

EL DORADO COUNTY EMS AGENCY

FIELD POLICIES

Effective: July 2009

Reviewed: NA

Revised: July 2016, 2018

Scope: BLS and ALS Personnel



EMS Agency Medical Director

MANAGEMENT OF TASER/STUN DEVICE PATIENTS

PURPOSE:

This policy shall be followed when evaluating taser/stun device patients.

DEFINITIONS:

Taser Device – means any device which is powered by electrical charging units, such as batteries, and which fires one or several barbs attached to a length of wire and which, upon hitting a human, can send out a current capable of disrupting person's nervous system in such a manner as to render him incapable of normal functioning.

Stun Device – means any weapon or other device (except taser devices), which emits an electrical charge or current, intended to temporarily or permanently disable a person.

POLICY:

- 1) All Taser Device patients that have been evaluated by El Dorado County EMS Personnel **shall be transported** to the most appropriate hospital for barb removal and further medical evaluation to rule out any underlying serious medical conditions.
 - a) Consider the potential for Sudden Unexpected Death Syndrome - the vast majority of patients that have died in police custody have shown signs of Excited Delirium.

Excited Delirium - a state in which a person is in a psychotic and extremely agitated state. Due to extreme over function of organs, patient can develop Multiple Organ Dysfunction Syndrome (MODS).
- 2) Any Stun Device patient that has been shocked in any "core" area (i.e., head, neck, thorax, or abdomen) shall be transported to most appropriate hospital for further medical evaluation to rule out any underlying serious medical conditions.
- 3) Patient management includes:
 - a) ABCs/EKG/vital signs must be continuously monitored.
 - b) Check for associated injuries.
 - c) For situations where ingestion of toxic substance may be suspected give activated charcoal per protocol. If the patient has a GCS of <15 use the coma / altered state of consciousness protocol.
 - d) Leave the barb(s) in place (the wire between the taser device and the patient may be cut to allow for ease of movement and/or treatment.
 - e) If Taser barbs interfere with treatment, they may be removed:
 - Verify wires to the barb(s) have been disconnected from device
 - Place one hand on the patient in the area where the barb is embedded and stabilized the skin surrounding the puncture site. With hemostats or equivalent tool, pull barb straight out in one fluid motion.
 - Follow law enforcement direction regarding the preservation or disposal of Taser barb
 - Refer to Routine Medical Care for bleeding control
- 4) For situations where a law enforcement officer requests a field medical evaluation for a taser/stun patient, the officer shall be advised of this policy by the EMS Personnel and the base station shall be contacted if further assistance is required. Refer to Physical Restraint Policy

- 5) For patients that are under arrest, a law enforcement officer should accompany the patient to the hospital. Restraints applied by Law enforcement require the officer to remain available at the scene or during transport to remove or adjust the restraints for patient safety.