

New Zealand Police Biannual TASER Report #4

1 January to 30 June, 2013

Tactical Options Research Team

Introduction

This biannual TASER report pertains to the first six months (1 January to 30 June) of the 2013 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; 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 2013, TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 552 TOR events, at an average of 92 events per month. Overall, TASER deployment comprised 21% of tactical options used at TOR events.
- Wellington district reported the highest rate of TASER events per 10,000 Police apprehensions (n=92), followed by Auckland (n=91). Southern (n=38) and Northland (n=41) reported the lowest. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.
- In the majority (71%) of TASER events, officers used laser painting as the highest mode of deployment, followed by presentation (15%). Discharge was used in 13% of TASER events, while arcing was used in 1%. This equates to a show to discharge ratio of 7:1. The majority of TASER discharges (82%) and shows (81%) were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.
- TASER discharge events were typified by verbal threats (42%) and physical violence towards police (47%). Officers were assaulted with weapons in 14% 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 (59%). TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) against Pacific Island peoples, Māori, and European, at 103, 76, and 54 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 (57%) and/or other drugs (23%). Mental illness (24%) and suicidal behaviours (14%) were also common issues.
- Excluding minor probe injuries, in 98% of TASER events there was no subject injury. There were ten TASER-related injuries. Half (50%; n=5) were of minor injury severity.

Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district and locality, 1 January to 30 June 2013 ¹

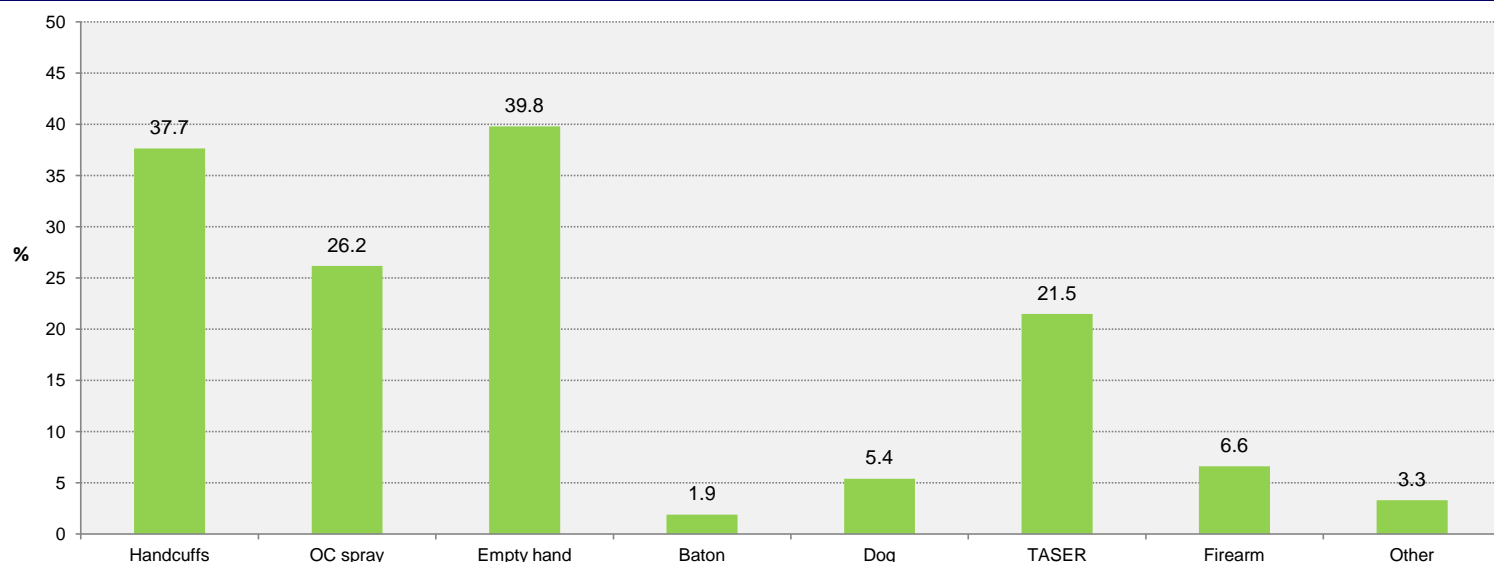
	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other
Northland	48	50	42	1	6	18	0	1
Waitemata	78	37	84	4	14	48	17	11
Auckland City	115	48	123	8	11	67	19	14
Counties Manukau	126	86	158	5	10	73	16	15
Waikato	62	62	69	2	9	41	18	1
Bay of Plenty	112	94	116	5	11	59	25	7
Eastern	84	73	81	6	14	39	13	4
Central	75	56	72	2	8	46	12	5
Wellington	83	69	86	9	29	60	24	10
Tasman	33	22	27	0	6	25	5	5
Canterbury	90	45	104	4	21	55	14	9
Southern	62	31	61	3	0	21	7	3
Total	968	673	1023	49	139	552	170	85
National average	81	56	85	4	12	46	14	7

