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STUN GUN USE IN NEBRASKA

Survey Results

NCJRS

AUG 12 1988

ACQUISITIONS

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The following summarizes data obtained from the Survey - Law Enforcement Use of the Stun Gun sent to all law enforcement agency heads on February 26, 1986. It was designed to get an overview of stun gun use by various agencies in Nebraska, centering on training as well as policies and procedures for use.

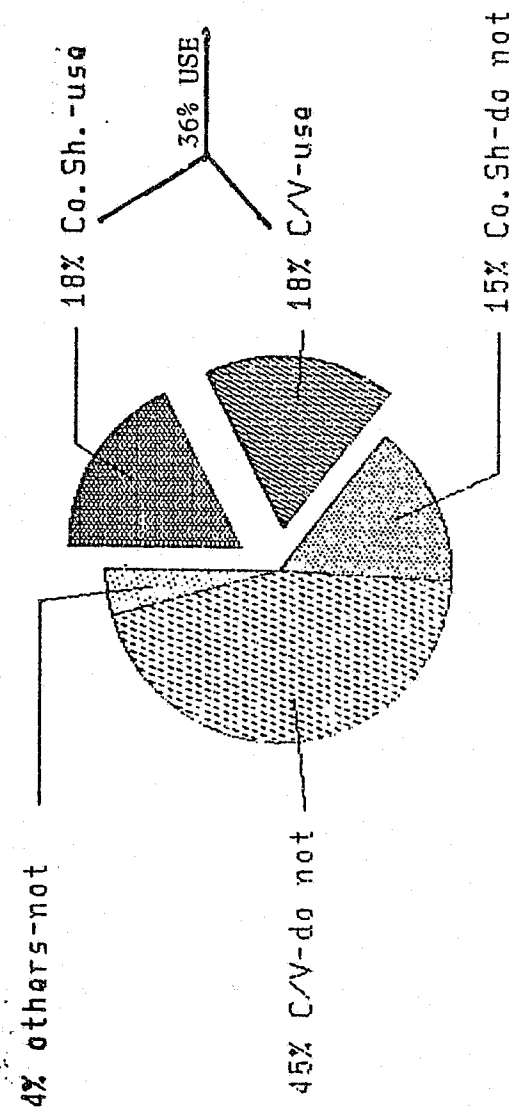
A copy of the questionnaire is included. Agencies which did not have stun guns available were expected to fill out only the first three questions. Although some of them added comments and concerns, they were not included in the numerical data. Their comments have been included in the final summary.

A total of 205 agencies responded, out of which 73 (35.6%) use stun guns. This includes one city and one county in which the officers have purchased the stun gun themselves. Of the 132 (64.4%) agencies which do not use it, 31 are county sheriffs, 92 were cities or villages, and 9 were other agencies (Nebraska State Patrol, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, UNL and UNO Police Departments, State Fire Marshal, AFOSI/Offutt, and the Union Pacific and Chicago Northwestern Railroad Police Departments.)

Even though about the same number in each of the classifications use the stun guns, county sheriffs were much more likely to have them available (36 of the 67) as only 37 of the 129 cities and villages responding had them. A few cities noted that they could obtain them from the county sheriff when they were deemed necessary.

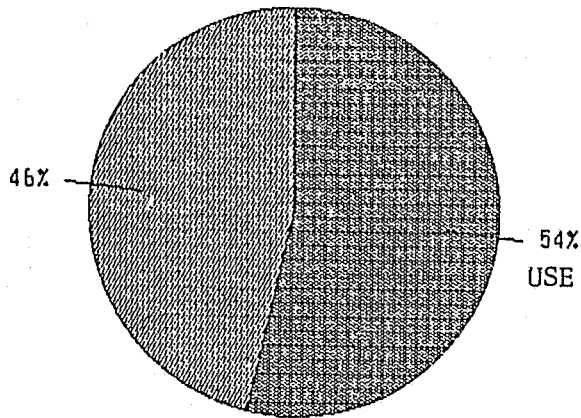
The following data is derived from those 73 agencies (36 counties and 37 cities) which use the stun gun. The only brand used was Nova with 51 of them mentioning model XR-5000. These are made by Nova Technologies, Inc.; Austin, Texas.

