

# New Zealand Police Biannual TASER Report #3

1 July to 31 December, 2012

Tactical Options Research Team

## Introduction

This biannual TASER report pertains to the last six months (1 July to 31 December) 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; 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 2012, TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 562 TOR events, at an average of 94 events per month. Overall, TASER deployment comprised 20% of tactical options used at TOR events.
- Tasman district reported the highest rate of TASER events per 10,000 Police apprehensions (n=81), followed by Central (n=79). Canterbury (n=39) and Southern (n=47) reported the lowest. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.
- In the majority (70%) of TASER events, officers used laser painting as the highest mode of deployment, followed by presentation (17%). Discharge was used in 11% of TASER events, while arcing was used in 1%. This equates to a show to discharge ratio of 8:1. The majority of TASER discharges (77%) and of shows (84%) were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.
- TASER discharge events were typified by verbal threats (53%) and physical violence towards police (42%). Officers were assaulted with weapons in 9% 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 (56%). TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) against Pacific Island peoples, Māori, and European, at 75, 73, and 53 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 (20%). Mental illness (20%) and suicidal behaviours (10%) were also common issues.
- Excluding minor probe injuries, in 99% of TASER events there was no subject injury. There were eight TASER-related injuries. Most (75%; n=6) were of moderate injury severity.

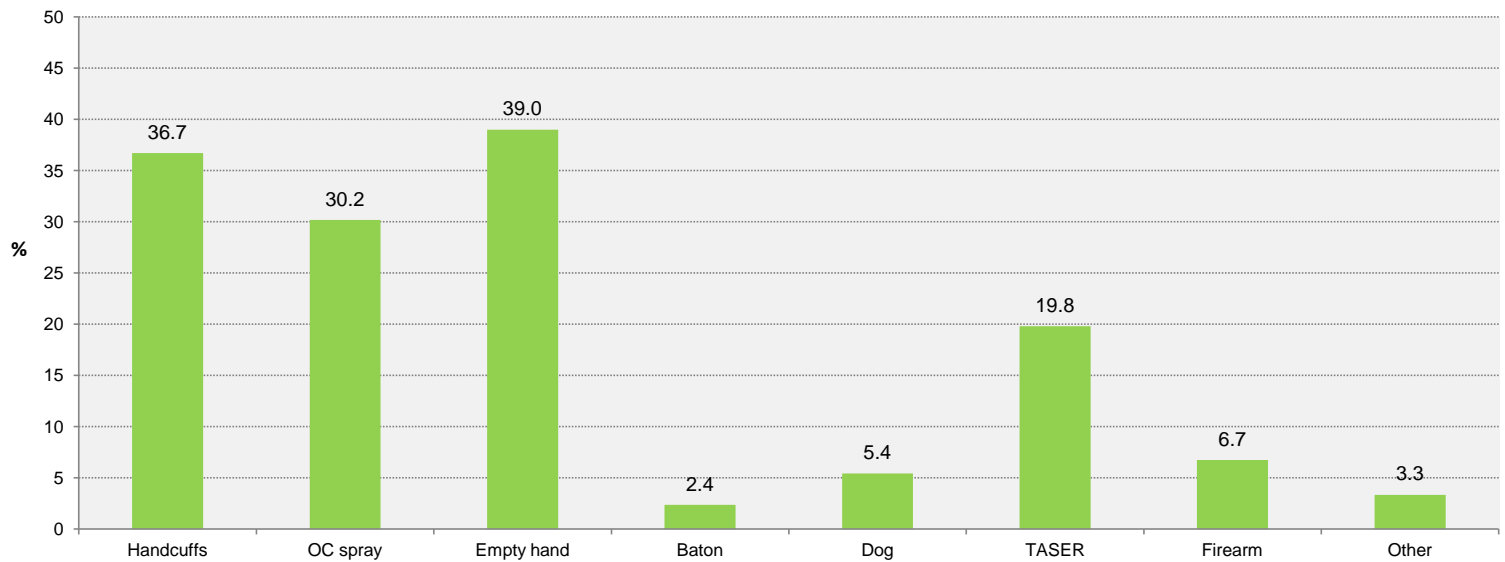
**Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district and locality, 1 July to 31 December 2012 <sup>1</sup>**

