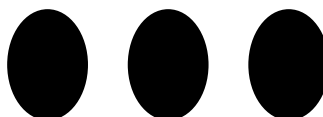




New Taser Fires Three Shots

Taser International demonstrated its new Taser X3 on July 27 at the company's annual conference for law enforcement personnel. According to a July 28 Fox News story, Taser International Chairman Tom Smith and CEO Rick Smith, Tom's brother, showed off the stun gun's ability to fire three times without reloading.



The current Tasers used by more than 14,000 law enforcement agencies around the country can only fire once and then need to be reloaded. This obviously creates quite a problem if the single shot misses its mark or if there are multiple targets that need to be stunned. The Taser X3's three-shot capability "is as big a step as when firearms went from a muzzle loader to the revolver," according to Rick Smith. "If I was a cop I'd want to carry one."

Both the old and new Tasers still shoot two barbed wires that deliver approximately 6 watts of current for several seconds, but the X3 has three sets of wires. The wires on the new model give it a range of 35 feet, and while the device looks bulky at 2.5 inches wide and seven inches tall, it weighs less than two pounds. But the extra two shots of the X3 do carry a heavy price tag: \$1,799 compared to \$799 for single-shot models.

The higher price of the Taser X3 brings with it greater flexibility and more advanced technology though. Having three shots means that more than one shot can be taken at a single target, either because a shot misses or the target is not completely immobilized, or one shot can be made at up to three different targets. This could undoubtedly mean the difference between life and death for an officer or a suspect when the officer needs to subdue someone resistant to shock due to drugs or alcohol, or when the officer is outnumbered and could only otherwise resort to lethal force. Fox News reports that the X3 will also "allow for greater accountability because it has sensors that measure each discharge," and the data collected "can then be downloaded and analyzed."

This accountability data collection does not allay the concerns of some human rights groups. Amnesty International, for example, says 351 people have died in the United States after being Tased, and doctors found a link between the shock and the cause of death in 50 of these cases. Fox News notes that "Taser spokesman Steve Tuttle said the company has won 96 of 97 wrongful-death and product liability lawsuits filed against it and is appealing after being found 15 percent responsible in the one suit it lost." While there are legitimate concerns about Tasers being abused, when Tasers aren't available or aren't used, lethal force is often the only other option. In these cases, the suspect is even more likely to be seriously injured or killed, as a recent incident in Auckland, New Zealand, proves.

"Family asks why Taser wasn't used" ran the headline of a July 28 TVNZ [online article](#) about a July 27



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on July 29, 2009

incident during which Auckland police had no choice but to shoot actor Rob Mokaraka after he came at them with knives and a meat cleaver. According to TVNZ, "Mokaraka is in a stable condition under police guard in Auckland Hospital," but his family understandably wonders why a Taser wasn't used instead of a firearm. The *New Zealand Herald* explained why in an [online story](#) dated July 29. The Auckland police have few officers trained to use Tasers, and they are not on duty 24/7. There was simply no time to get an experienced, Taser-equipped officer to the scene.

The *Herald* noted that even Campaign Against the Taser spokeswoman Marie Dyhrberg had to concede that shooting Mokaraka with a Taser would have been preferable: "Where possible it is of course much better to use a Taser than something lethal, but there will be times where a Taser can't be used and they have to resort to lethal use. So long as it's all open and transparent then that's what they'll have to do."

Mokaraka has so far survived a three-hour surgery to remove the police officer's bullet.

Photo: AP Images



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