington	0	5	5
Tasman	0	2	2
Canterbury	5	2	7
Southern	2	1	3
Total discharges	12	51	63

Figure 5. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=37)

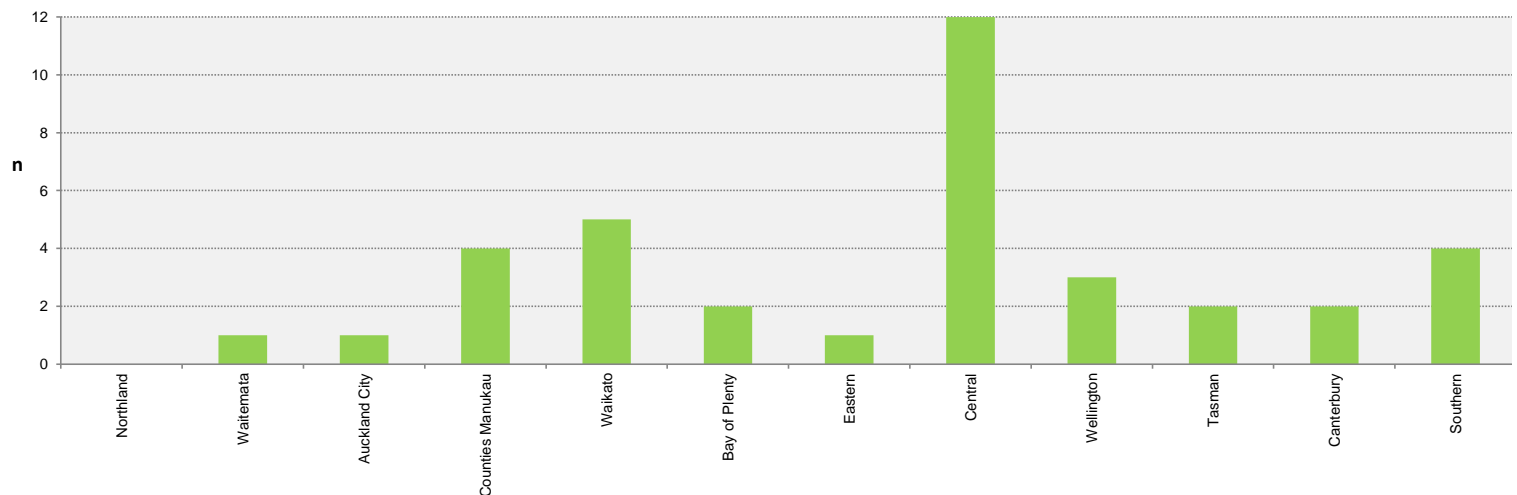


Table 6. TASER TOR events, by work group ⁸

Work group	n
AOS	1
CIB/Enquiries	4
Community Relations	3
Dog Section	1
General Duties Branch	334
Road Policing	8
Rural	6
Other	6
Total	363

⁸ 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 ⁹

Location type	n
Commercial property	6
Gang premises	3
Non-police vehicle	0
Outdoor public area	58
Police premises	5
Police vehicle	5
Residence	219
Street, highway, motorway	81
Other	14
Total	391

⁹ 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 = 363).

Table 8. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 30 June 2012 ¹⁰

	Shows ¹¹	% of shows	Discharges ¹¹	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Threats towards police	117	37	28	56	145	40
Threats towards non-police	67	21	8	16	75	21
Violence towards police	36	12	24	48	60	17
Violence towards non-police	49	16	8	16	57	16
Spit blood and / or saliva at police	5	2	1	2	6	2
Weapons used against police	29	9	11	22	40	11
Weapon possession without use	29	9	2	4	31	9
Threatened or actual self-harm	18	6	3	6	21	6
Other	96	31	8	16	104	29
Total	446		93		539	

¹⁰ Table 8 presents subject behaviours displayed at TASER TOR events; eg, in 48% 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%.