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other
Northland	50	52	46	4	6	30	6	7
Waitemata	95	58	95	6	12	56	24	15
Auckland City	112	63	117	10	14	45	25	11
Counties Manukau	161	109	163	12	10	64	41	16
Waikato	63	90	67	4	7	56	13	3
Bay of Plenty	101	101	108	5	14	71	23	7
Eastern	80	88	75	5	3	33	6	5
Central	83	65	95	4	15	55	13	6
Wellington	80	62	80	7	29	44	17	8
Tasman	36	38	38	0	4	36	5	2
Canterbury	105	82	146	5	30	42	11	8
Southern	76	49	77	5	10	30	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1042</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>1107</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>National average</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>
Upper North <sup>2</sup>	418	282	421	32	42	195	96	49
Lower North	407	406	425	25	68	259	72	29
South	217	169	261	10	44	108	23	17

<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=2,838), 1 July 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 July to 31 December 2012**

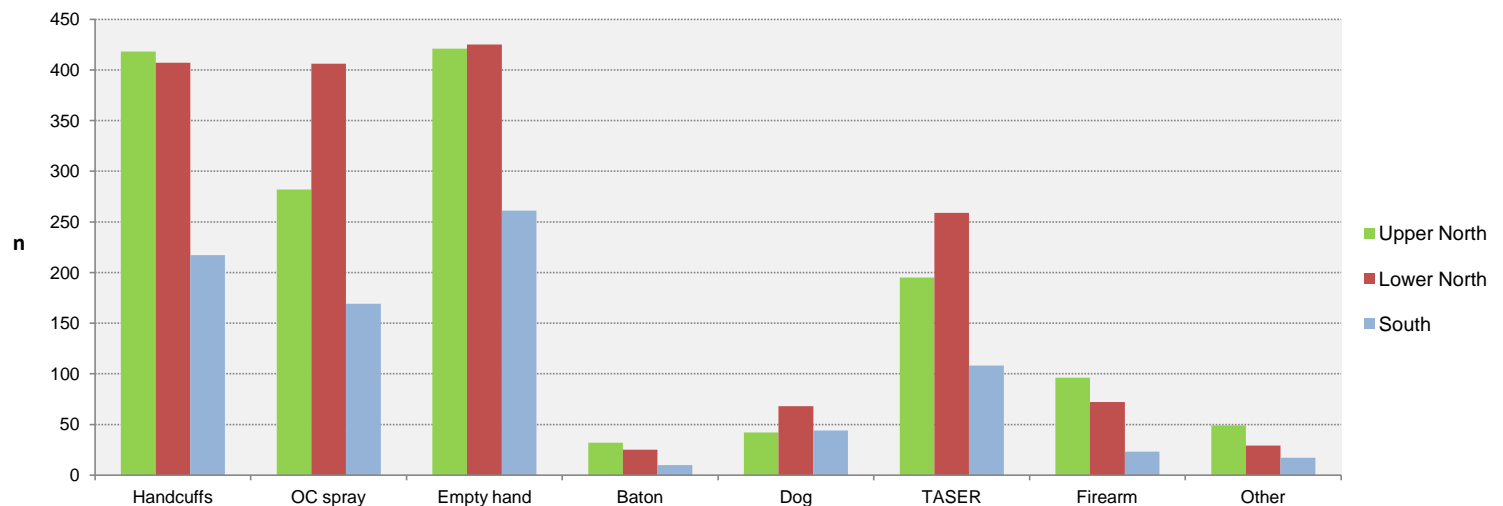
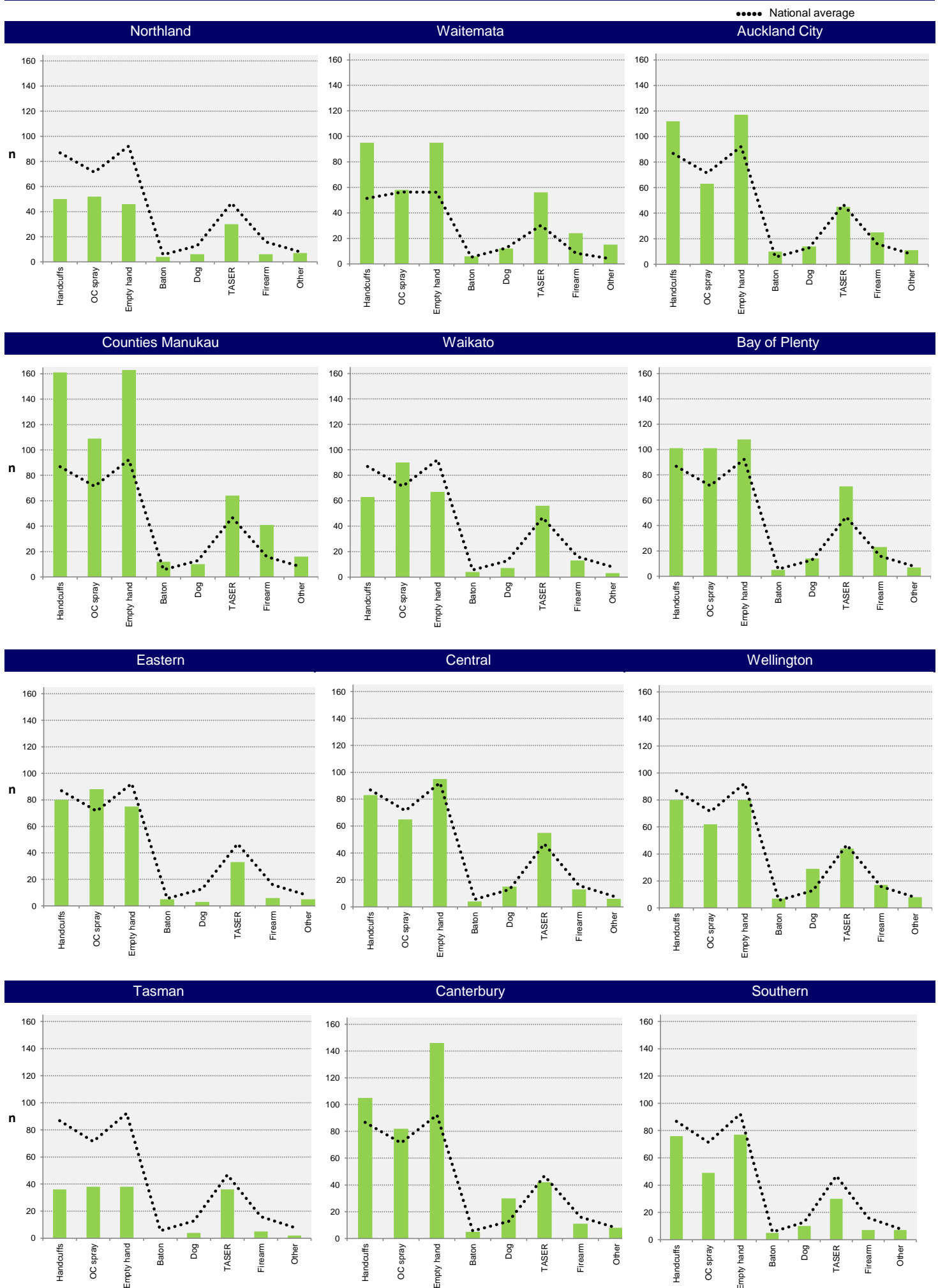


Figure 3. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 1 July to 31 December 2012