OVERALL AGENCY USE OF STUN GUNS

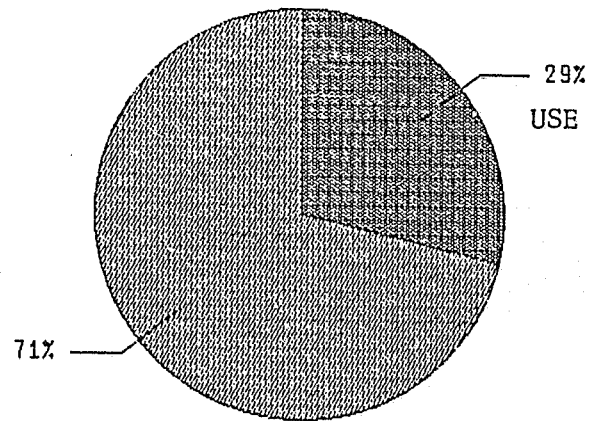


TOTAL

PERCENTAGE OF AGENCIES USING STUN GUNS



COUNTY SHER.



CITY/VILL.

SIZE OF AGENCY USING STUN GUNS

<u>NO. OF OFFICERS</u>	<u>COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</u>	<u>CITY/VILLAGE DEPARTMENT</u>
50 or More	1	0
15 to 50	1	1
5 to 15	13	10
1 to 5	<u>21</u>	<u>26</u>
TOTAL	36	37

AVAILABILITY OF STUN GUN

<u>ACCESS</u>	<u>COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</u>	<u>CITY/VILLAGE DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Carried on the Officer	17 (47.2%)	15 (40.5%)	32 (43.8%)
Kept in the Vehicle	13 (36.1%)	20 (54.1%)	33 (45.2%)
Kept at the Jail	21 (58.3%)	0 (0%)	21 (28.8%)*
	(Out of 36)	(Out of 37)	(Out of 73)

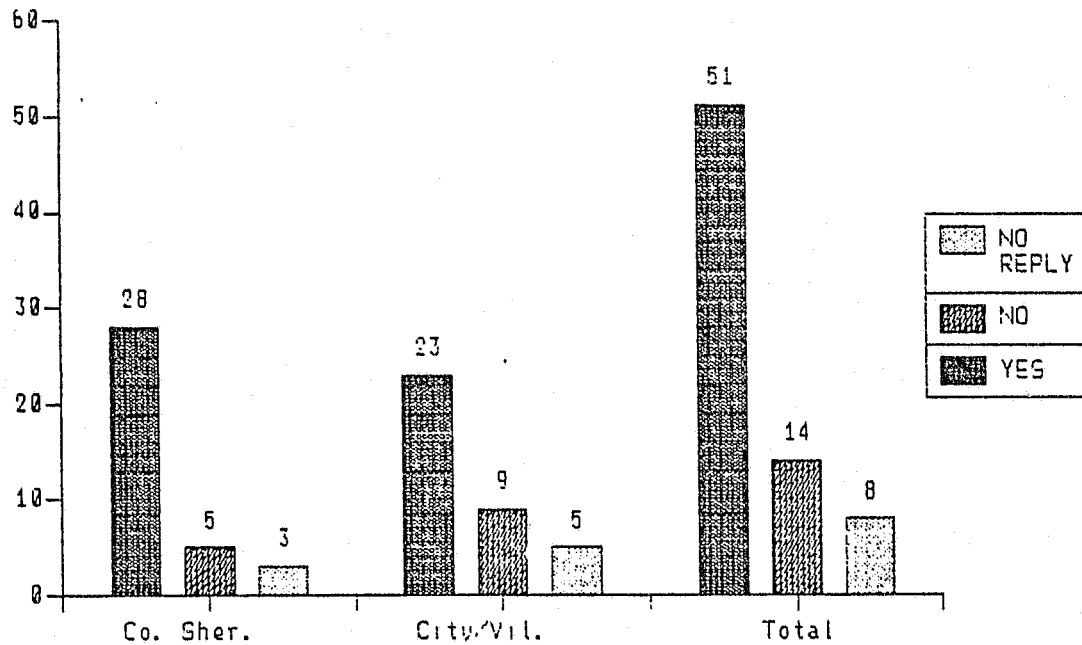
*Of the 37 cities, 23 did not have facilities or did not respond to this part of the question. Eliminating these makes it 42%.

One county reported that it was used for courtroom security as opposed to jail facilities. Even with a fairly high number of officers carrying the device it is overwhelmingly optional. Only 3 counties and 2 cities require it to be worn as part of the uniform (15.6% of those carrying). Along with this some stated that they were carried only in certain circumstances or if alerted to a hostile situation.

Use of the stun gun is in the majority of cases not specifically covered by a unique policy. Although 14 counties (38.9%) and 14 cities (37.8%) reported having a written policy governing its use, many of these use standards set up for overall enforcement. This would include either a general use of force doctrine or the same policies which apply to chemical mace. Some were in the process of developing specific guidelines for use.

