

New Zealand Police Biannual TASER Report #1

1 July to 31 December 2011

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 biannual TASER report pertains to the last six months (1 July to 31 December 2011) of the 2011 calendar year.

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 July to 31 December 2011, TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 323 TOR events, at an average of 54 events per month. TASER deployment comprised 13% of tactical options used at TOR events.
- Bay of Plenty district reported the highest rate of TASER events per 10,000 Police apprehensions (n=40), followed by Northland (n=37). Waitematā (n=17) and Eastern (n=18) reported the lowest. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.
- In the majority (64%) of TASER events, officers used laser painting as the highest mode of deployment, followed by presentation (19%). Discharge was used in 16% of TASER events, and arcing in 1%. This equates to a show to discharge ratio of 5:1. The vast majority of TASER discharges (83%) and shows (80%) were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.
- TASER discharge events were typified by verbal threats (60%), physical violence (42%), and assaults with weapons (32%), all against police. Note, people may display more than one type of behaviour at TOR events.
- 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 46, 31, and 24 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 (56%) and/or other drugs (14%). Mental illness (19%) and suicidal behaviours (12%) were the next most common issues.
- Excluding minor probe injuries, in 99% of TASER events there was no subject injury. There were four TASER-related injuries of moderate injury severity.

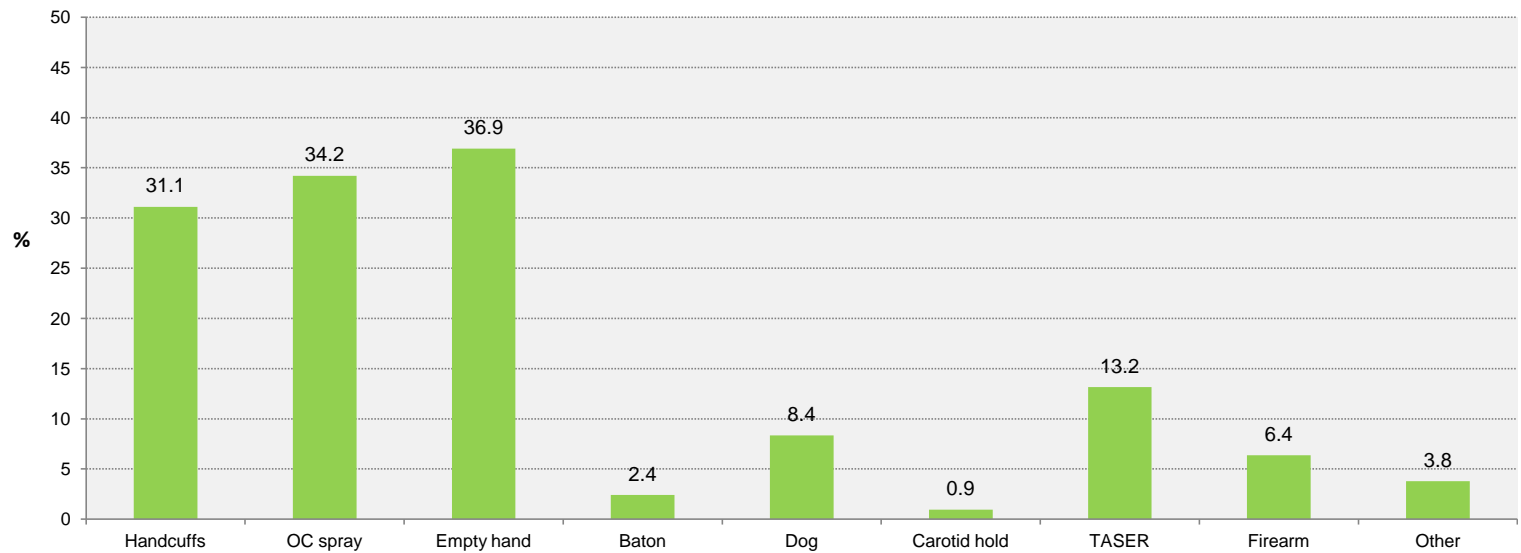
Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district and locality, 1 July to 31 December 2011 ¹