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

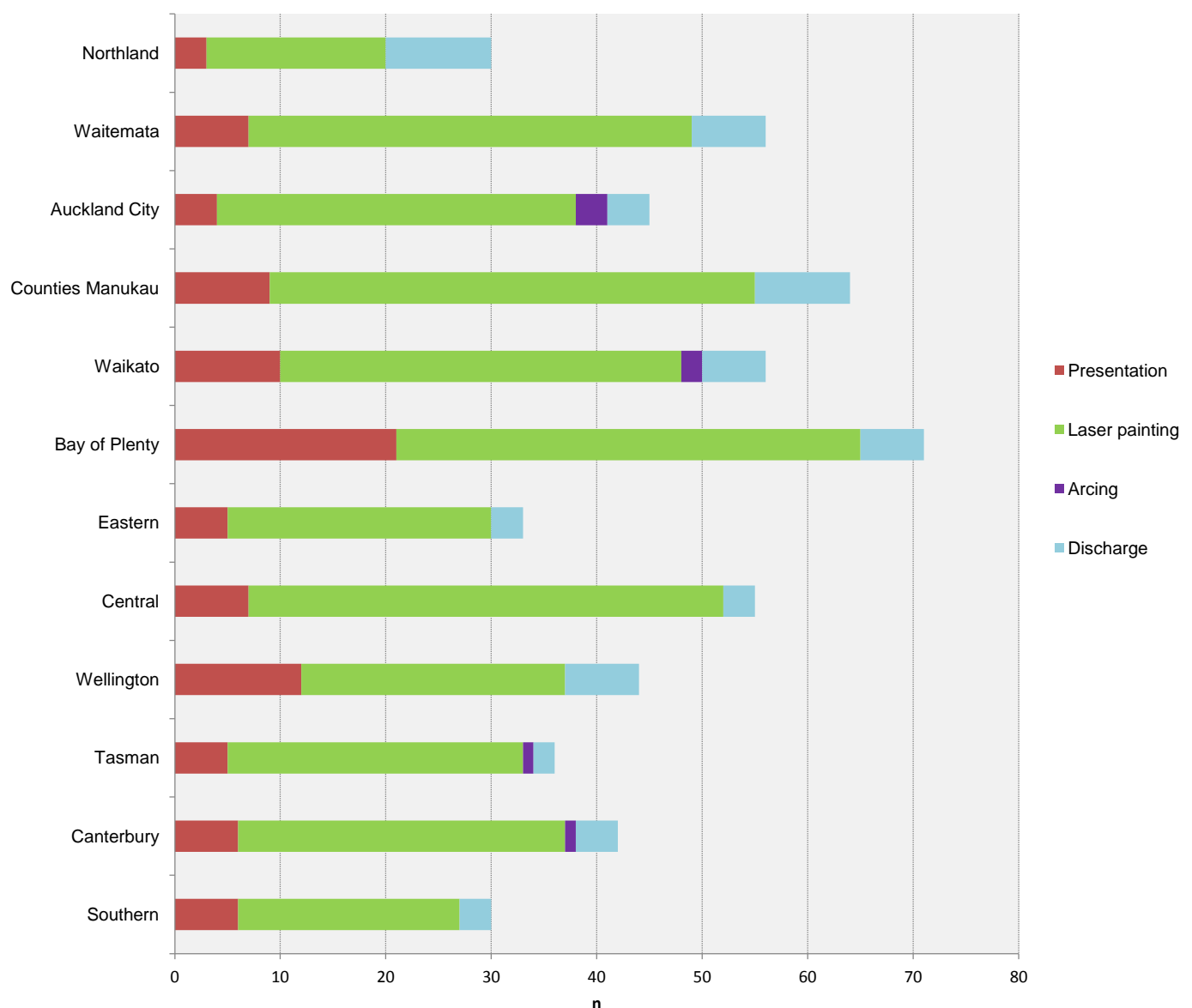
	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge <sup>5</sup>	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>6</sup>
Northland	3	17	0	10	30	69
Waitemata	7	42	0	7	56	75
Auckland City	4	34	3	4	45	53
Counties Manukau	9	46	0	9	64	57
Waikato	10	38	2	6	56	73
Bay of Plenty	21	44	0	6	71	77
Eastern	5	25	0	3	33	59
Central	7	45	0	3	55	79
Wellington	12	25	0	7	44	59
Tasman	5	28	1	2	36	81
Canterbury	6	31	1	4	42	39
Southern	6	21	0	3	30	47
<b>National</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>District average</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>47</b>	
Upper North	23	139	3	30	195	62
Lower North	55	177	2	25	259	70
South	17	80	2	9	108	50

<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, Figure 4, Table 3, and Table 4.

<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 4 and 5).