Once an officer has made use of the device, they are generally required to record and document its use (69.9% overall). Most often mentioned was documentation as part of the regular report submitted for an incident as opposed to tracking its specific use.

NUMBER OF AGENCIES REQUIRING DOCUMENTATION



REQUIRE DOCUMENTATION OF USE

<u>REQUIRED</u>	<u>COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</u>	<u>CITY/VILLAGE DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Yes	28 (77.8%)	23 (62.2%)	51 (69.9%)
No	5 (13.9%)	9 (24.3%)	14 (19.1%)
No Response	3 (8.3%)	5 (13.5%)	8 (11.0%)
TOTAL	36	37	73

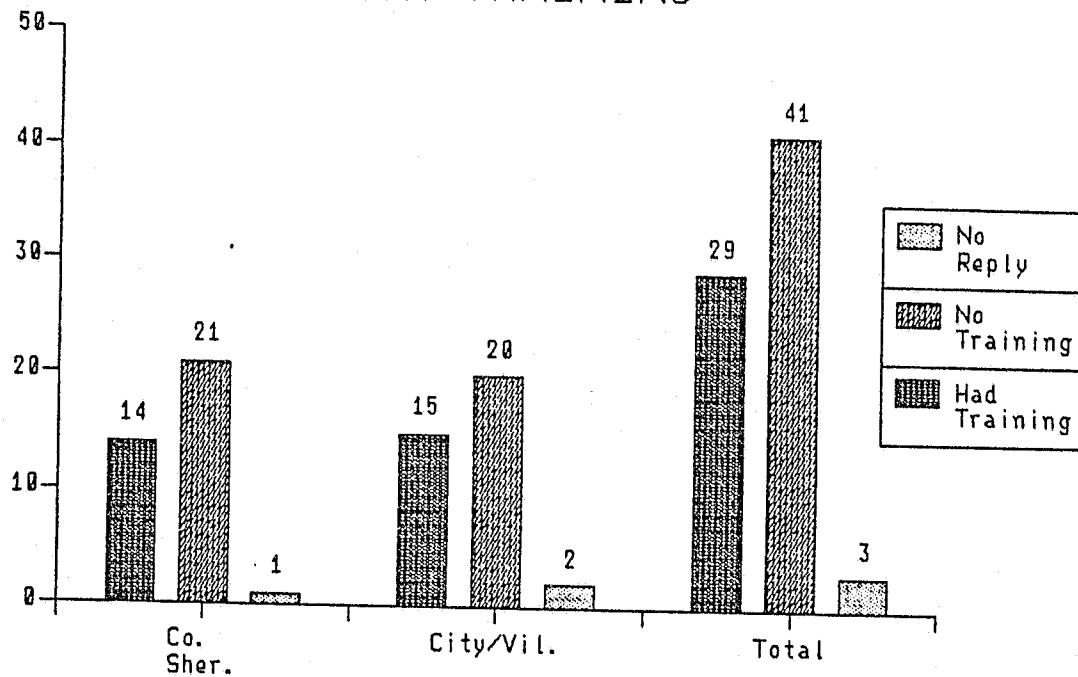
The question of training and additional training was interpreted in various manners. Less than 40% of those responding said their personnel had been certified or felt they had been properly trained. What constituted proper training varied throughout the state. While a number of agencies were trained at classes conducted at other facilities or by trained instructors, 58.6% trained themselves. This included 71.4% of the county sheriff offices. Some described having used manuals or manufacturer supplied video cassettes. For two counties this had followed training/certification by Nova, the manufacturer. Some questioned what constituted either Commission or legislative requirements for certification. As with access and use, degrees and opinions on training varied greatly.

SOURCE OF TRAINING FOR THOSE WITH TRAINING OR CERTIFICATION

<u>PROVIDED TRAINING</u>	<u>COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</u>	<u>CITY/VILLAGE DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Douglas County Sheriff's Office	3 (21.4%)	6 (40.0%)	9 (31.0%)
Omaha Police Dept.	1 (7.1%)	1 (6.7%)	2 (6.9%)
Texas A&M Instructor	0 (--)	1 (6.7%)	1 (3.4%)
Self-Trained	<u>10 (71.4%)</u>	<u>7 (46.7%)</u>	<u>17 (58.6%)</u>
TOTAL	14	15	29

The question of additional training was interpreted as being either in addition to what they had or in addition to what was currently offered by the state. Since not all respondents distinguished how they read it, no effort was made to break the data down further. Overall 60.3% of the agencies now using stun guns felt that additional training was needed. The Law Enforcement Training Center received mention for either doing the training or detailing certification and training procedures.