Upper North ²	367	221	407	18	41	206	52	41
Lower North	416	354	424	24	71	245	92	27
South	185	98	192	7	27	101	26	17

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=2,570), 1 January to 30 June 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 30 June 2013

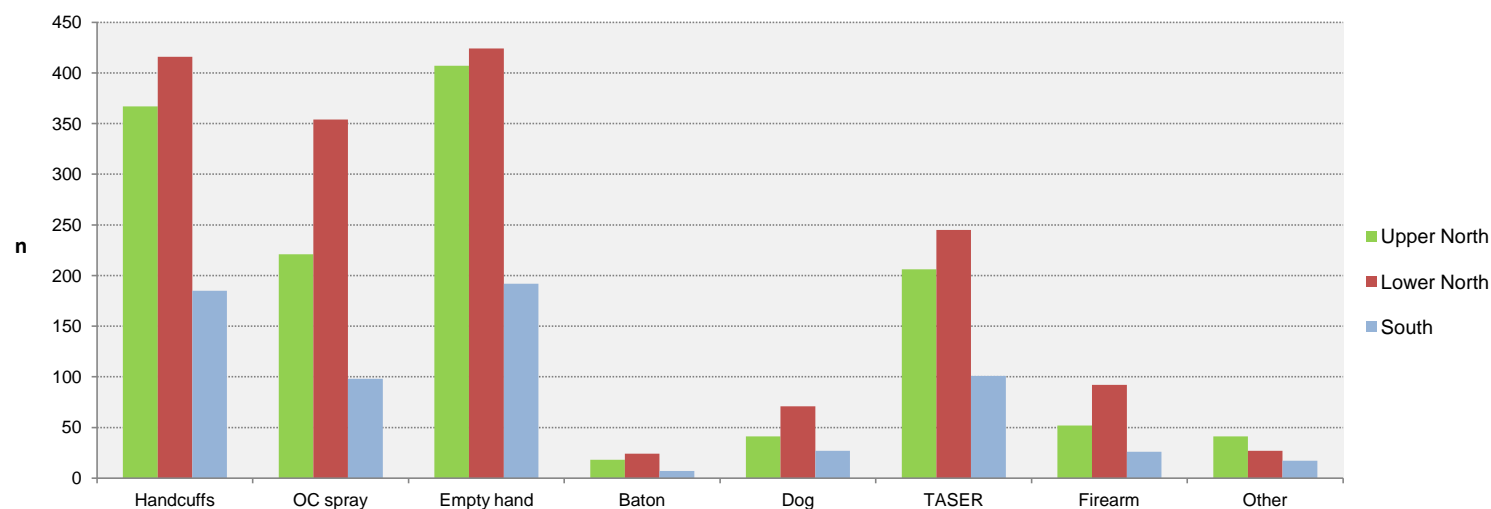


Figure 3. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 1 January to 30 June 2013

