



Annual Electronic Weapons Use Analysis

A Summary of Electronic Weapons Use in Massachusetts

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Office of Grants and Research
Research and Policy Analysis Division
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Introduction

Since July 2004 Massachusetts law has allowed law enforcement agencies to purchase and use electronic weapons. The law mandates that the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) approve departments' training programs for use and collect data on the use of electronic weapons.¹ At the close of Federal Fiscal Year 2009 (September 30, 2009), the training programs of 61 law enforcement agencies had been approved by EOPSS, thus permitting them to use electronic weapons (see Appendix for a list of departments) pursuant to G.L. c. 140, § 131J. Chapter 170 of the Acts of 2004 specifies that data be collected on the number of times the weapon was fired and the identifying characteristics of the individual(s) fired upon (including race and gender). This report summarizes electronic weapons data collected through quarterly reports submitted to EOPSS during the time period October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2009 (also known as Federal Fiscal Years 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009). Two law enforcement agencies were approved for electronic weapons use prior to October 1, 2005 but no use was reported. EOPSS received quarterly report data from all 61 approved law enforcement agencies during the above-mentioned time period.

Authorized Law Enforcement Agencies

The size of law enforcement agencies authorized to use electronic weapons in Massachusetts varies considerably. Authorized law enforcement agencies ranged in size from an average of 9 officers to 474 officers (over the 4 year period), with a mean of 55 officers and a median of 31 officers per department. The population of the communities served by these law enforcement agencies ranged from 1,116 to 175,011.²

Every officer who possesses an electronic weapon must first attend a required training course approved by the Secretary of Public Safety and Security. With the exception of one department, which had recently been approved for electronic weapons use, all of the law enforcement agencies indicated that at least one officer in their department had attended the approved training course, and was thus permitted to possess said weapon (the percentage of officers in each department that completed training ranged from 2%-100%). Not every officer that completed the required electronic weapons training was issued an electronic weapon. While some departments issued electronic weapons to all their officers who completed the training course, other departments train and issue electronic weapons only to a percentage of officers. It is difficult to determine the percentage of officers per department who were issued an electronic weapon, however, as some departments opt to rotate or share electronic weapons instead of assigning them to a specific officer.³

¹ St.2004, c. 170.

² Population taken from Census 2008 estimates at www.census.gov.

³ As indicated by a number of departments on their quarterly reports.

Electronic Weapons Use

Of the 61 law enforcement agencies approved for electronic weapons use, 38 agencies reported using electronic weapons from FFY 2006 through FFY 2009. The remaining 23 approved agencies reported zero electronic weapons use over this four year period. Those 38 agencies that reported using electronic weapons indicated they did so in a total of 581 incidents within this time period. During these incidents, electronic weapons were fired a total of 1,006 times (electronic weapons may be fired more than once during an incident).

Tables 2 and 3 in Appendix B show the 38 law enforcement agencies that reported electronic weapons use by annual electronic weapon incidents and times fired.

Electronic Weapon Targets

Law enforcement agencies reported using electronic weapons on 581 targets between FFY 2006 through FFY 2009. The majority of the targets were male (91%). The racial breakdown of the targets is as follows: 79% White (442), 12% Black (71), 11% Hispanic (65), <1% Middle Eastern/East Indian (2), and <1% Asian/Pacific Islander (1).

Table 3 shows the racial breakdown of the targets by gender. The female targets were predominately White while the male targets were slightly more racially diverse.

Table 1.

**Electronic Weapons Targets by Gender and Race from
FFY 2006 through FFY 2009**

	White	Black	Hispanic	Middle Eastern	Asian
Female (n=55)	89%	7%	4%	0%	0%
Male (n=526)	75%	13%	12%	<1%	<1%
Total (n=581)	76%	12%	11%	<1%	<1%

Appendix A

Law enforcement agencies approved for electronic weapons use as of September 30, 2009:

Adams Police Department	Salisbury Police Department
Amesbury Police Department	Seekonk Police Department
Andover Police Department	Somerset Police Department
Attleboro Police Department	Sterling Police Department
Barnstable Police Department	Swansea Police Department
Belchertown Police Department	Templeton Police Department
Cape Cod Regional Law Enforcement SWAT	Tewksbury Police Department
Chelmsford Police Department	Wareham Police Department
Chelsea Police Department	West Boylston Police Department
Concord Police Department	West Springfield Police Department
Deerfield Police Department	Westport Police Department
East Brookfield Police Department	Williamstown Police Department
Fall River Police Department	Winchendon Police Department
Foxboro Police Department	Worcester Police Department
Framingham Police Department	Yarmouth Police Department
Franklin Police Department	
Freetown Police Department	
Gardner Police Department	
Gill Police Department	
Granville Police Department	
Greenfield Police Department	
Groton Police Department	
Hingham Police Department	
Hubbardson Police Department	
Lawrence Police Department	
Leominster Police Department	
Littleton Police Department	
Mansfield Police Department	
Maynard Police Department	
Methuen Police Department	
Milford Police Department	
Montague Police Department	
Nantucket Police Department	
Natick Police Department	
New Braintree Police Department	
North Adams Police Department	
North Brookfield Police Department	
North Reading Police Department	
Northborough Police Department	
Norton Police Department	
Peabody Police Department	
Pembroke Police Department	
Pepperell Police Department	
Raynham Police Department	
Rockland Police Department	
Rowley Police Department	

Appendix B

Table 2 shows the 38, of the 61, approved agencies that reported electronic weapons use and the number of incidents in which electronic weapons were used by each agency. Not all departments were approved for electronic weapons use for all three years; thus, for Tables 2 and 3, the term “N/A” refers to cities/towns that were not approved for electronic weapons use within that federal fiscal year.