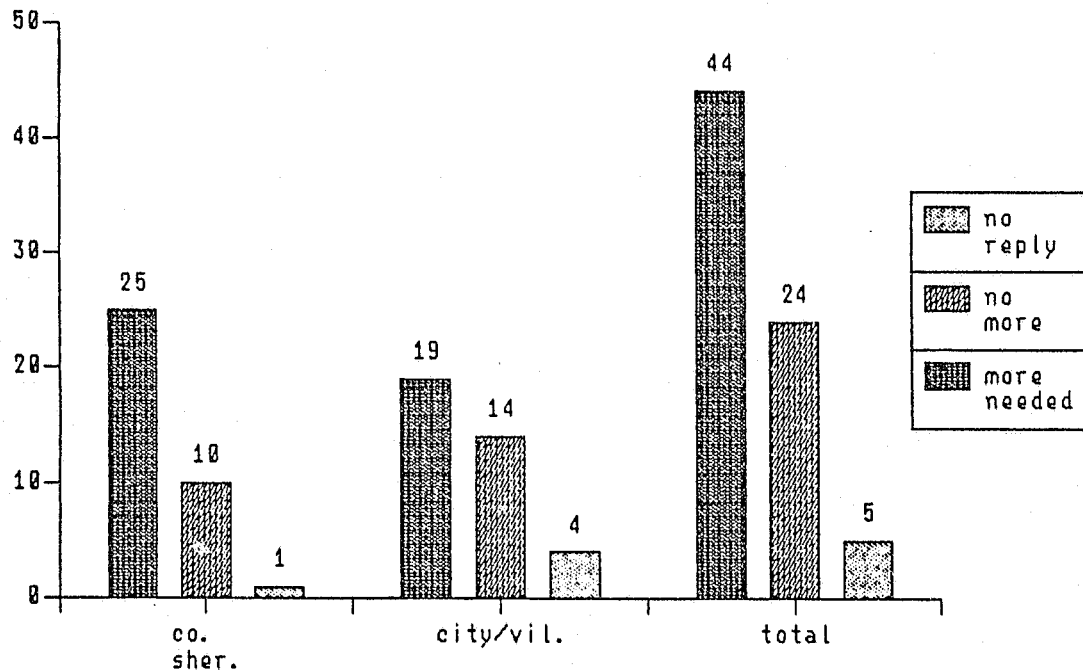
NUMBER OF AGENCIES WITH TRAINING



AGENCIES HAVING HAD TRAINING

<u>TRAINING</u>	<u>COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</u>	<u>CITY/VILLAGE DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Yes	14 (38.9%)	15 (40.5%)	29 (39.7%)
No	21 (58.3%)	20 (54.1%)	41 (56.2%)
No Reply	<u>1 (2.8%)</u>	<u>2 (5.4%)</u>	<u>3 (4.1%)</u>
TOTAL	36	37	73