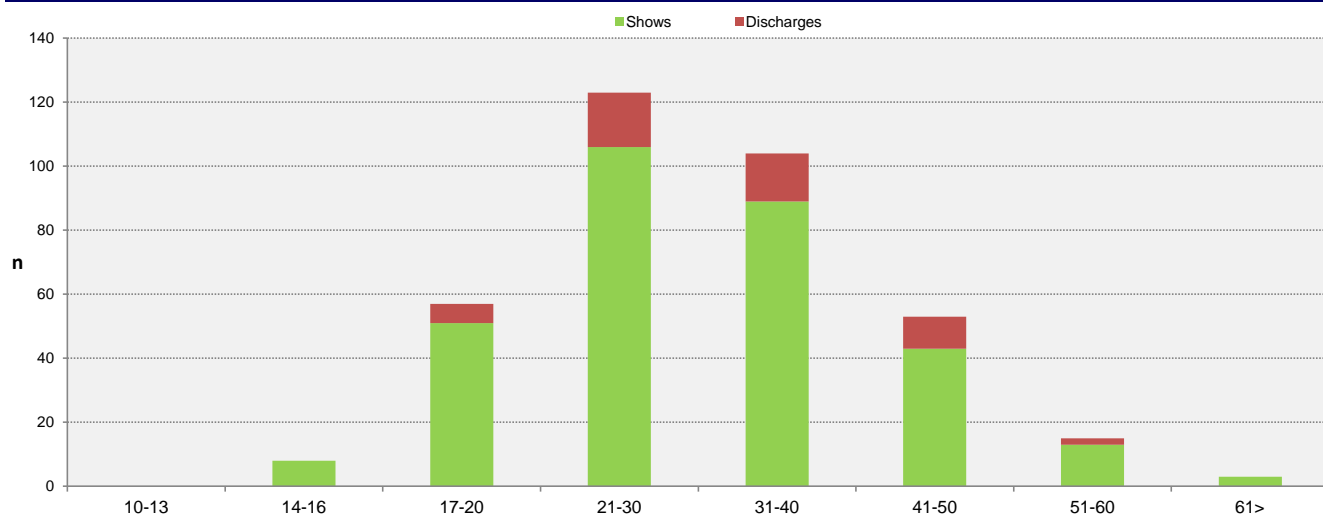
¹¹ TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

Table 9. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 30 June 2012 ¹²

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	81	26	17	34	98	27
Suicidal	50	16	5	10	55	15
Alcohol	180	58	35	70	215	59
Drugs	54	17	13	26	67	18
Excited delirium	20	6	3	6	23	6
History of carrying weapons	68	22	8	16	76	21
History of violence against police	86	27	11	22	97	27
History of violence	144	46	25	50	169	47
Medical condition	18	6	4	8	22	6
Other	38	12	1	2	39	11
Total	739		122		861	

¹² Table 9 presents broader factors relevant to TASER TOR events; eg, in 70% 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 2012 ¹³



¹³ The youngest person who had TASER discharged against them was aged 17 years, while the oldest person was aged 54.

Table 10. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 January to 30 June 2012

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁴
European	110	35	15	30	125	31
Māori	149	48	32	64	181	46
Pacific Island peoples	45	14	2	4	47	52
Other	9	3	1	2	10	–
Total	313	100	50	100	363	

¹⁴ 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 10 does not account for subject behaviours at TOR events.

Table 11. TASER TOR events, by sex, 1 January to 30 June 2012

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁴
Male	294	94	49	98	343	46
Female	19	6	1	2	20	10
Total	313	100	50	100	363	

Table 12. Number of tactical options used resulting in subject injuries, by district and locality ¹⁵

	Handcuffs	Empty hand	OC spray	Baton	Dog	TASER	Carotid hold	Firearm	Other	Total
Northland	3	13	1	3	10	0	0	0	1	31
Waitemata	1	12	1	0	10	0	0	0	0	24
Auckland City	5	17	1	1	14	0	0	0	0	38
Counties Manukau	13	22	4	3	10	0	0	1	1	54
Waikato	5	13	1	3	9	1	0	0	0	32
Bay of Plenty	11	29	3	2	12	0	0	0	0	57
Eastern	3	9	1	2	7	1	0	0	0	23
Central	4	12	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	25
Wellington	5	21	3	0	18	0	0	0	1	48
Tasman	1	9	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	16
Canterbury	4	24	2	1	20	0	1	1	0	53
Southern	7	17	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	32
Total	62	198	17	19	128	2	1	2	4	433
Upper North	22	64	7	7	44	0	0	1	2	147
Lower North	28	84	8	9	53	2	0	0	1	185
South	12	50	2	3	31	0	1	1	1	101

¹⁵ More than one subject injury may be reported as a result of a TASER TOR event. Table 12 and Figure 7 present injuries caused by each tactical option, as a number and proportion of all injuries caused by all tactical options.

