



Six stun guns added to arsenal

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Eight AA batteries, a ball of wire and two metal darts.

The items may not seem powerful on their own.

But used together, they pack enough punch to drop a grown man to the ground and make him scream.

It's called a Taser stun gun, and it's the newest addition to the

[Bellevue Police Department's](#) (WA) arsenal of nonlethal weapons - tools that aim to subdue suspects before officers have to draw their guns.

Bellevue's other nonlethal weapons include aerosol canisters that can shoot pepper gas into houses or cars where someone is barricaded inside. Other law enforcement agencies, including Omaha's, use guns that shoot pepper balls to stop suspects.

"With these things out there, we can say we've done everything we could to prevent from killing someone," said Bellevue Deputy Chief John Stacey.

The M26 Advanced Taser, a type of stun gun, works - and looks - like a standard police handgun. But instead of bullets, it fires two metal darts that stick into a suspect's skin or clothing and deliver a five-second electrical shock. The 50,000-volt jolt of electricity immobilizes muscles and forces a person to the ground in less than a second, said Bellevue Officer Steve Hatfield, the department's training coordinator.

The shock feels like a mix between a strong shock of static electricity and your foot falling asleep, said Stacey, one of several Bellevue officers who have tested the Tasers on themselves.

"It makes you scream," he said. "You can't help it. The sound just comes out."

The shock is less powerful than the charge delivered by defibrillator paddles, and the effects wear off quickly, Hatfield said.

The Bellevue Police Department has six Tasers, which should be ready to use soon. The department is waiting for more equipment and then will train officers to use the weapons.

A Taser costs \$400, and each dart cartridge is about \$18, Hatfield said. Bellevue's Police-Citizen's Advisory Council bought four of the Tasers, and the other two were paid for by the city, he said.

Stun guns are being used by increasing numbers of law enforcement agencies, and now some airlines are interested in the weapons, too.

This week,

[United Airlines](#) announced it had ordered 1,000 Taser stun guns to stash in its cockpits so pilots can fend off potential hijackers.

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