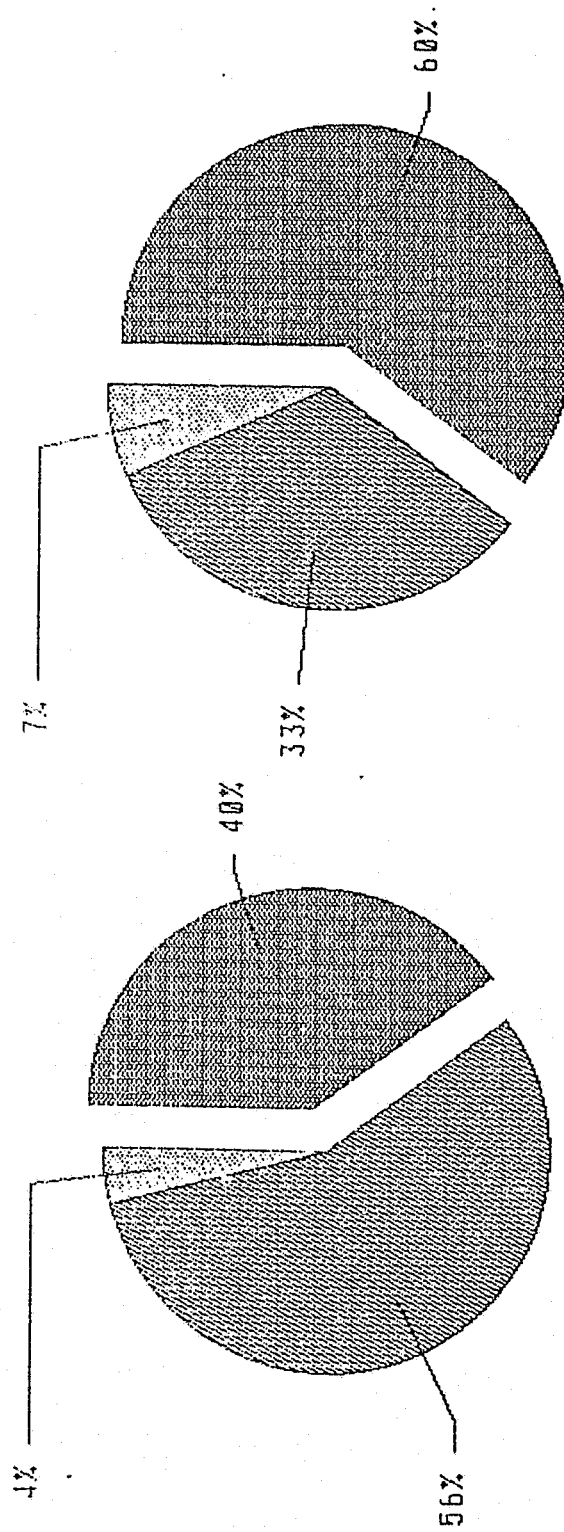
NUMBER OF AGENCIES WANTING ADDITIONAL TRAINING



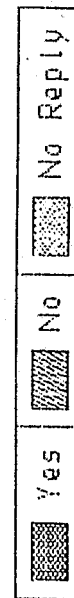
AGENCIES DESIRING ADDITIONAL TRAINING

<u>DESIRE TRAINING</u>	<u>COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</u>	<u>CITY/VILLAGE DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Feel more is needed	25 (69.4%)	19 (51.4%)	44 (60.3%)
Feel no more is needed	10 (27.8%)	14 (37.8%)	24 (32.9%)
No reply	<u>1 (2.8%)</u>	<u>4 (10.8%)</u>	<u>5 (6.8%)</u>
TOTAL	36	37	73

RESPONSE TO TRAINING ALL AGENCIES



Had Training Want More



The need for training and topics to be covered varied widely. Many wanted general information on use, applications, how to best get results, and general operation of the device (including maintenance). It was also stated that the exact results on the individual, physical and mental, needed to be known. This was for possible medical needs and back-up but also for the most common concern raised, namely liability. This was mentioned not only by agencies using the stun gun, but also as a concern and reason for some of those not using it. The seemingly apparent ease of use for some, but general lack of certification made many wary. It seemed welcome as an option, as with a baton or chemical mace, but some viewed it as a last resort for officer protection. Officer and department liability may not be totally known, but one respondent has already been sued for stun gun use (unknown if the case is solved or pending).

SURVEY LAW ENFORCEMENT USE OF THE STUN GUN

1. Size of department answering the survey.

- _____ Fifty officers and above
_____ Fifteen to fifty officers
_____ Five to fifteen officers
_____ Less than five officers

2. Type of department answering the survey.

- _____ 1st Class City Police Department
_____ 2nd Class City Police Department
_____ Village Marshal, Incorporated
_____ Village Marshal, Unincorporated
_____ County Sheriff's Office

a. If county sheriff, does your agency contract law enforcement to villages in the county?

_____ Yes _____ No

b. If yes, how many? _____

3. Does your agency own or have access to stun guns?

Yes _____ No _____ Comments:

4. Are stun guns carried by the officers as an integral piece of equipment in the normal operations? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, do the officers wear them as an option or is it mandated by policy? _____

5. Are the stun guns kept in the police vehicle so that it is accessible to the officer? _____ Yes _____ No

6. Are stun guns kept in the jail proper and/or accessible to jail staff for use?

_____ Yes _____ No

SURVEY-LAW ENFORCEMENT USE OF THE STUN GUN

7. Have your personnel been properly trained and/or certified on the use of the stun gun? _____ Yes _____ No

a. Who conducted the training? _____

b. Where was the training conducted? _____

c. The number of personnel that are certified _____

8. Does your agency have a written policy that governs the use of the stun gun? _____

9. Do you believe additional training is needed in the use of the stun gun?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, list the topics by priority that the training should cover, i.e., liabilities, use of, etc. _____

10. What type of stun gun is currently being used by your agency?

(Manufacturer's Name)

11. Do you require documentation on the part of the officer after the use of the stun gun in the performance of the officer's duties?

_____ Yes _____ No

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEY TO ADDRESS BELOW:

Nebraska Crime Commission
Attention: Jim Joneson
P. O. Box 94946
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509