Figure 7. Proportion (%) of tactical options used resulting in subject injuries, nationally (n=433)

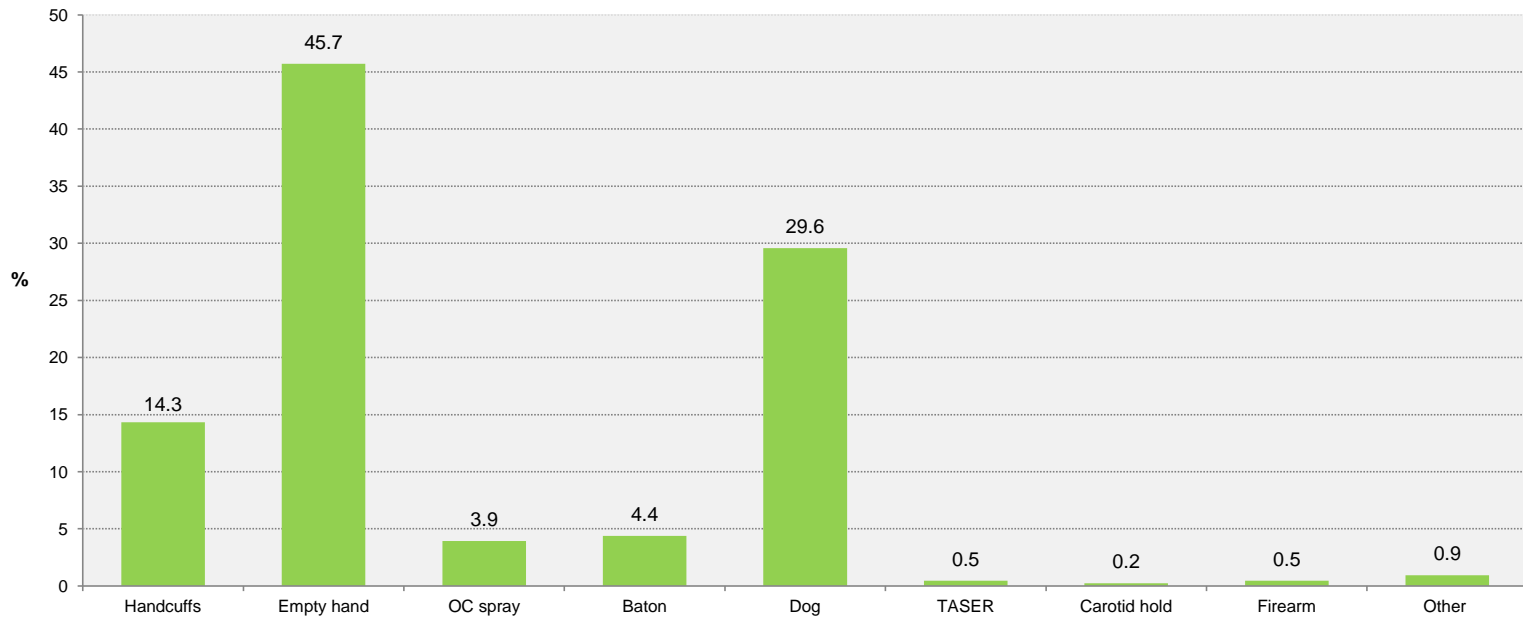


Table 13. Subject injuries resulting from TASER discharges, by severity, and district ¹⁶

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	0	0	0
Waitemata	0	0	0	0
Auckland City	0	0	0	0
Counties Manukau	0	0	0	0
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	0	0	0
Canterbury	0	0	0	0
Southern	0	0	0	0
Total	0	2	0	2

¹⁶ 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 ¹⁷

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	0	0	0
Waitemata	1	0	0	1
Auckland City	2	1	0	3
Counties Manukau	1	0	0	1
Waikato	0	0	0	0
Bay of Plenty	1	0	0	1
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	5	0	0	5
Wellington	1	0	0	1
Tasman	2	0	0	2
Canterbury	2	0	0	2
Southern	3	0	0	3
Total	18	1	0	19

¹⁷ 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.

View from the frontline...

"[The subject] a committed mental health patient... had previously attempted suicide two days earlier... which was life threatening and required a blood transfusion. Prior to Police arrival in this instance she had been cutting herself, again losing a considerable amount of blood... [The subject], when approached by police, was holding a razor blade and cutting/digging into her wrist. Blood was freely flowing... and the subject had lost at least two litres. [The subject] was non-responsive to verbal commands... TASER was deployed... the effects [were] immediate... and the subject was restrained by police and medical staff".

"Police were advised of two males yelling at each other and one male was heard saying he would cut [the other male's] head off...On arrival, two males could be clearly heard yelling and swearing at each other and one male mentioned a hammer...As Police approached the scene...the subject was seen up the driveway holding a very large machete. He was waving it around and appeared to be verbally abusing someone. There were other people, including kids, only metres away from the subject... I produced the TASER...and clearly announced Police presence and instructed the subject to drop the machete. Once he realised it was Police, he [dropped] the machete and was arrested without incident. TASER laser painting [was] very successful once again."

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.

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.

Contact

Ross Henderson, Chief Media Adviser

Tel: 04 474 9499

ross.henderson@police.govt.nz