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	Carotid hold	TASER	Firearm	Other
Northland	36	47	37	3	10	1	18	1	3
Waitemata	81	50	97	6	19	1	18	20	11
Auckland City	94	97	112	5	17	0	36	18	16
Counties Manukau	119	140	143	17	16	2	43	31	11
Waikato	43	63	61	9	13	0	27	10	4
Bay of Plenty	81	109	87	5	19	6	45	30	5
Eastern	43	42	49	1	19	0	14	5	4
Central	56	55	78	2	15	2	25	13	6
Wellington	65	93	87	7	37	5	34	12	14
Tasman	34	37	30	1	4	3	16	5	1
Canterbury	78	72	72	1	31	2	23	7	9
Southern	34	35	53	2	5	1	24	4	9
Total	764	840	906	59	205	23	323	156	93
National average	64	70	76	5	17	2	27	13	8
Upper North ²	330	334	389	31	62	4	115	70	41
Lower North	288	362	362	24	103	13	145	70	33
South	146	144	155	4	40	6	63	16	19

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 (n=2,455), nationally, 1 July to 31 December 2011 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 July to 31 December 2011

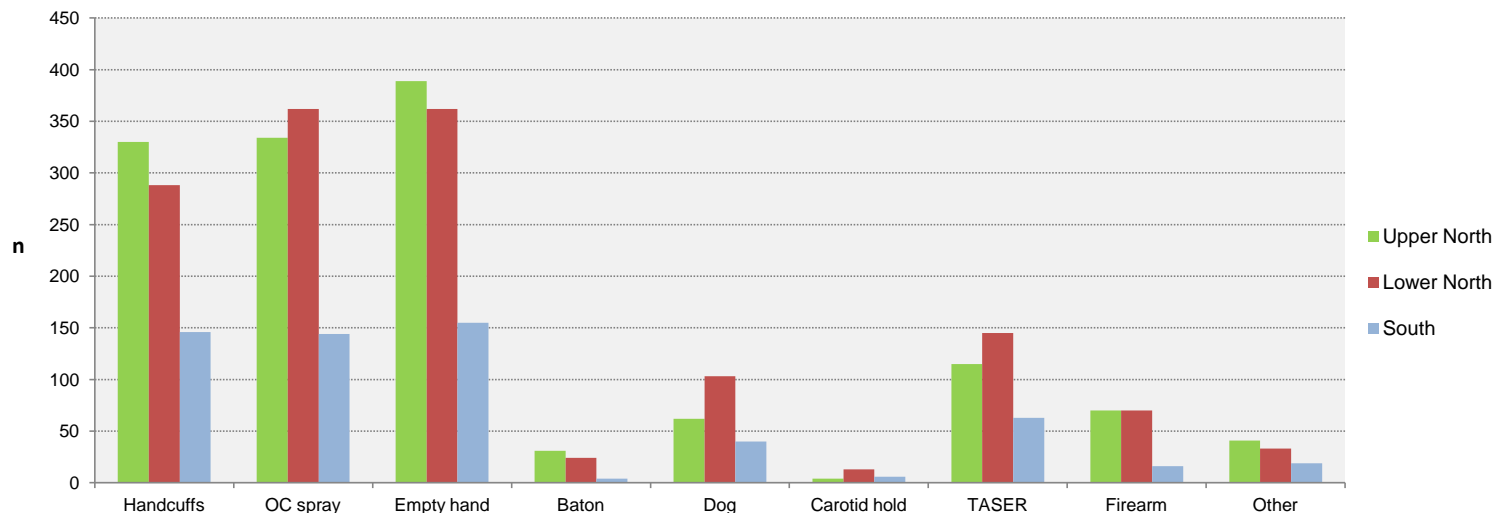


Figure 3. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 1 July to 31 December 2011