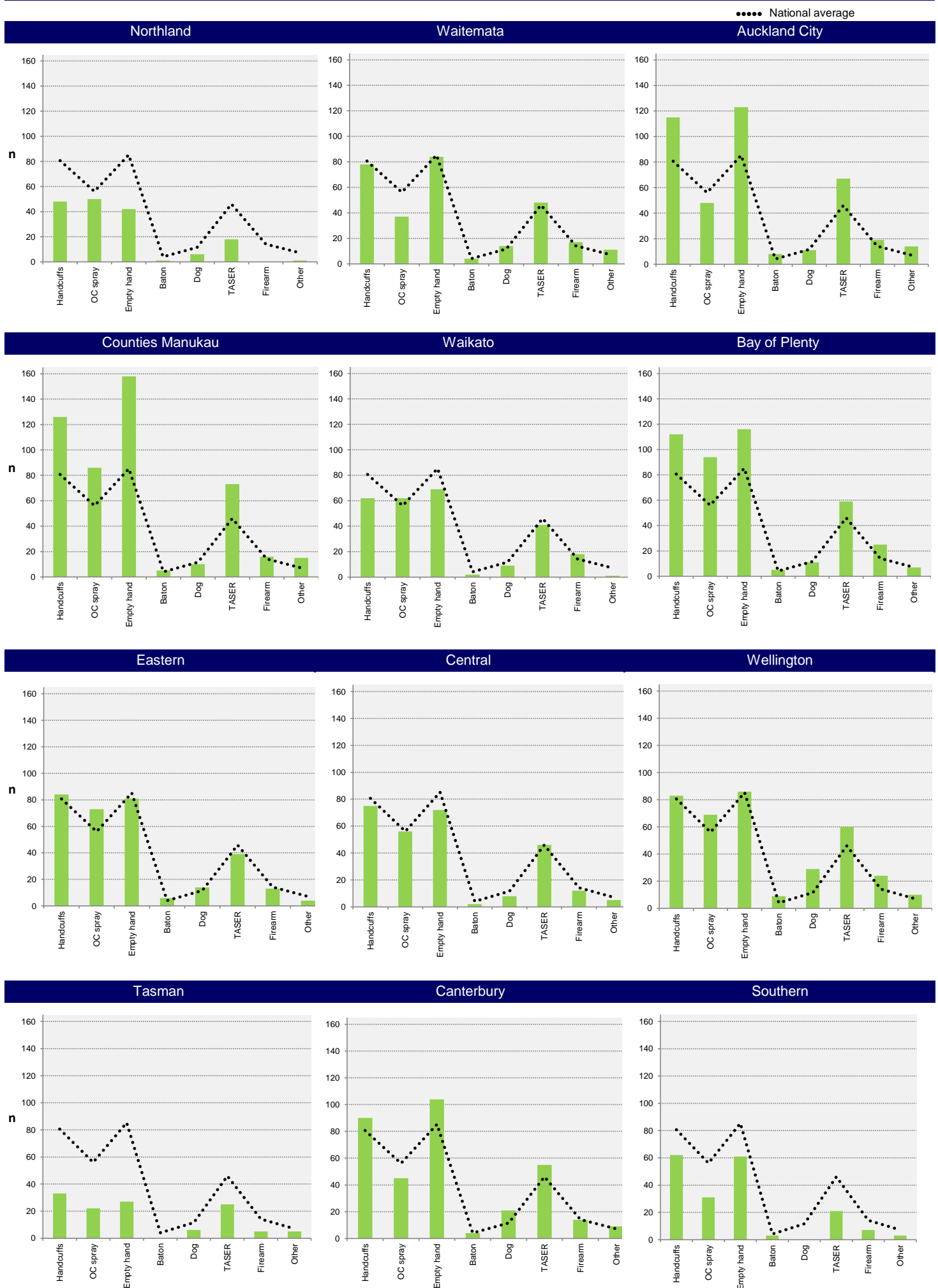


Table 2. TASER TOR events by highest mode of deployment,⁴ by district and locality, 1 January to 30 June 2013

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge ⁵	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ⁶
Northland	2	15	0	1	18	41
Waitemata	6	29	0	13	48	69
Auckland City	10	50	0	7	67	91
Counties Manukau	3	54	0	16	73	68
Waikato	3	30	2	6	41	58
Bay of Plenty	18	33	0	8	59	67
Eastern	3	33	0	3	39	69
Central	7	33	0	6	46	65
Wellington	14	44	0	2	60	92
Tasman	7	15	0	3	25	60
Canterbury	6	44	1	4	55	59
Southern	6	12	0	3	21	38
National	85	392	3	72	552	66
District average	7	33	0.3	6	46	
Upper North	21	148	0	37	206	70
Lower North	45	173	2	25	245	70
South	19	71	1	10	101	53

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=552), 1 January to 30 June 2013

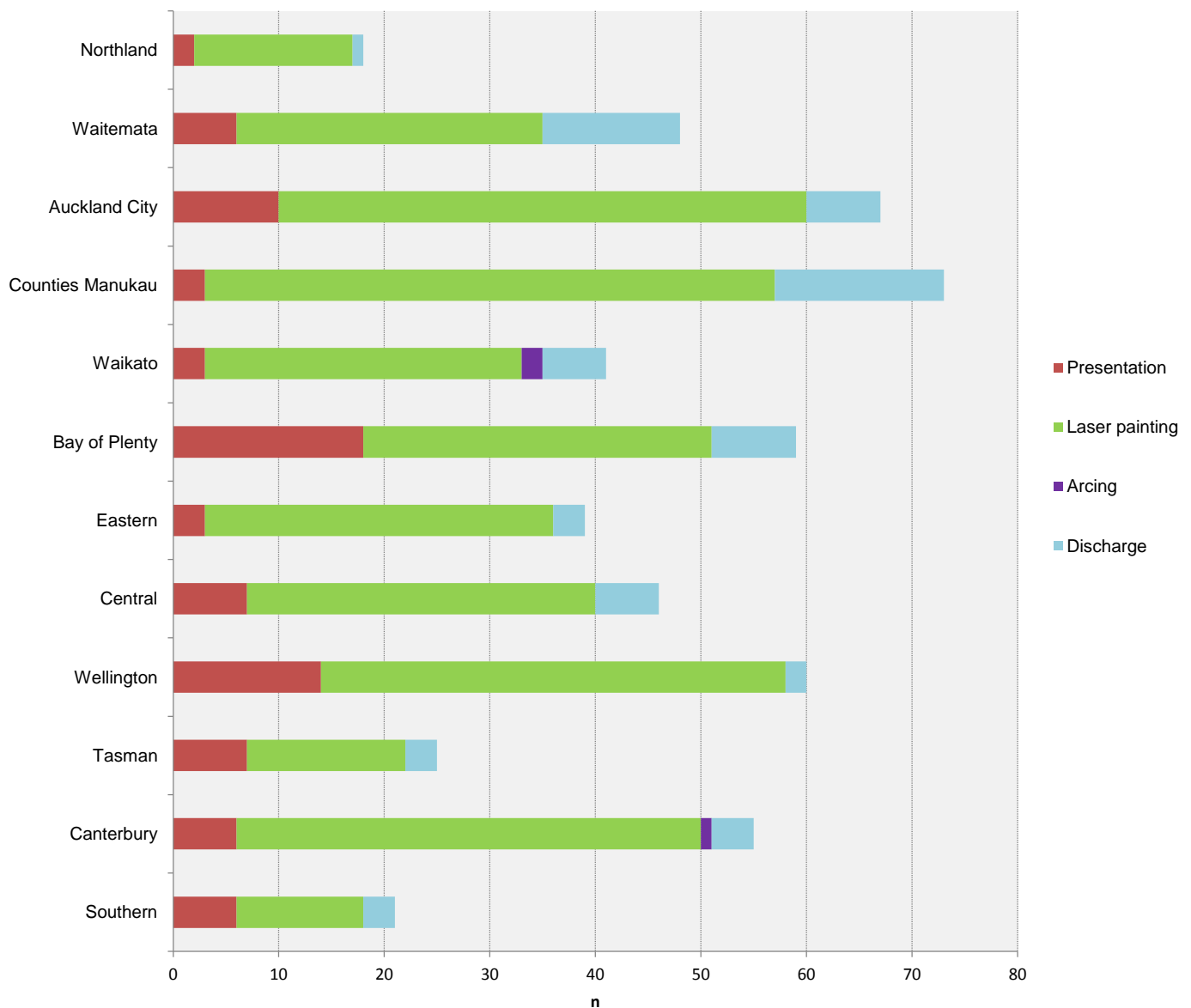


Table 3. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district and area

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge	Total
NORTHLAND					
Far North	2	6	0	1	9
Whangarei	0	9	0	0	9
WAITEMATA					
Rodney	1	11	0	3	15
Waitakere	0	8	0	7	15
North Shore	5	10	0	3	18
Auckland Motorways	0	0	0	0	0
AUCKLAND CITY					
Auckland Central Area	3	13	0	1	17
Auckland East Area	4	21	0	5	30
Auckland West Area	3	33	1	6	43
COUNTIES MANUKAU					
Counties Manukau Central	0	13	0	3	16
Counties Manukau East	1	9	0	7	17
Counties Manukau South	2	6	0	3	11
Counties Manukau West	0	23	0	1	24
WAIKATO					
Hamilton City	3	11	0	0	14
Waikato East	0	5	1	3	9
Waikato West	0	0	0	0	0
BAY OF PLENTY					
Eastern Bay of Plenty	7	7	0	1	15
Rotorua	1	7	0	1	9
Taupo	3	5	0	2	10
Western Bay of Plenty	7	14	0	4	25
EASTERN					
Tairāwhiti	1	12	0	1	14
Hawkes bay	2	21	0	2	25
CENTRAL					
Ruapehu	1	4	0	2	7
Palmerston North City	1	5	0	1	7
Palmerston North Rural	1	17	0	0	18
Taranaki Rural	1	0	0	1	2
Wanganui	3	7	0	1	11
New Plymouth	0	0	0	1	1
WELLINGTON					
Hutt Valley	9	16	0	0	25
Kapiti-Mana	3	15	0	1	19
Wairarapa	0	3	0	1	4
Wellington	2	10	0	0	12
TASMAN					
Marlborough	6	6	0	0	12
Nelson Bays	1	5	0	2	8
