

Guidelines for investigating EMD*/CED*/Taser® deaths

- Performance of a complete autopsy of the scope usually performed for deaths in-custody.
- Comprehensive postmortem toxicology, specifically including tests for alcohol, nervous system stimulants, common drugs of abuse, anti-seizure drugs, and therapeutic drugs often prescribed for psychiatric disorders.
- Measurement of the thickness of the anterior chest wall from the skin to the rear of the pre-pericardial sternum at intercostal space between the left 4th and 5th ribs.
- Measurement of the thickness of clothing in the area(s) where CED darts or prongs were applied.
- Documentation of the CED dart's barb length(s).
- Consideration of unusual or atypical current flow paths, such as body to ground, body to water, body to metal etc..
- Determination of the nature of any other forms of subdual or restraint that were employed in the case in question.
- Utilization of appropriate consultants such as cardiologists, cardiac pathologists, and neuropathologists as needed.

Also, examine the specific information related to the CED.

- A time line of all events with attempts to verify, to the extent possible, the accuracy of the dates and times of reported events, with specific emphasis on the interval between CED use, unresponsiveness, and death.
- Clarification as to whether the CED was used in drive stun and/or cartridge mode(s).
- Recent activities of the subject prior to the incident.
- The emotional state of the subject.
- The subject's medical conditions determined by medical history taking, medical record review, and medical conditions determined at autopsy.
- The subject's drug use history including both prescription and illicit drugs as well as alcohol.
- Specific inquiry into the subject's cardiac history including review of any electrocardiograms or other cardiac function or laboratory tests which have been performed in the past.
- Specific inquiry to the subject's seizure history to rule out history of seizures or to clarify the nature of a past seizure disorder.
- Review of witness accounts, police reports, use of force reports, emergency medical services records, medical and psychiatric records, and any videos, photographs, or digital images of the events.
- When possible, darts should not be removed from the decedent's body or clothing.
- Measure and document body and ambient temperature taken at the scene and other locations such as the hospital.
- If death occurs after arrival at a hospital, obtain blood drawn upon arrival at the hospital so it may be tested for intoxicants, if needed.
- Review information downloaded from the CED with special emphasis on number and duration of discharges over the time interval involved.
- Investigate the subject's place of residence and recent activities to determine if additional medical history or evidence of drug use exist. This may require the coordination of the Medical Examiner/Coroner with law enforcement.

*EMD – Electro Muscular Disruption; CED – Conducted Energy Devices

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