<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 4. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district (n=562), 1 July to 31 December 2012**



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

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge	Total
<b>NORTHLAND</b>					
Far North	1	6	0	8	15
Whangarei	2	11	0	2	15
<b>WAITEMATA</b>					
Rodney	0	18	0	4	22
Waitakere	3	16	0	1	20
North Shore	3	7	0	1	11
Auckland Motorways	1	1	0	1	3
<b>AUCKLAND CITY</b>					
Auckland Central Area	0	14	0	0	14
Auckland East Area	4	8	1	3	16
Auckland West Area	0	12	2	1	15
<b>COUNTIES MANUKAU</b>					
Counties Manukau Central	2	16	0	3	21
Counties Manukau East	1	8	0	3	12
Counties Manukau South	1	10	0	2	13
Counties Manukau West	5	12	0	1	18
<b>WAIKATO</b>					
Hamilton City	6	18	0	2	26
Waikato East	3	6	1	1	11
Waikato West	1	14	1	3	19
<b>BAY OF PLENTY</b>					
Eastern Bay of Plenty	2	14	0	2	18
Rotorua	7	12	0	0	19
Taupo	4	11	0	2	17
Western Bay of Plenty	8	7	0	2	17
<b>EASTERN</b>					
Tairāwhiti	1	9	0	0	10
Hawkes bay	4	16	0	3	23
<b>CENTRAL</b>					
Ruapehu	0	2	0	1	3
Palmerston North City	3	12	0	0	15
Palmerston North Rural	2	18	0	2	22
Taranaki Rural	1	3	0	0	4
Wanganui	1	6	0	0	7
New Plymouth	0	4	0	0	4
<b>WELLINGTON</b>					
Hutt Valley	8	15	0	3	26
Kapiti-Mana	1	5	0	2	8
Wairarapa	1	2	0	0	3
Wellington	2	3	0	2	7
<b>TASMAN</b>					
Marlborough	1	6	0	0	7
Nelson Bays	3	7	1	2	13
West Coast	1	15	0	0	16
<b>CANTERBURY</b>					
Northern Canterbury	5	10	0	2	17
Christchurch Central	1	12	1	1	15
Southern Canterbury	0	3	0	1	4
Mid South Canterbury	0	6	0	0	6
<b>SOUTHERN</b>					
Otago Rural	0	3	0	2	5
Dunedin	1	11	0	0	12
Southland	5	7	0	1	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>562</b>

**Table 4. Number of TASER discharges at each TASER TOR event, by district <sup>7</sup>**

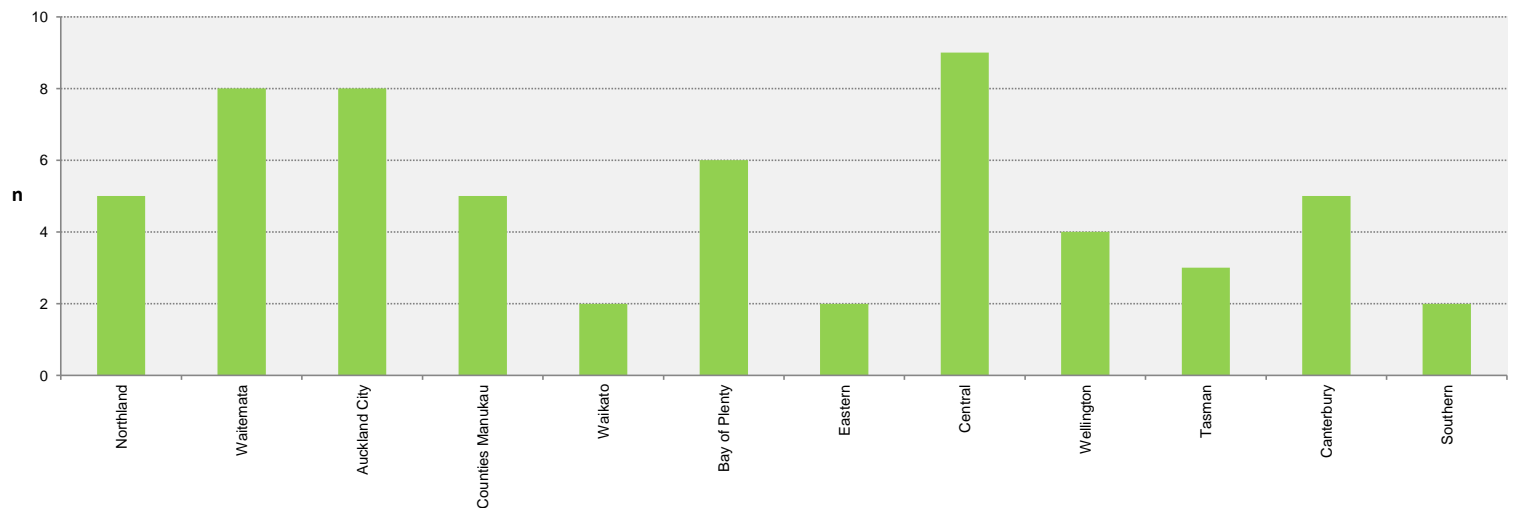
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	8	1	1	0	0	10
Waitemata	4	2	1	0	0	7
Auckland City	3	1	0	0	0	4
Counties Manukau	8	1	0	0	0	9
Waikato	2	2	0	1	1	6
Bay of Plenty	3	3	0	0	0	6
Eastern	2	1	0	0	0	3
Central	1	2	0	0	0	3
Wellington	4	2	1	0	0	7
Tasman	1	1	0	0	0	2
Canterbury	2	2	0	0	0	4
Southern	3	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>64</b>