West Coast	0	4	0	1	5
CANTERBURY					
Northern Canterbury	4	14	1	2	21
Christchurch Central	1	7	0	0	8
Southern Canterbury	1	13	0	1	15
Mid South Canterbury	0	10	0	1	11
SOUTHERN					
Otago Rural	2	2	0	0	4
Dunedin	0	3	0	2	5
Southland	4	7	0	1	12
Total	85	392	3	72	552

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

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	0	1	0	0	0	1
Waitemata	10	2	1	0	0	13
Auckland City	4	2	1	0	0	7
Counties Manukau	7	5	3	1	0	16
Waikato	4	2	0	0	0	6
Bay of Plenty	4	3	1	0	0	8
Eastern	2	0	0	1	0	3
Central	3	2	1	0	0	6
Wellington	2	0	0	0	0	2
Tasman	2	0	1	0	0	3
Canterbury	4	0	0	0	0	4
Southern	2	1	0	0	0	3
Total	44	18	8	2	0	72

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 44 TASER TOR events TASER was discharged once, while in 18 events it was discharged twice, in eight events it was discharged three times, and in two events it was discharged four times; thus, there were 112 discharges at the 72 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	0	2	2
Waitemata	4	13	17
Auckland City	4	7	11
Counties Manukau	10	20	30
Waikato	1	7	8
Bay of Plenty	2	11	13
Eastern	3	3	6
Central	3	7	10
Wellington	0	2	2
Tasman	2	3	5
Canterbury	0	4	4
Southern	1	3	4
Total discharges	30	82	112

Figure 5. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=44)

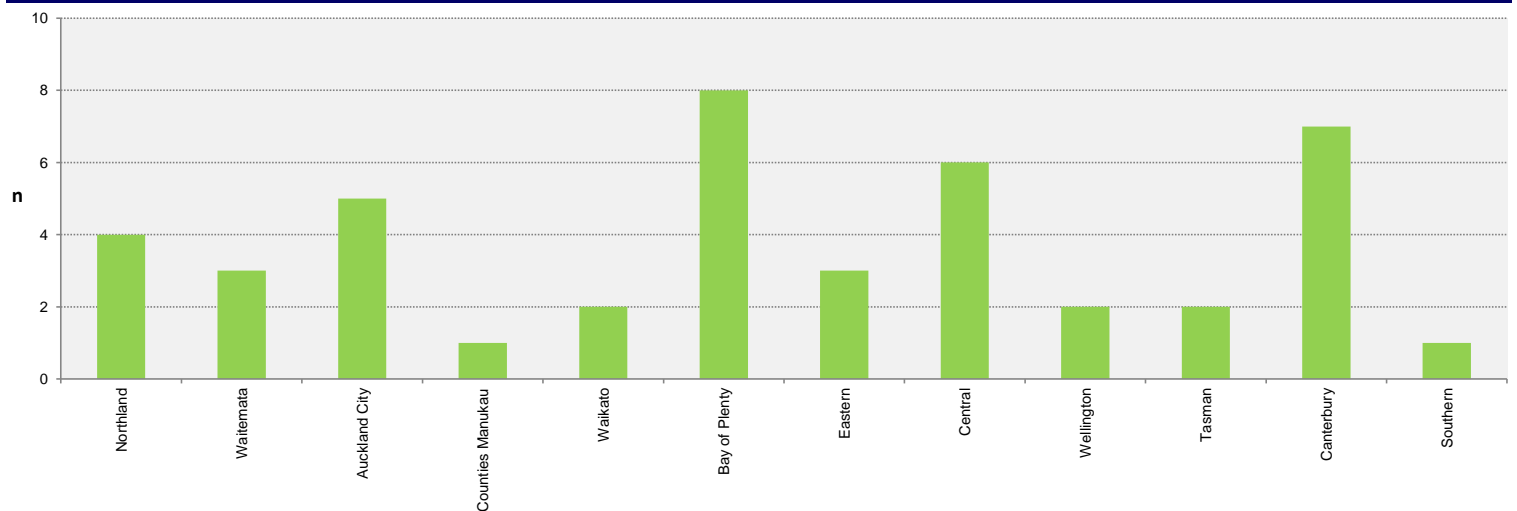


Table 6. TASER TOR events, by work group ⁸

Work group	n
AOS	2
CIB/Enquiries	11
Community Relations	3
Dog Section	3
General Duties Branch	479
Road Policing	30
Rural	14
Other	10
Total	552

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	10
Non-police vehicle	6
Outdoor public area	95
Police premises	3
Police vehicle	3
Residence	307
Street, highway, motorway	132
Other	28
Total	590

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=552).

Table 8. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 30 June 2013 ¹⁰

	Shows ¹¹	% of shows	Discharges ¹¹	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Threaten police	196	41	30	42	226	41
Threaten non-police	124	26	11	15	135	24
Violence towards police	54	11	34	47	88	16
Violence towards non-police	82	17	7	10	89	16
Weapon used against police	64	13	10	14	74	13
Had weapon but did not use it	24	5	5	7	29	5
Other aggressive behaviours	95	20	9	13	104	19
Resist and / or obstruct police	48	10	4	6	52	9
Evade and / or escape police	25	5	2	3	27	5
Threatened or actual self-harm	19	4	7	10	26	5
Other	81	17	2	3	83	15
Total	812		121		933	

¹⁰ Table 8 presents subject behaviours displayed at TASER TOR events; eg, in 47% 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%.

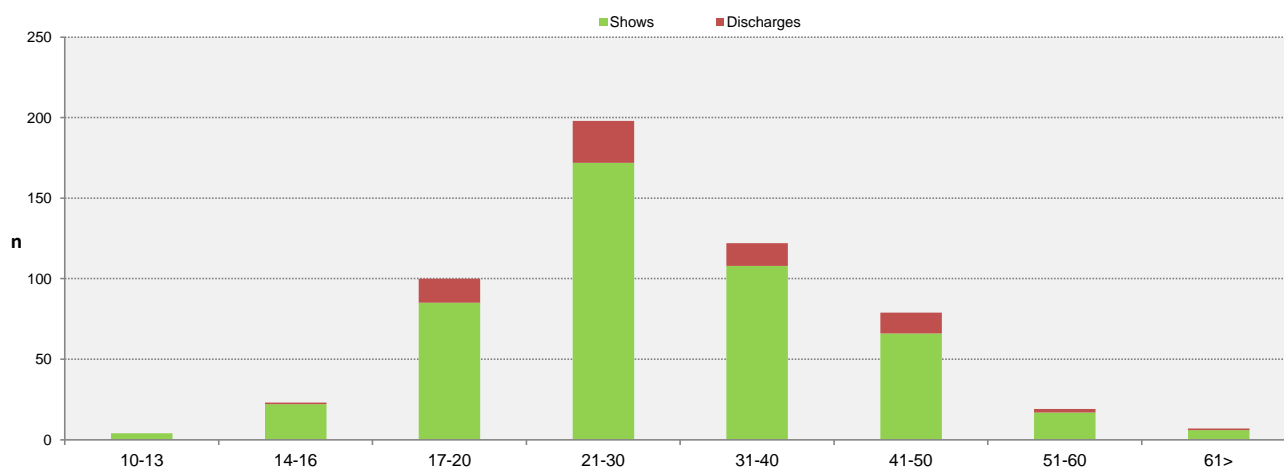
¹¹ TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