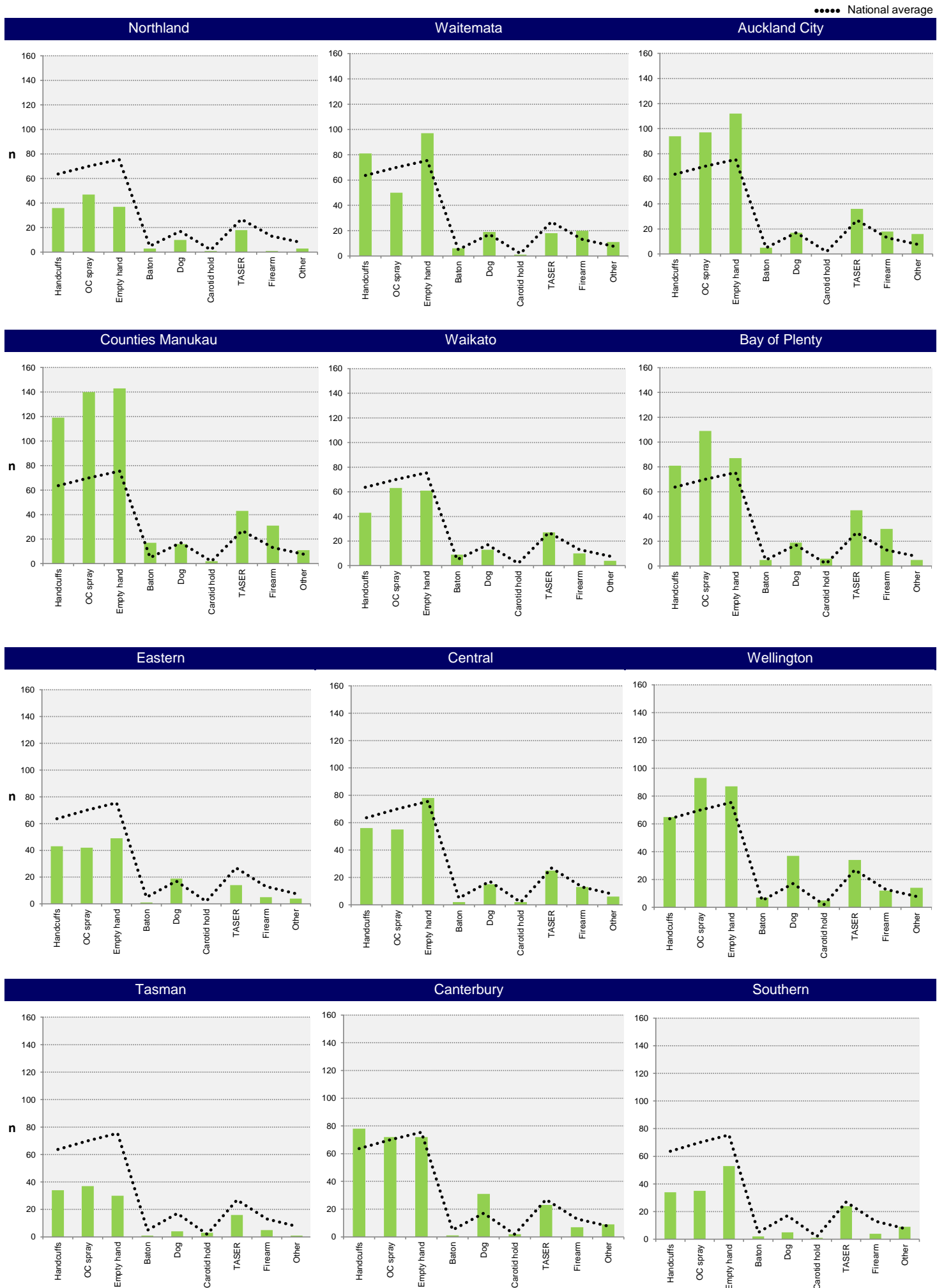


Table 2. TASER TOR events by highest mode of deployment,⁴ by district and locality, 1 July to 31 December 2011