Table 2.
Law Enforcement Agencies that Reported Electronic Weapons Use by Number of Incidents
from FFY 2006 through FFY 2009

Law Enforcement Agencies	Population ³	2006 Incidents	2007 Incidents	2008 Incidents	2009 Incidents	Total Incidents
Amesbury	16,584	10	11	6	4	31
Andover	33,418	N/A	N/A	0	1	1
Attleboro	42,833	4	9	28	15	56
Barnstable	46,184	N/A	0	24	31	55
CCRLE SWAT ⁴	*	N/A	0	1	0	1
Chelmsford	34,409	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	3
Chelsea	41,577	0	0	5	9	14
Deerfield	4,694	N/A	N/A	0	1	1
Fall River	90,931	N/A	8	45	28	81
Foxboro ⁴	16,347	0	1	6	7	14
Framingham	64,885	9	7	10	8	34
Freetown	9,027	0	7	2	3	12
Gardner	20,682	0	0	2	1	3
Gill	1,388	0	0	1	0	1
Greenfield	17,828	6	7	8	6	27
Groton	10,632	0	0	3	1	4
Lawrence	70,014	0	12	3	13	28
Littleton	8,711	N/A	0	1	2	3
Mansfield	23,969	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Methuen	44,055	0	3	5	3	11
Montague	8,316	3	2	4	2	11
Nantucket	11,215	N/A	1	1	1	3
North Adams	13,711	0	1	18	10	29
Norton	19,186	2	2	5	3	12
Peabody	51,331	0	0	1	0	1
Pembroke	18,714	N/A	0	3	2	5
Pepperell	11,382	0	1	1	5	7
Raynham	13,566	3	1	2	0	6
Rockland	17,883	N/A	0	1	4	5
Salisbury	8,417	N/A	5	7	4	16
Somerset	18,055	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	4
Swansea	16,155	0	2	3	3	8
Tewksbury	29,543	0	4	3	2	9
Wareham	21,221	3	20	16	15	54
West Boylston	8,277	N/A	N/A	0	1	1
Westport	15,417	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Worcester	175,011	N/A	4	9	6	19
Yarmouth	23,778	0	0	3	6	9
Total	1,079,346	40	108	227	206	581

⁴ Foxboro Police Department was approved for electronic weapons use as of November 20, 2007 (FFY2008)

Table 3 shows the 38, of the 61, approved law enforcement agencies that reported electronic weapons use and the number of times the electronic weapons were fired by each agency.

Table 3.
Law Enforcement Agencies that Reported Electronic Weapons Use by Number of Times Fired from FFY 2006 through FFY 2009

Law Enforcement Agencies	Population	2006 Times Fired	2007 Times Fired	2008 Times Fired	2009 Times Fired	Total Times Fired
Amesbury	16,584	16	17	11	10	54
Andover	33,418	N/A	N/A	0	1	1
Attleboro	42,833	4	12	46	26	88
Barnstable	46,184	N/A	0	31	47	78
CCRLE SWAT	*	N/A	0	2	0	2
Chelmsford	34,409	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	8
Chelsea	41,577	0	0	6	18	24
Deerfield	4,694	N/A	N/A	0	1	1
Fall River	90,931	N/A	15	114	73	202
Foxboro	16,347	0	1	10	8	19
Framingham	64,885	16	11	17	10	54
Freetown	9,027	0	15	2	4	21
Gardner	20,682	0	0	3	1	4
Gill	1,388	0	0	1	0	1
Greenfield	17,828	10	14	11	12	47
Groton	10,632	0	0	5	1	6
Lawrence	70,014	0	12	4	16	32
Littleton	8,711	N/A	0	1	2	3
Mansfield	23,969	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Methuen	44,055	0	19	6	9	34
Montague	8,316	4	2	4	2	12
Nantucket	11,215	N/A	13	1	1	15
North Adams	13,711	0	1	24	10	35
Norton	19,186	4	2	9	3	18
Peabody	51,331	0	0	1	0	1
Pembroke	18,714	N/A	0	7	2	9
Pepperell	11,382	0	2	1	9	12
Raynham	13,566	3	1	5	0	9
Rockland	17,883	N/A	0	1	6	7
Salisbury	8,417	N/A	6	7	7	20
Somerset	18,055	N/A	N/A	N/A	11	11
Swansea	16,155	0	2	4	5	11
Tewksbury	29,543	0	8	27	2	37
Wareham	21,221	6	31	25	21	83
West Boylston	8,277	N/A	N/A	0	3	3
Westport	15,417	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Worcester	175,011	N/A	7	10	7	24
Yarmouth	23,778	0	0	8	10	18
Total	1,079,346	63	186	405	340	1,006