



Annual Electronic Weapons Use Analysis

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## **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) review training protocols, approve departments for use, and collect data on the use of electronic weapons<sup>1</sup>. At the close of Federal Fiscal Year 2007 (September 30, 2007), a total of 36 police departments 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, 2007 (also known as Federal Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007). Two police departments were approved for electronic weapons use prior to October 1, 2005 but no use was reported. EOPSS received quarterly report data from all 36 approved police departments during this time period.

## **Authorized Police Departments**

The size of police departments authorized to use electronic weapons in Massachusetts varies considerably. Authorized police departments ranged in size from 10 officers to 480 officers, with an average of 51 officers and a median of 33 officers per department. The population of the communities served by these police departments ranged from 1,382 to 175,454<sup>2</sup>.

Every officer who possesses an electronic weapon must first attend a required training course approved by the Secretary of Public Safety and Security. All 36 police departments 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 3%-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 100%. 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 every officer who has completed the training course.

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<sup>1</sup> St.2004, c. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Population taken from Census 2006 estimates at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## Electronic Weapons Use

Twenty of the 36 police departments reported using electronic weapons during FFY 2006 and FFY 2007. These 20 police departments reported using electronic weapons in a total of 137 incidents within this time period. During these incidents, electronic weapons were fired a total of 242 times, an average of 1.8 times per incident (the highest number of discharges per incident was 13).

The table below shows the 20 police departments that reported electronic weapons use and the number of incidents and times fired by each agency.

<b>Police Department</b>	<b>Population<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Incidents</b>	<b>Times Fired</b>
Wareham	21,324	23	37
Amesbury	16,542	21	33
Framingham	64,762	16	27
Greenfield	17,699	13	24
Attleboro	43,283	13	16
Fall River	91,474	8	15
Freetown	8,963	7	14
Montague	8,368	5	6
Salisbury	8,438	5	6
Norton	19,242	4	6
Raynham	13,665	4	4
Tewksbury	29,418	4	8
Worcester	175,454	4	7
Methuen	44,259	3	19
Swansea	16,222	2	2
Foxboro	16,274	1	1
Lawrence	70,662	1	1
Nantucket	10,240	1	13
North Adams	13,842	1	1
Pepperell	11,412	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>701,543</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>242</b>

<sup>3</sup> Population taken from Census 2006 estimates at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## Electronic Weapon Targets

Police departments reported using electronic weapons on 137 targets during FFY 2006 and FFY 2007. The majority of the targets were male (87%). The racial breakdown of the targets is as follows: 76% White, 15% Black, 8% Hispanic and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander (or 104 White, 21 Black, 11 Hispanic and 1 Asian/Pacific Islander).

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

**Electronic Weapons Targets by Gender and Race during  
FFY 2006 and FFY 2007**

	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian</b>
Female (n=18)	89%	11%	0%	0%
Male (n=119)	74%	16%	9%	1%
<b>Total (n=137)</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>1%</b>

## Appendix A

Law enforcement agencies approved for electronic weapons use as of September 30, 2007:

Adams Police Department  
Amesbury Police Department  
Attleboro Police Department  
Barnstable Police Department  
Chelsea Police Department  
Concord Police Department  
Fall River Police Department  
Foxborough Police Department  
Framingham Police Department  
Freetown 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 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