

RCMP to test some Tasers after CBC investigation

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[CBC News](#)

The RCMP says it is pulling some of its Tasers for testing after a CBC News and Radio-Canada investigation found some of the stun guns deliver a higher level of electricity than the manufacturer promises.



Three of the X26 Tasers tested by U.S.-based lab National Technical Systems as part of a CBC/Radio-Canada investigation into the devices. (CBC)

In a release issued Monday, the RCMP said it will remove 24 units for analysis.

"Given concerns raised by recent CBC/Radio Canada broadcasts, the RCMP has undertaken a review of its national inventory of Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs) and has identified 24 Taser model X26 units acquired by the RCMP prior to January 1st, 2006," the release said.

"It has directed that these units be removed from service and undergo testing."

In a series of CBC-commissioned tests on 41 stun guns, four of the units delivered significantly more current than Taser International says is possible. In some cases, the current was up to 50 per cent stronger than specified on the devices.

The four abnormal X26 model Tasers were manufactured before 2005, prompting some scientists to suggest police should stop using any older versions of the stun guns until they can be tested.

CBC/Radio Canada broadcast the test results on Dec. 4.

Upon learning about the CBC investigation in early November, the RCMP says it pulled a random sample of 30 of the force's Tasers for independent testing at MPB Technologies Electronic Centre.

The 30 Tasers included 15 M26 units and 15 X26 units. The RCMP said preliminary results showed all units tested within the manufacturer's specifications and accepted variance limits of plus or minus 15 per cent.

"Although we are awaiting a final report, the RCMP can confirm that all our CEW units tested were within the manufacturer's specifications," the release said.

In light of CBC's investigation, however, the RCMP said it is pulling an additional 24 X26 units for testing, all of which were acquired before the beginning of 2006.

May deteriorate with age: engineer

"The steps taken by the RCMP to remove some CEWs from service and to conduct tests is part of our ongoing effort to ensure our policies and practices continue to be appropriate and are based on the best available information," the release said.

The RCMP does not know how long it will take to test the 24 units, Sgt. Greg Cox told CBC News Tuesday.

Nearly all stun guns, also known as conductive energy weapons, used by police forces are manufactured by Arizona-based Taser International Inc. The devices are intended to incapacitate people with an electric shock.

Pierre Savard, a biomedical engineer at the University of Montreal who designed the technical procedure for the CBC's testing, said the cause of the increased current could have been either due to faulty quality control during the stun guns' manufacturing or electrical components that deteriorate with age.

In a written response to the results of CBC's investigation, Taser International's vice-president of research and development, Magne Nerheim, called the four malfunctioning Tasers an anomaly — one that could be explained if the weapons are not spark tested on a regular basis.

All Tasers tested as part of the CBC investigation were provided by seven police departments in the U.S. and analyzed by the U.S.-based lab National Technical Systems.

The CBC showed the results to several electrical engineers as a peer review of the analysis. They agreed that at the very least, the Tasers made before 2005 should not be used again until they are tested and proved reliable.

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