



## University of Iowa police yet to draw, fire TASER guns

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The Air Taser brand stun guns that the University of Iowa purchased earlier this spring have remained in officers' holsters since the school's police force started carrying the weapons in May, 2002.

To date, UI police officers have neither fired nor drawn a Taser outside of training sessions.

"We've had no incidents so far, and I hope it stays that way," said Chuck Green, UI director of public safety.

In January, the Iowa State Board of Regents unanimously approved a proposal from UI, Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa to arm campus police with the weapons.

At UI, 31 of 46 officers carry stun guns. The weapon uses compressed nitrogen to shoot two metal probes up to 21 feet. When the probes make contact with the target the Taser transmits 26 watts of electricity along connecting wires. The initial pulse lasts five seconds and can penetrate through two inches of clothing.

Both UI Student Government and Staff Council voted overwhelmingly in favor of equipping officers with the weapons. Meanwhile, the UI Faculty Senate approved the measure in a divided 24-18 vote.

It cost the department \$16,120 to equip its officers with the weapons. The UI Parents Association paid \$12,000 of the total price tag.

Although there has not been a reason to draw the Tasers, Green said he thinks the weapons have created a greater sense of security among officers.

"I suspect they feel a little bit safer," he said. "This is certainly an advantage in hand-to-hand contact as well as being a good alternative (in most situations). .... I'm sure they feel better with them than without them."

The police force is gearing up for another training session this fall, Green said. The officers will receive additional training on the Tasers every six months.

Officers at ISU also have yet to use their Tasers.

"I have not received a lot of feedback," said Jerry Stewart, ISU director of public safety. "I do believe there is some feeling of increased security for themselves and for others."

In other public safety news:

- UI's department of public safety recently completed its welcome back initiative, in which officers go out and talk to new students and parents about various issues related to campus safety. This year, the department made nearly 5,000 contacts with students and parents, which is more than double last year, Green said.

### Details

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