<sup>7</sup> 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 41 TASER TOR events TASER was discharged once, while in 18 events it was discharged twice, in three 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 95 discharges at the 64 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	11	13
Waitemata	3	8	11
Auckland City	3	2	5
Counties Manukau	3	7	10
Waikato	6	9	15
Bay of Plenty	1	8	9
Eastern	3	1	4
Central	0	5	5
Wellington	2	9	11
Tasman	0	3	3
Canterbury	3	3	6
Southern	0	3	3
<b>Total discharges</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>95</b>

**Figure 5. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=59)**



**Table 6. TASER TOR events, by work group <sup>8</sup>**

Work group	n
AOS	2
CIB/Enquiries	11
Community Relations	2
Dog Section	2
General Duties Branch	487
Road Policing	31
Rural	14
Other	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>562</b>

<sup>8</sup> 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 <sup>9</sup>**

Location type	n
Commercial property	10
Gang premises	5
Non-police vehicle	5
Outdoor public area	87
Police premises	8
Police vehicle	2
Residence	327
Street, highway, motorway	116
Other	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>597</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=363).

**Table 8. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 July 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	172	35	34	53	206	37
Threaten non-police	113	23	13	20	126	22
Violence towards police	62	12	27	42	89	16
Violence towards non-police	96	19	7	11	103	18
Weapon used against police	47	9	6	9	53	9
Had weapon but did not use it	18	4	1	2	19	3
Other aggressive behaviours	46	9	11	17	57	10
Resist and / or obstruct police	54	11	2	3	56	10
Evade and / or escape police	26	5	4	6	30	5
Threatened or actual self-harm	16	3	4	6	20	4
Other	69	14	4	6	73	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>		<b>113</b>		<b>832</b>	

<sup>10</sup> 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%.

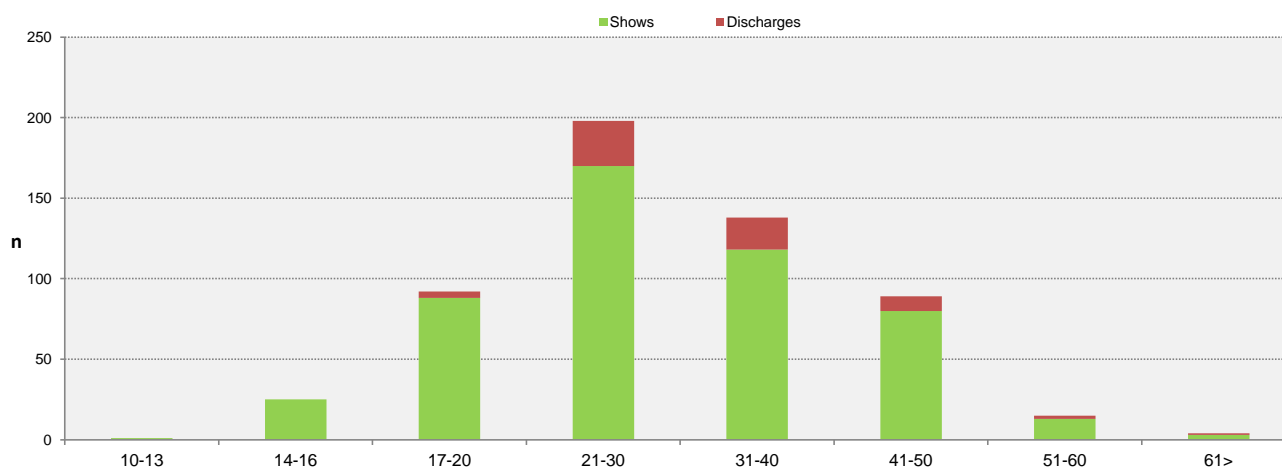
<sup>11</sup> TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

**Table 9. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 July to 31 December 2012 <sup>12</sup>**

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	103	21	11	17	114	20
Suicidal	49	10	9	14	58	10
Alcohol	277	56	41	64	318	57
Drugs	96	19	18	28	114	20
Excited delirium	34	7	5	8	39	7
History of carrying weapons	139	28	25	39	164	29
History of violence against police	123	25	25	39	148	26
History of violence	229	46	36	56	265	47
Medical condition	16	3	1	2	17	3
Other	67	13	5	8	72	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>1133</b>		<b>176</b>		<b>1309</b>	

<sup>12</sup> Table 9 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 6. TASER TOR events by age range, 1 July 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 10. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 July to 31 December 2012**

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>14</sup>
European	185	37	17	27	202	53
Māori	245	49	36	56	281	73
Pacific Island peoples	54	11	11	17	65	75
Other	14	3	0	0	14	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>562</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 10 does not account for subject behaviours at TOR events.

**Table 11. TASER TOR events, by sex, 1 July to 31 December 2012**

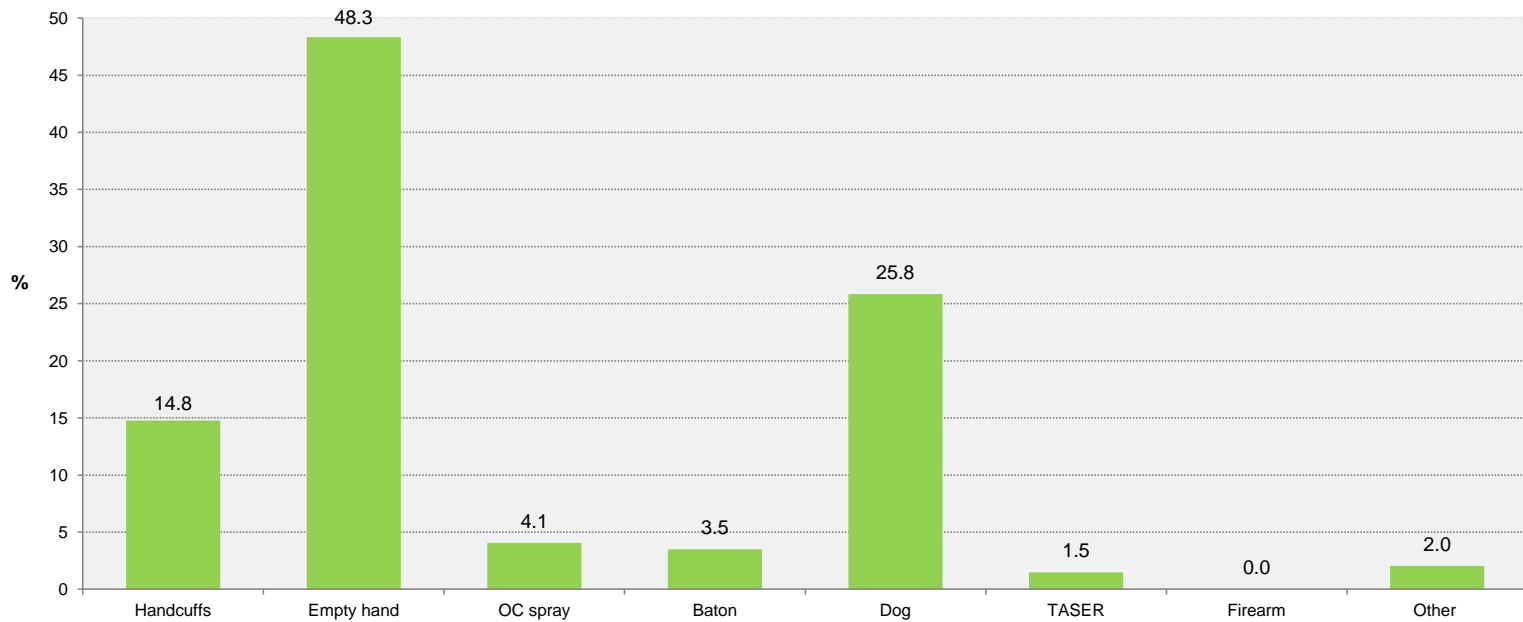
	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions <sup>14</sup>
Male	469	94	59	92	528	74
Female	28	6	5	8	33	18
Unknown	1	0.2	0	0	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>562</b>	

**Table 12. Number of tactical options used resulting in subject injuries, by district and locality <sup>15</sup>**

	Handcuffs	Empty hand	OC spray	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Total	%
Northland	7	17	0	0	6	1	0	0	31	6
Waitemata	4	21	3	2	12	2	0	2	46	8
Auckland City	8	23	2	2	13	0	0	1	49	9
Counties Manukau	13	43	4	4	9	4	0	0	77	14
Waikato	1	11	3	0	6	0	0	1	22	4
Bay of Plenty	11	28	3	1	12	0	0	2	57	11
Eastern	7	18	3	3	2	0	0	1	34	6
Central	7	24	1	2	12	0	0	2	48	9
Wellington	6	15	0	3	28	0	0	1	53	10
Tasman	5	8	2	0	4	1	0	0	20	4
Canterbury	4	37	1	1	28	0	0	1	72	13
Southern	7	17	0	1	8	0	0	0	33	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>100</b>
Upper North	32	104	9	8	40	7	0	3	203	37
Lower North	32	96	10	9	60	0	0	7	214	39
South	16	62	3	2	40	1	0	1	125	23

<sup>15</sup> 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=542)**



**Table 13. Subject injuries resulting from TASER discharges, by severity, and district <sup>16</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	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	1	0	1
Canterbury	0	0	0	0
Southern	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>

<sup>16</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 14. Staff injuries at TASER TOR events, by severity, and district <sup>17</sup>**

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	1	1	2
Waitemata	2	0	0	2
Auckland City	4	0	0	4
Counties Manukau	1	0	0	1
Waikato	3	4	0	7
Bay of Plenty	4	0	0	4
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	1	0	0	1
Wellington	0	0	0	0
Tasman	1	0	0	1
Canterbury	2	0	0	2
Southern	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>

<sup>17</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.



## View from the frontline...

"We received job details from Comms that a male had assaulted a female and was swinging a machete at people. When we arrived one female yelled that the male with the machete is inside the house and her children are upstairs. Given this information, I believed it was necessary to enter the address immediately in order to ensure the safety of the children and disarm the male. I considered my tactical options and believed TASER was the most appropriate use of force. I knocked loudly and announced that it was the Police. I raised the TASER and when the male opened the door he immediately raised his hands to his head. I could see he was not in immediate possession of the machete, so dropped the TASER to my side and pointed it to the ground".

"Police were called to a party because of a complaint of disorder and excessive noise. Noise control had already issued an abatement notice. Once in the garage [to seize the stereo] a male started to shout at Police to leave the stereo alone. As I reached to unplug the stereo, he grabbed my stab vest, leaned back, and punched me in the side of the head. I sprayed him [OC spray] directly in the face. Other officers tried to grab him but one of the party goers turned off the garage light. I felt more heavy blows to my head. It was clear he was intent on causing serious harm or death to Police. I feared for my safety. I saw him fighting with the other [Police] unit and removed the TASER and activated the TASER hitting him. He instantly dropped to the ground".

## 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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