



Annual Electronic Weapons Use Analysis

A Summary of Electronic Weapons Use in Massachusetts

**Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Office of Grants and Research
Research and Policy Analysis Division
August 2009**

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) review training protocols, approve departments for use, and collect data on the use of electronic weapons.¹ At the close of Federal Fiscal Year 2008 (September 30, 2008), a total of 44 law enforcement agencies had been approved by EOPSS to use electronic weapons (see Appendix for a list of departments) pursuant to G.L. c. 140, § 131J. The law 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, 2008 (also known as Federal Fiscal Years 2006, 2007, and 2008). 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 44 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 10 officers to 480 officers (over the 3 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 1,388 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. All 44 law enforcement agencies indicated that at least one officer in their department had attended the required training course for electronic weapons use (the percentage of officers in each department that completed training ranged from 1%-100%). Not every officer that completed the required electronic weapons training was issued an electronic weapon. The percentage of officers in each department issued an electronic weapon ranged from 0% to 96%. This range indicates that despite being approved for electronic weapons use, some departments have not issued electronic weapons to their officers while other departments have issued electronic weapons to nearly every officer who has completed the training course.

¹ St.2004, c. 170.

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

Electronic Weapons Use

Of the 44 law enforcement agencies approved for electronic weapons use, 31 agencies reported using electronic weapons from FFY 2006 through FFY 2008. These 31 agencies reported using electronic weapons in a total of 367 incidents within this time period. During these incidents, electronic weapons were fired a total of 654 times.

Table 1 shows the 31 law enforcement 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 1 and 2, the term “N/A” refers to cities/towns that were not approved for electronic weapons use within that federal fiscal year.

Table 1.
Law Enforcement Agencies that Reported Electronic Weapons Use by Number of Incidents from FFY 2006 through FFY 2008

Law Enforcement Agencies	Population ³	2006 Incidents	2007 Incidents	2008 Incidents	Total Incidents
Amesbury	16,584	10	11	6	27
Attleboro	42,833	4	9	30	43
Barnstable	46,184	N/A	0	24	24
CCRLE SWAT ⁴	*	N/A	0	1	1
Chelsea	41,577	0	0	5	5
Fall River	90,931	N/A	8	45	53
Foxboro ⁵	16,347	N/A	1	6	7
Framingham	64,885	9	7	10	26
Freetown	9,027	0	7	2	9
Gardner	20,682	N/A	N/A	2	2
Gill	1,388	0	0	1	1
Greenfield	17,828	6	7	8	21
Groton	10,632	0	0	3	3
Lawrence	70,014	0	1	3	4
Littleton	8,711	N/A	0	1	1
Methuen	44,055	0	3	5	8
Montague	8,316	3	2	4	9
Nantucket	11,215	N/A	1	1	2
North Adams	13,711	0	1	18	19
Norton	19,186	2	2	5	9
Peabody	51,331	0	0	1	1
Pembroke	18,714	N/A	0	3	3
Pepperell	11,382	0	1	1	2
Raynham	13,566	3	1	2	6
Rockland	17,883	N/A	0	1	1
Salisbury	8,417	N/A	5	7	12
Swansea	16,155	0	2	3	5
Tewksbury	29,543	0	4	3	7
Wareham	21,221	3	20	16	39
Worcester	175,011	N/A	4	10	14
Yarmouth	23,778	N/A	N/A	3	3
Total	941,107	40	97	230	367

³ Population taken from Census 2008 estimates at www.census.gov.

⁴ Cape Cod Regional Law Enforcement SWAT is a law enforcement collaboration representing multiple towns in MA. As such, population for this group has not been included.

⁵ Foxboro Police Department was approved for electronic weapons use as of November 20, 2007 (FFY 2008).

Table 2 shows the 31 law enforcement agencies that reported electronic weapons use and the number of times the electronic weapons were fired by each agency.

Table 2.

Law Enforcement Agencies that Reported Electronic Weapons Use by Number of Times Fired from FFY 2006 through FFY 2008

Law Enforcement Agencies	Population	2006 Times Fired	2007 Times Fired	2008 Times Fired	Total Times Fired
Amesbury	16,584	16	17	11	44
Attleboro	42,833	4	12	47	63
Barnstable	46,184	N/A	0	31	31
CCRLE SWAT	*	N/A	0	2	2
Chelsea	41,577	0	0	6	6
Fall River	90,931	N/A	15	114	129
Foxboro	16,347	N/A	1	10	11
Framingham	64,885	16	11	17	44
Freetown	9,027	0	15	2	17
Gardner	20,682	N/A	0	3	3
Gill	1,388	0	0	1	1
Greenfield	17,828	10	14	11	35
Groton	10,632	0	0	5	5
Lawrence	70,014	0	7	4	11
Littleton	8,711	N/A	0	1	1
Methuen	44,055	0	19	6	25
Montague	8,316	4	2	4	10
Nantucket	11,215	N/A	13	1	14
North Adams	13,711	0	1	24	25
Norton	19,186	4	2	9	15
Peabody	51,331	0	0	1	1
Pembroke	18,714	N/A	0	7	7
Pepperell	11,382	0	2	1	3
Raynham	13,566	3	1	5	9
Rockland	17,883	N/A	0	1	1
Salisbury	8,417	0	6	7	13
Swansea	16,155	0	2	4	6
Tewksbury	29,543	0	8	27	35
Wareham	21,221	6	31	25	62
Worcester	175,011	N/A	7	10	17
Yarmouth	23,778	N/A	0	8	8
Total	941,107	63	186	405	654

Electronic Weapon Targets

Law enforcement agencies reported using electronic weapons on 374 targets from FFY 2006 through FFY 2008. The majority of the targets were male (90%). The racial breakdown of the targets is as follows: 79% White (297), 13% Black (49), 7% Hispanic (26), <1% Asian/Pacific Islander (1), and <1% Middle Eastern/East Indian (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 3.

**Electronic Weapons Targets by Gender and Race from
FFY 2006 through FFY 2008**

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Middle Eastern
Female (n= 39)	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Male (n=335)	78%	13%	8%	<1%	<1%
Total (n=374)	79%	13%	7%	<1%	<1%

Appendix A

Law enforcement agencies approved for electronic weapons use as of September 30th, 2008:

Adams Police Department
Amesbury Police Department
Andover Police Department
Attleboro Police Department
Barnstable Police Department
Belchertown Police Department
Cape Cod Regional Law Enforcement SWAT
Chelsea Police Department
Concord Police Department
Deerfield Police Department
East Brookfield Police Department
Fall River Police Department
Foxboro Police Department
Framingham Police Department
Freetown Police Department
Gardner Police Department
Gill Police Department
Granville Police Department
Greenfield Police Department
Groton Police Department
Lawrence Police Department
Littleton Police Department
Maynard Police Department
Methuen Police Department
Montague Police Department
Nantucket 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
Salisbury Police Department
Swansea Police Department
Tewksbury Police Department
Wareham Police Department
West Springfield Police Department
Winchendon Police Department
Worcester Police Department
Yarmouth Police Department