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Police officer hurt after
discharging taser outlines
dangers of arming cops

The officer in Dumfries was hurt when he accidentally discharged his taser.

By [Jane Candlish](#)

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Police Scotland

An accident in which a police officer shot himself with his electric taser highlights the need for caution over the routine arming of police in the north, it was claimed yesterday.

An officer in Dumfries was hurt when the weapon went off as he was putting it in its holster at a firing range before going on duty.

Ironically, the man was a designated safety officer overseeing a group of police on the range.

The May 26 incident prompted a probe by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC), Kate Frame.

Ms Frame published her findings yesterday, stating that the incident was preventable.

She has recommended that Police Scotland withdraw the type of holster, due to its potential to activate safety catches.

A forensic examination of the holster found that moving the taser in and out of the holster could move the safety catch from the "on" to "off" position.

Ms Frame said: "Although preventable, the fault cannot sit entirely with the operator in this incident as the design of the taser holster itself predicated an accidental discharge.

"To prevent further similar incidents I hope that Police Scotland will act quickly on my recommendation that they stop using this type of holster."

Ms Frame also said that while the officer supervised others through the checks and drills, he did not comply with the requirement for him to be supervised by a safety officer.

Highland Council member David Alston, who has led a campaign against the routine arming of police in the Highlands, said: "It's Murphy's Law that if something can go wrong, it will go wrong.

"With any weapon, there will be accidents and mistakes can be made. There is no foolproof system and that is something that needs to be borne in mind as far as possible with firearms and tasers.

"It is an additional reason to be cautious and be absolutely sure that if we are deploying officers with tasers that it is absolutely necessary and not 'just in case'."

Chief Superintendent Elaine Ferguson said: "Police Scotland notes the findings of this report, including the recognition that if accepted practice and procedures had been fully adhered to it would not have occurred.

"The recommendations, some of which have already been addressed, will be considered fully and where appropriate will be acted upon. In respect of the procurement and roll out of replacement holsters, this process is already in progress and will be completed shortly."



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