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Police: Cocaine taken prior to death

By Craig Garretson
Post staff reporter

A 27-year-old Forest Park man who died soon after Hamilton police stunned him with a Taser Monday morning had swallowed crack cocaine a few hours earlier, police said Tuesday.

Marvin Hendrix was feeling sick Monday morning and called for help. But he began fighting with Hamilton Fire Department paramedics after they arrived, who called for Hamilton police. Hendrix was subdued after a struggle and

being hit twice with a Taser, police said.

He went into cardiac arrest in the ambulance and was pronounced dead at Fort Hamilton Hospital.

A 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ by $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch tied plastic bag was found in Hendrix's small intestine during an autopsy Tuesday, said Dr. Richard Burkhardt, the Butler County Coroner. He said analysis of the plastic bag and a toxicology report on Hendrix are pending.

Burkhardt also said Hendrix may have had heart dis-

ease. He said it will be four to six weeks before the cause of death can be determined.

Police investigators said Hendrix told a friend he had swallowed an "eight ball" - one-eighth of an ounce of crack cocaine - so police wouldn't find it during a traffic stop early Monday morning.

Police records show Hendrix was cited for driving under a suspended license and his car impounded at 1:47 a.m., but he was released and told to walk home.

Man's drug reading 'off the scale'

Taser used to subdue him; death followed

By Janice Morse

The Cincinnati Enquirer

HAMILTON - A Forest Park man who died after police used a stun device on him last week had high levels of cocaine in his blood and urine, the Butler County coroner said Wednesday.

Test results for Marvin Hendrix, 27, were "off the scale," Dr. Richard P. Burkhardt said, adding that a plastic bag containing cocaine had also been found in Mr. Hendrix's small intestine.

Mr. Hendrix died Dec. 17 soon after Hamilton police stunned him with a Taser. Specifics of the incident's timing were unavailable Wednesday.

Whether the Taser played a significant role in Mr. Hendrix's death remains under investigation, Dr. Burkhardt said. It could take up to six weeks for laboratory test results and other analyses to be completed.

City police have not finished probing the incident, although a preliminary investigation showed that Sgt. Dan Pratt's use of the Taser appeared to be in compliance with departmental procedures, said Officer Don Taylor, Hamilton police spokesman. Sgt. Pratt returned to normal duty after a brief administrative leave.

Investigators say Mr. Hendrix apparently swallowed a bag of cocaine to



Hendrix

hide it from police during a traffic stop several hours before he died. He later called for emergency aid, saying he was feeling ill.

When paramedics arrived, Mr. Hendrix struggled with them and with police, so Sgt. Pratt used the Taser to subdue him.

Mr. Hendrix went into cardiac arrest in the ambulance en route to Fort Hamilton Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Mr. Hendrix has twice served state prison terms for drug offenses, records show. He was last released in January 1999 after serving about three years for drug trafficking and carrying a concealed weapon.

Hundreds of police agencies, including Cincinnati, use Taser. Hamilton police began using the Air Taser in October.

The Air Taser uses a cartridge to fire dart-like probes attached to wires. When the probes contact a person, the wires deliver battery-powered electrical impulses.

The manufacturer, Taser International of Scottsdale, Ariz., says similar devices have been used for more than 20 years and "no deaths have ever been directly attributed to the Taser."