Table 9. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 January to 30 June 2013 ¹²

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	111	23	19	26	130	24
Suicidal	63	13	13	18	76	14
Alcohol	264	55	49	68	313	57
Drugs	107	22	19	26	126	23
Excited delirium	26	5	3	4	29	5
History of carrying weapons	141	29	20	28	161	29
History of violence against police	106	22	25	35	131	24
History of violence	220	46	39	54	259	47
Medical condition	29	6	3	4	32	6
Other	55	11	9	13	64	12
Total	1122		199		1321	

¹² Table 9 presents broader factors relevant to TASER TOR events; eg, in 68% 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 2013 ¹³



¹³ The youngest person who had TASER discharged against them was aged 16 years, while the oldest person was aged 69.

Table 10. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 January to 30 June 2013

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁴
European	163	34	24	33	187	54
Māori	250	52	31	43	281	76
Pacific Island peoples	62	13	16	22	78	103
Other	5	1	1	1	6	–
Total	480	100	72	100	552	

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 2013

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁴
Male	448	93	69	96	517	78
Female	31	6	3	4	34	20
Unknown	1	0.2	0	0	1	–
Total	480	100	72	100	552	

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

	Handcuffs	Empty hand	OC spray	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Total	%
Northland	1	10	3	0	6	0	0	0	20	4
Waitemata	4	20	1	1	12	7	0	0	45	8
Auckland City	2	32	0	0	10	1	0	2	47	9
Counties Manukau	13	40	3	0	10	2	0	1	69	13
Waikato	2	16	1	1	7	0	0	0	27	5
Bay of Plenty	22	36	8	1	10	0	0	1	78	15
Eastern	7	26	3	0	11	0	0	0	47	9
Central	9	19	1	0	8	0	1	0	38	7
Wellington	7	28	2	3	27	0	1	2	70	13
Tasman	4	11	0	0	5	0	0	0	20	4
Canterbury	7	23	0	1	21	0	0	1	53	10
Southern	6	13	0	1	0	0	0	0	20	4
Total	84	274	22	8	127	10	2	7	534	100
Upper North	20	102	7	1	38	10	0	3	181	34
Lower North	47	125	15	5	63	0	2	3	260	49
South	17	47	0	2	26	0	0	1	93	17

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=534)