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge ⁵	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ⁶
Northland	6	10	0	2	18	37
Waitemata	2	12	0	4	18	17
Auckland City	6	23	0	7	36	32
Counties Manukau	4	33	1	5	43	31
Waikato	4	17	0	6	27	28
Bay of Plenty	6	32	0	7	45	40
Eastern	0	9	0	5	14	18
Central	6	16	0	3	25	26
Wellington	8	22	0	4	34	33
Tasman	4	10	0	2	16	25
Canterbury	3	15	1	4	23	22
Southern	11	9	0	4	24	31
National	60	208	2	53	323	29
District average	5	17	0.2	4	27	
Upper North	18	78	1	18	115	28
Lower North	24	96	0	25	145	30
South	18	34	1	10	63	26

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, and Table 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 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=323), 1 July to 31 December 2011

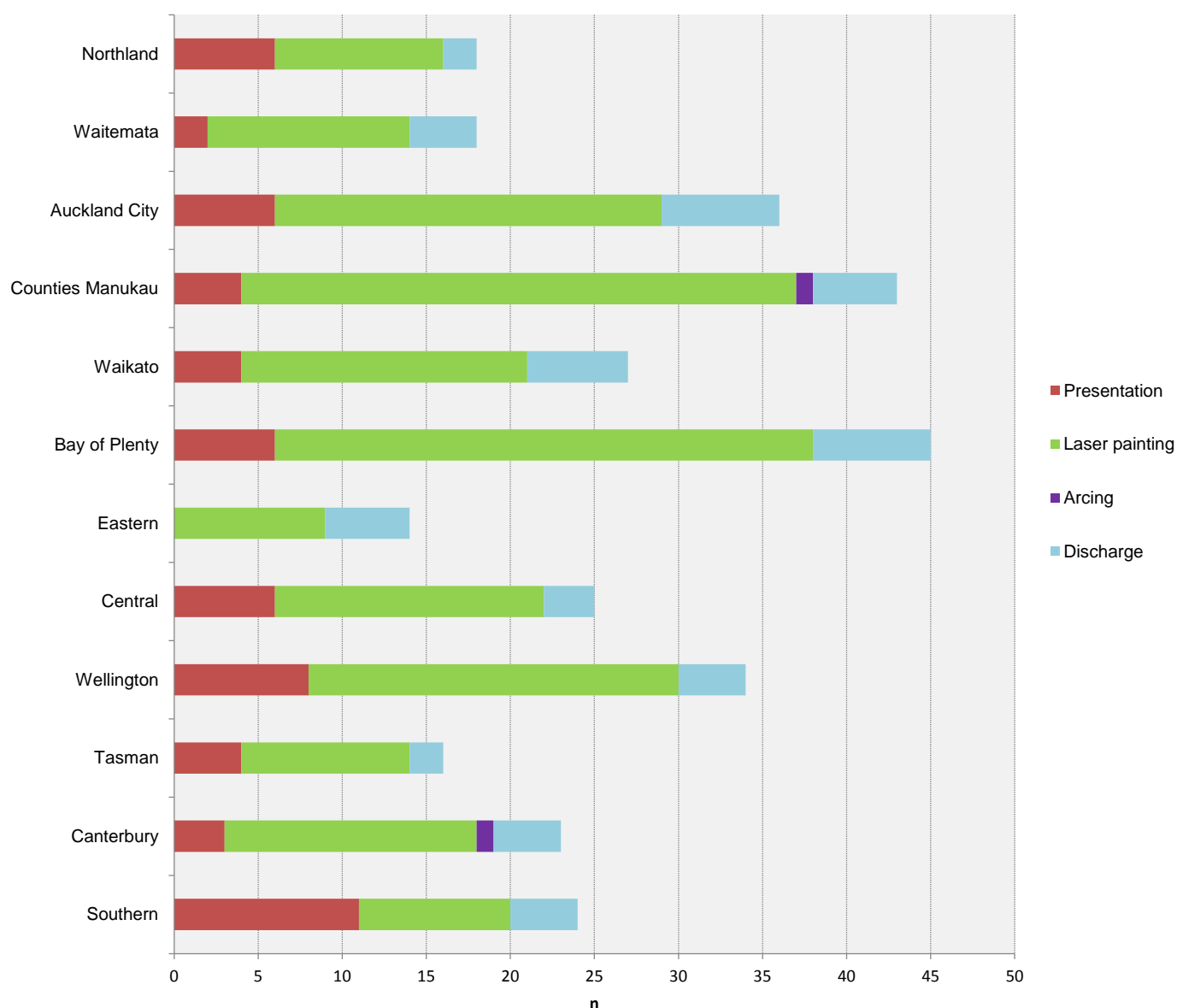


Table 3. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district and area

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge	Total
NORTHLAND					
Far North	1	5	0	1	7
Whangarei	5	5	0	1	11
WAITEMATA					
Rodney	0	1	0	0	1
Waitakere	1	7	0	3	11
North Shore	1	4	0	1	6
Auckland Motorways	0	0	0	0	0
AUCKLAND CITY					
Auckland Central Area	1	2	0	1	4
Auckland East Area	2	15	0	3	20
Auckland West Area	3	6	0	3	12
COUNTIES MANUKAU					
Counties Manukau Central	2	13	0	0	15
Counties Manukau East	0	5	0	1	6
Counties Manukau South	1	7	1	1	10
Counties Manukau West	1	8	0	3	12
WAIKATO					
Hamilton City	1	3	0	2	6
Waikato East	1	4	0	2	7
Waikato West	2	10	0	2	14
BAY OF PLENTY					
Eastern Bay of Plenty	1	4	0	3	8
Rotorua	0	6	0	2	8
Taupo	3	9	0	1	13
Western Bay of Plenty	2	13	0	1	16
EASTERN					
