CED Joint Working Group



Conducted Energy Device (TASER™): At a Glance Guidance for ED Clinicians FFLM, UKAFNP, NPCC, RCEM, CoP, RCN, AACE



The medico-legal guidelines and recommendations published by this CED Joint Working Group are for general information only. Appropriate specific advice should be sought from your medical defence organisation or professional association.

The Faculty has one or more senior representatives of the MDOs on its Board, but for the avoidance of doubt, endorsement of the medico-legal guidelines or recommendations published by the Faculty has not been sought from any of the medical defence organisations.

This guidance was produced in collaboration with UKFANP, NPCC, RCEM, College of Paramedics & the RCN

August 2022 Review prior to August 2026 - check <u>www.fflm.ac.uk</u> for latest updates



Conducted Energy Devices(CED)

This patient has presented to your department following being exposed to a Conducted Energy Device (CED), this is commonly known as TASER[™] which is a brand of CED.

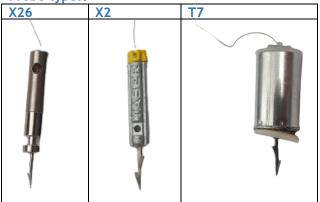
The police may have taken this patient directly from the arrest scene or via a custody suite, where they may have been assessed by a custody Health Care Professional. Where a clinician has referred from custody there should also be a transfer document highlighting the areas of specific concern & which referral criteria have been triggered.

The Police Officer has been advised to provide you with this document/letter to assist your assessment & treatment of this patient whilst they are in the department.

What is a CED?

A CED is a battery-operated device that fires at speed (via compressed nitrogen gas) 2 probes connected by insulated conductive wires. When fired, the probes are designed to connect to the person & on triggering, the device generates very rapid, short, repetitive electrical impulses for 5 seconds. Depending on the device this is approximately 19-44 pulses/second. This time period can be extended by the officer re-energising the device. These impulses cause neuromuscular incapacitation for a short period of time generally causing the patient to fall.

Probe types:



The actual barb length for the probes varies between 9.6 & 11.7mm depending on model

What are the risks?

The majority of individuals exposed to CED do not suffer any significant ill effects beyond pain.

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Fit & well individuals who are asymptomatic & free from injuries should not routinely be referred to ED & the NPCC has made it <u>clear</u> that police custody healthcare providers should **not** rely on ED in lieu of staffing custody adequately. Clinicians in custody are urged to refer direct to appropriate specialities & **not** refer to ED as a default.

Due to the high profile nature of any CED use, there is a low threshold for referral from custody for more in depth assessment than with other similar injury mechanisms.

The primary focuses of concern are to establish the reason for the initial deployment of the CED (they are used rarely & therefore consideration should be given to why it was required) & injury from an unprotected fall.

Clinicians should, therefore, be alert to the risk of physical or mental health crises which may have resulted in the individual being unable to understand or engage with police de-escalation. This may include acute behavioural disturbance (see <u>RCEM guidance</u>) & acute confusion due to sepsis or other organic disturbances.

What should ED be aware of?

In addition to the specific considerations described overleaf ED clinicians should be cognisant of the high profile nature & risk of these cases.

ED clinicians are not there to perform a forensic role, & therefore should make an independent assessment. This guidance relates to normal use of a CED only & does **not** mandate any actions by ED staff.

Clinicians should be particularly alert to the likelihood that they may need to produce a statement in relation to their assessment of individuals exposed to a CED at a later date. We recommend, in addition to a standard full assessment of patients presenting following CED exposure, that all patients have an ECG & injuries are documented (ideally on a body diagram) as in some cases the ED clinician will be the only clinician they see. CED Joint Workin gGroup

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Specific Considerations

Areas for specific consideration & rationales for being referred to ED.

Cardiac	
Rationale Whilst the evidence for cardiac complications varies, it appears that delayed dysrhythmias are rare. Those with pacemakers, vagus nerve stimulators or internal cardiac defibrillators require additional assessment.	Suggested action Perform ECG & consider cardiac monitoring if indicated.
	Consider CXR (to confirm lead position) Pacemaker or equivalent
	'box check' for implanted devices.Appropriate observation
	& monitoring for any ECG abnormalities or post exposure collapse.
Injuries	
Rationale Neuromuscular incapacitation can cause an unprotected fall due to paralysis.	Suggested action Head & c-spine injury assessment
	Consider occult injuries including posterior shoulder dislocation, & limb injuries including scaphoid & chest wall injuries.
	Documentation of relevant findings
	following head to toe examination.
Probe removal	
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Where patients are transferred back to custody clinicians should provide a discharge summary, including any medications given whilst in ED.

Visit <u>www.fflm.ac.uk\CEDHub</u> or scan the QR code below for additional information (including videos with guidance on barb removal) & the latest version of this guidance



Produced by the CED Working Group (members listed on the CEDHub)

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> Send any feedback & comments to: forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk