

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT:

It was reported that while at the 25th District station on 18 July 2016 at approximately 2311 hours the accused Police Administrative Clerk, Administrative Clerk A, was restocking police equipment from the previous watch when she accidentally discharged a Taser in the drawer.

ALLEGATIONS:

On 19 July 2016 at 0854 hours, IPRA Investigator updated a complaint by Witness Officer. It was alleged that on 18 July 2016 at approximately 2311 hours, accused **Administrative Clerk A:**

1. Was putting radios and Tasers away from the previous watch when she carelessly discharged a Taser in a storage drawer, in violation of Rule 6 & 10 of the Chicago Police Department's Rules and Regulation.

INVESTIGATION:

In his **Initiation Report**, Sgt. A reported that on 18 July 2016, civilian desk aide Administrative Clerk A was putting radios and Tasers way from the previous watch. While she was moving Taser #6 in the drawer, she accidentally discharged one cartridge in the drawer. No was injured and the incident was brought to the attention of Sgt. A. A Non Field Deployment Report was completed and Taser Sync report was generated and all items were inventoried under #13730776. (Att. 4)

In her statement to IPRA, accused, **Administrative Clerk A** stated that on 18 July 2016, as part of her normal duties, she was assigned by her immediate supervisor, Sgt. A, to store the radios, Tasers, and keys to police vehicles. She stated that on the date and time of the incident, she had approximately 1520 Tasers to store. Some Tasers that were lying on a counter were in holsters but most were not. Administrative Clerk A stated that she grabbed five or six Tasers at a time and placed them in two file drawers. She stated that while stacking them inside the file drawer, she was pretty sure that she may have placed her finger on the trigger mechanism of one of the Tasers causing it to deploy. She stated that she had been in working in her clerk position for approximately two or three weeks and had never really had any training in the safe handling of Taser devices. Administrative Clerk A stated that the training she received at the police academy entailed what her essential duties would be which was clerical in nature. No one ever warned her of the inherent dangers of Taser devices and on one ever instructed her in the proper handling and storage of such devices. (Att. 15, 16)

A Taser repairman, Officer A of the Training Academy on 18 Oct 2016 was asked whether or not a Taser will deploy by merely picking it up. He related that is highly unlikely and that one would actually have to pull the trigger for a deployment to occur. He further mentioned that a Taser is properly secured in an approved holster that will prevent any contact with the trigger mechanism.

The District Secretary was asked if there was documentation in Administrative Clerk A's district personnel file regarding training she received for preparation of her position as a Police Administrative Clerk. The District Secretary acknowledged that there was in fact documentation from the police academy which was a bullet-point list of duties to be performed by Administrative Clerk A. The list did indicate that the Police Administrative Clerks are responsible for the distribution and collection of hand radios, Tasers, and keys to police vehicles.

Sgt. B is responsible for the training of police personnel in the handling and use of Taser devices. Sgt. B stated that to date, no civilian personnel have been trained in the use and safe handling of Taser devices.

Master Trainer Officer of the Training Academy was asked on 24 Oct 2016 about the actual training course in the use and handling of Taser devices. He related that for sworn personnel, the training course takes eight hours. There is a four to five hour Power Point presentation followed by two hours on the hands on handling of the Taser device. He also related that civilian personnel do not receive this training. (Att. 18)

In a follow-up To/From/Subject Report completed by Sgt. A, he reported that on 18 July 2016, he was the Acting Desk Sergeant for that tour of duty. He reported that he has never instructed Administrative Clerk A or any civilian or sworn member on the safe handling of a Taser. Sgt. A reported that he does not have any knowledge as to whether or not any training was provided to Administrative Clerk A on the handling of Tasers. He reported that he does not know whether Tasers are returned with or without holsters since they are not returned to him. Sgt. A reported that he is unaware of any instruction other than those received when officers completed training on Taser devices at the Academy or Near North training facility. Sgt. A further reported that he can only speculate that Administrative Clerk A did or will receive some instructions pertaining to the safe handling of Taser devices. (Att. 21)

CONCLUSION:

IPRA recommends that **Allegations #1 & 2** be **Unfounded**. Training personnel from the Training Academy who are responsible for the training of police personnel in the use and safe handling of Taser devices related that only sworn personnel are trained and that civilian personnel have never been trained or received any instructions on the handling of Taser devices. Sgt. A, the immediate supervisor of Administrative Clerk A, reported that he never instructed her in the safe handling of Taser devices nor did he know whether or not she had received previous training in the handling of such devices. It appears that the only training Administrative Clerk A received at the Training Academy covered the clerical duties relevant to her position. Even though one of her duties included the collection and distribution Taser devices, she was never trained or given any instructions in the handling of Taser devices.

In reference to the duties of a Police Administrative Clerk, there is a direct contradiction between their assigned duties and the Police Department's Uniform and Property Order (U04-02-04) which indicates in Sec. 2A.3 that Tasers will be carried, handled, tested, and deployed by members who have completed Department-conducted training on their safe handling and deployment and in Sec. 2B.1b, District station supervisors will designate a member on their watch who will be responsible for the issuance and safe storage of Taser devices.

Given that Administrative Clerk A is not sworn and has never been trained nor has she received any instruction in the safe handling of Taser devices, she should not be held responsible for the accidental deployment of a Taser device on 18 July 2016.

To remedy this contradiction in Department policy, it is recommended that those civilian personnel who are responsible for the collection and distribution of Taser devices, they should either be trained in the safe handling of Taser devices or they should not be allowed to have any contact with such devices. Moreover, sworn personnel who carry Taser devices should do so in the required holster for the safety of themselves as well as anyone else that may handle them. The approved holster has a safety feature, and once the Taser device is returned to the holster, the Taser device is disarmed and rendered safe for handling.