

Public Policy Center Examines Taser Use

The *UH Center for Public Policy* (CPP) is studying how the use of Taser electric stun guns has affected the Houston community and its police officers.

“Among other things, we’ll look at whether Houston Police Department (HPD) officers are discharging the Tasers on any populations disproportionately and whether the cause is combative and dangerous behavior or profiling,” says Jim Granato, CPP director. “We’ll also look at whether or not Tasers have reduced serious injuries to suspects and officers by giving officers an alternate way to approach combative suspects.”

Researchers will look at data from the nearly 1,000 times a Taser has been discharged since the policy was implemented in December 2004. They’ll examine the actions leading up to the use of the Taser, the neighborhoods where Tasers were used as well as the demographic characteristics of the officers and the people who were shocked.

CPP is working collaboratively with Sam Houston State University researchers, who are examining HPD’s policies and procedures on the use of Tasers and officer training.

The study, which is commissioned by the city of Houston and overseen by the city controller’s office, will be completed by the end of summer.