Gisborne	0	4	0	2	6
Napier	0	1	0	2	3
Hastings	0	4	0	1	5
CENTRAL					
Ruapehu	0	1	0	0	1
Palmerston North City	1	3	0	1	5
Palmerston North Rural	1	6	0	1	8
Taranaki Rural	0	2	0	1	3
Wanganui	3	3	0	0	6
New Plymouth	1	1	0	0	2
WELLINGTON					
Wairarapa	1	2	0	0	3
Kapiti-Mana	1	5	0	0	6
Upper Hutt	2	2	0	2	6
Lower Hutt	0	4	0	1	5
Wellington	4	9	0	1	14
TASMAN					
Marlborough	2	3	0	0	5
Nelson Bays	1	3	0	1	5
West Coast	1	4	0	1	6
CANTERBURY					
Northern Canterbury	2	4	0	0	6
Christchurch Central	0	3	0	1	4
Southern Canterbury	1	3	0	2	6
Mid South Canterbury	0	5	1	1	7
SOUTHERN					
Otago Rural	1	0	0	0	1
Dunedin	0	2	0	2	4
Southland	10	7	0	2	19
Total	60	208	2	53	323

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

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	2	0	0	0	0	2
Waitemata	4	0	0	0	0	4
Auckland City	5	2	0	0	0	7
Counties Manukau	2	2	1	0	0	5
Waikato	2	4	0	0	0	6
Bay of Plenty	3	4	0	0	0	7
Eastern	4	1	0	0	0	5
Central	3	0	0	0	0	3
Wellington	3	1	0	0	0	4
Tasman	2	0	0	0	0	2
Canterbury	3	1	0	0	0	4
Southern	4	0	0	0	0	4
Total	37	15	1	0	0	53

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 37 TASER TOR events TASER was discharged once, while in 15 events it was discharged twice, and in one event it was discharged three times; thus, there were 70 discharges at the 53 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	0	4	4
Auckland City	2	7	9
Counties Manukau	6	3	9
Waikato	3	7	10
Bay of Plenty	3	8	11
Eastern	0	6	6
Central	0	3	3
Wellington	2	3	5
Tasman	0	2	2
Canterbury	1	4	5
Southern	2	2	4
Total discharges	19	51	70

Figure 5. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=31)