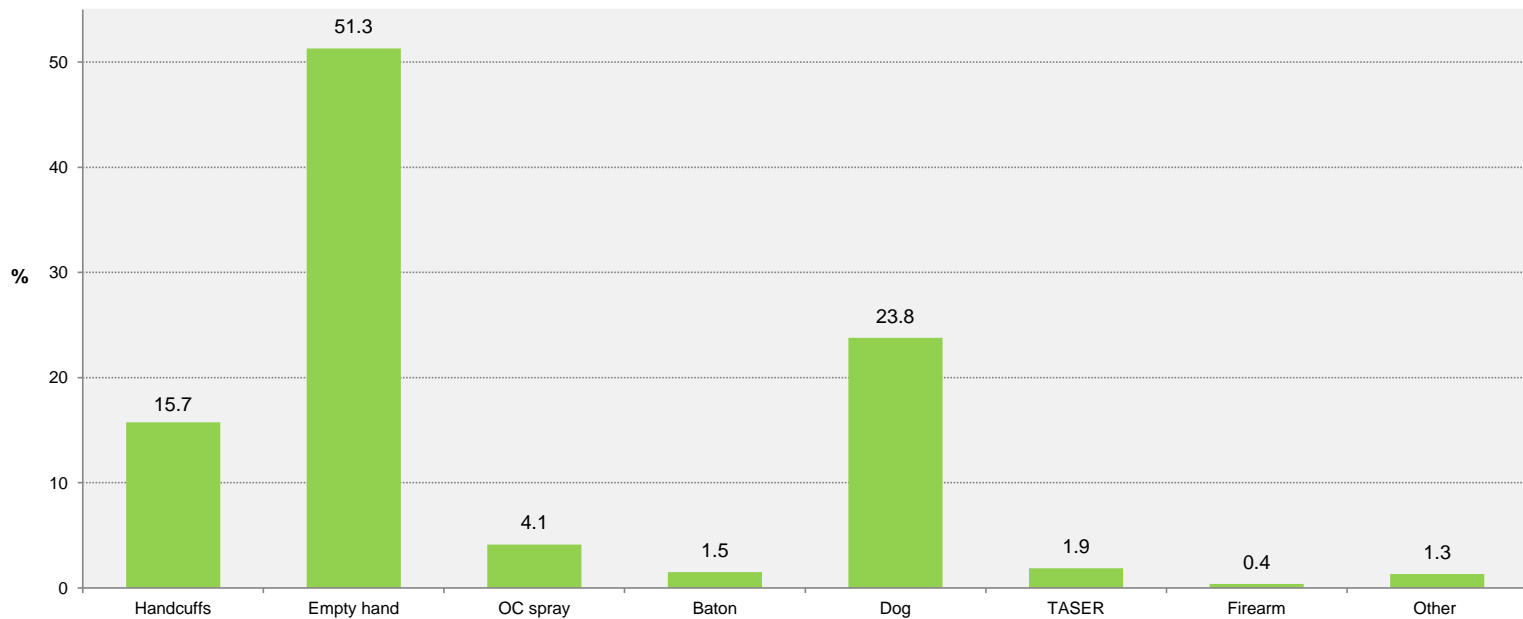


Table 13. Subject injuries resulting from TASER discharges, by severity, and district ¹⁶

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	0	0	0
Waitemata	3	2	2	7
Auckland City	1	0	0	1
Counties Manukau	1	1	0	2
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	5	3	2	10

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	1	0	0	1
Waitemata	2	1	1	4
Auckland City	5	1	0	6
Counties Manukau	0	1	0	1
Waikato	2	1	0	3
Bay of Plenty	1	1	0	2
Eastern	3	0	0	3
Central	1	2	0	3
Wellington	1	0	0	1
Tasman	0	0	0	0
Canterbury	2	0	0	2
Southern	0	0	0	0
Total	18	7	1	26

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...

"Police were called to assist Mental Health workers with a violent person [being assessed]. On arrival, Mental Health workers informed us that the subject was very agitated and under the influence of methamphetamine and were waiting for a Dr to assess him and [requested] police to be present during the assessment...During the assessment...the subject's agitated behaviour increased and he began threatening to self-harm and [was aggressive] towards Mental Health staff...I presented myself...and directed the subject to calm down...the subject immediately grabbed the coffee table, lifting it in a throwing motion over his head and I immediately presented my TASER and laser painted him...The subject was admitted under sections 9, 10, and 11 of the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992."

"We were dispatched by Communications to reports of three suspicious males in a parked vehicle on a driveway...The informant had stated that the males had informed them that their presence on the driveway was gang related...I approached the vehicle...I observed the defendant...both his hands were resting in his lap. I observed a second male in the back of the vehicle, he also appeared to be asleep...I placed my hand on the defendant's left shoulder and tried to wake him...the defendant lifted his right arm. I observed a knife, which had been hidden underneath his right forearm. [He] grabbed hold of the knife... My assessment at the time was that the defendant posed a genuine threat of death or grievous bodily harm [GBH]. I pointed my TASER at the defendant...[He] got out of the vehicle holding the knife...I feared death or GBH and fired my TASER...the defendant tensed up and fell onto the vehicle... I placed handcuffs on [him]".

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.

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