

Minimum standards for Tasers needed

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Language barrier cited in man's

Taser death

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The recent death of a man in Vancouver, who died after being subdued by a Taser, should raise issues and concerns. Minimum standards for the efficacy and use of Tasers must be developed. Relying completely on manufacturer specifications is completely unacceptable.

A framework to establish priorities and bring the best Canadian and international practices together to focus on standards for protecting first responders and the public is critical.

An important Canadian study in 2005 supported the use of Tasers and found that their advantages far outweigh their dangers. It said the risks are low but manageable, but police and the public need to be more aware of these risks.

Certainly, establishing minimum standards would be a step in the right direction to allay fears and concerns.

That study was conducted by the Canadian Police Research Centre, under the auspices of the National Research Council of Canada. The Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada, the Schizophrenia Society of Canada and the Canada Safety Council participated in the study. Third-party participants were required to ensure that committee membership was balanced and the public interest was well represented.

Emile Therien, Past-President, Canada Safety Council, Ottawa

It appears that many police forces have been duped by the manufacturer of Taser guns into believing that these devices are harmless. The recent death of a traveller at the Vancouver airport is another tragic event in the long list of related tragedies. It's reported that more than 300 people in North America have died after being Tasered. When will it stop?

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