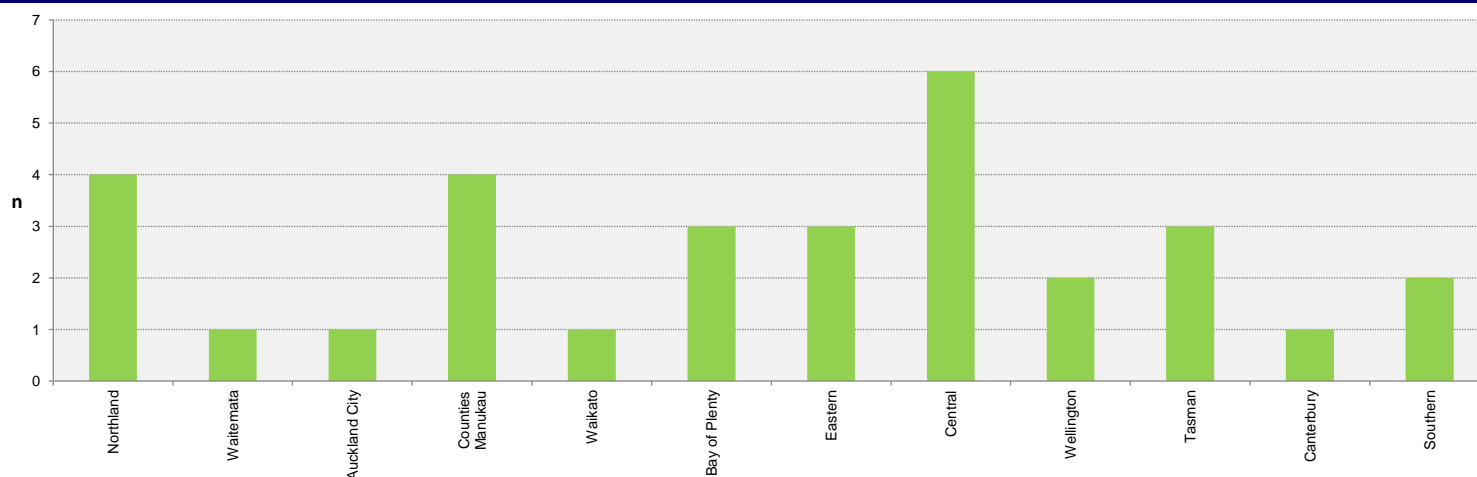


Table 6. TASER TOR events, by work group ⁸

Work group	n
AOS	2
CIB/Enquiries	3
Community Relations	2
Dog Section	3
General Duties Branch	293
Road Policing	5
Rural	8
Other	7
Total	323

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	3
Gang premises	2
Licensed premises	2
Outdoor public area	51
Police premises	0
Police vehicle	2
Residence	203
Street, highway, motorway	70
Other	20
Total	353

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 = 846).

Table 8. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 July to 31 December 2011 ¹⁰

	Shows ¹¹	% of shows	Discharges ¹¹	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Threats towards police	87	32	32	60	119	37
Threats towards non-police	66	24	5	9	71	22
Violence towards police	34	13	22	42	56	17
Violence towards non-police	45	17	11	21	56	17
Spit blood / saliva at police	3	1	4	8	7	2
Weapons used against police	19	7	17	32	36	11
Other (incl. self-harm & weapon possession)	127	47	11	21	138	43
Total	381		102		483	

¹⁰ Table 8 presents subject behaviours displayed at TASER TOR events; eg, in 42% 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%.

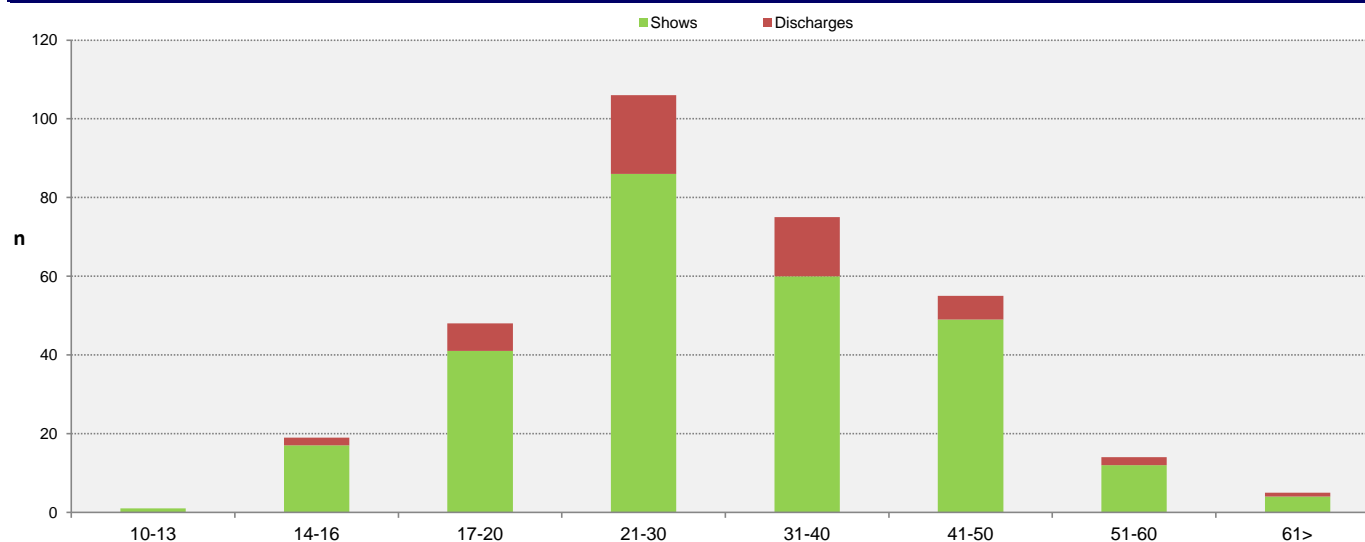
¹¹ TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

Table 9. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 July to 31 December 2011 ¹²

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	49	18	13	25	62	19
Suicidal	28	10	10	19	38	12
Alcohol	149	55	33	62	182	56
Drugs	31	11	14	26	45	14
Excited delirium	12	4	5	9	17	5
History of carrying weapons	63	23	12	23	75	23
History of violence against police	60	22	20	38	80	25
History of violence	108	40	25	47	133	41
Medical condition	8	3	5	9	13	4
Other	39	14	8	15	47	15
Total	547		145		692	

¹² Table 9 presents broader factors relevant to TASER TOR events; eg, in 62% 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 July to 31 December 2011 ¹³



¹³ The youngest person who had TASER discharged against them was aged 16 years, while the oldest person was aged 66.

Table 10. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 July to 31 December 2011

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁴
European	97	36	18	34	115	24
Māori	127	47	26	49	153	31
Pacific Island peoples	44	16	7	13	51	46
Other	2	1	2	4	4	–
Total	270	100	53	100	323	

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 July to 31 December 2011

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁴
Male	257	95	46	87	303	34
Female	13	5	7	13	20	8
Total	270	100	53	100	323	

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	1	11	0	1	8	0	0	0	1	22
Waitemata	11	14	0	1	18	1	1	0	1	47
Auckland City	7	28	1	1	15	2	0	0	1	55
Counties Manukau	6	44	3	3	16	0	0	0	1	73
Waikato	5	18	1	3	13	0	0	0	1	41
Bay of Plenty	11	26	5	1	16	0	1	0	0	60
Eastern	1	16	0	0	16	0	0	0	1	34
Central	3	36	0	0	9	1	1	0	3	53
Wellington	10	26	1	2	32	0	2	0	2	75
Tasman	6	13	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	24
Canterbury	11	17	2	0	29	0	0	0	1	60
Southern	4	18	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	29
Total	76	267	14	12	179	4	5	0	16	573
Upper North	25	97	4	6	57	3	1	0	4	197
Lower North	30	122	7	6	86	1	4	0	7	263
South	21	48	3	0	36	0	0	0	5	113

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=573)

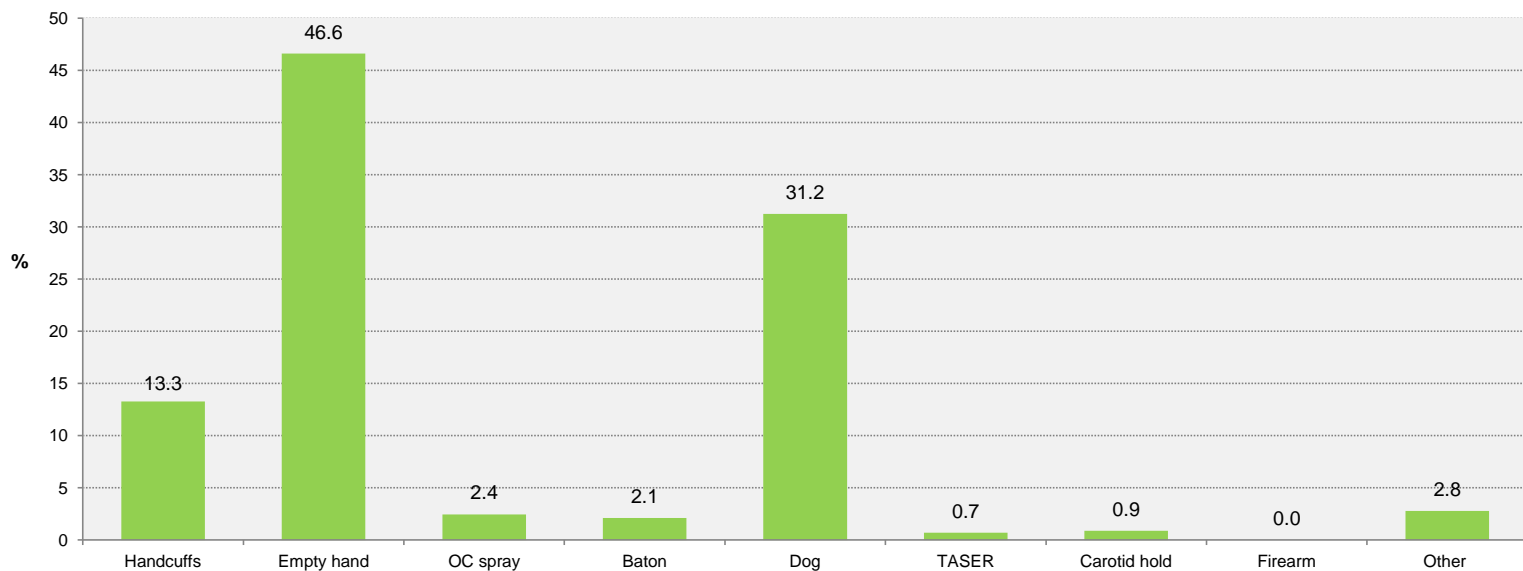


Table 13. Subject injuries resulting from TASER discharges, by severity, and district ¹⁶

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

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	1	0	2
Waitemata	0	1	0	1
Auckland City	0	0	0	0
Counties Manukau	2	1	0	3
Waikato	4	1	0	5
Bay of Plenty	1	1	0	2
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	1	0	0	1
Wellington	0	0	0	0
Tasman	1	0	0	1
Canterbury	0	0	0	0
Southern	1	0	0	1
Total	11	5	0	16

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...

"He [had] a large knife and threatened to cause grievous bodily harm [GBH]... He continued to yell over and over that he knew I was there and he was coming to kill me... He walked up the driveway but I could tell by the way he carried his right hand that he had something in it. He approached me with continuing threats to kill me ... I challenged him with the TASER by presenting it at him and laser painting him... The TASER provided a safe, immediate, and sufficient resolution... When searched in situ, a large boning knife was concealed in his jacket pocket".

"It was reported that there were approximately 20 people gathering on the street for a gang fight... Weapons were involved, including a machete... I saw an unknown male walk directly in front of the patrol vehicle. I saw at the time what I believed to be a knife... I exited the vehicle and immediately drew the TASER. The subject was still in possession of the machete. He ignored the warnings and was subsequently TASERed. My perceived cumulative assessment of the situation was that of death or fear of GBH. Sgt [name] still had his glock drawn, and I believe if the TASER had not worked that would possibly have been the next best tactical option available".

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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