

More than 12,000 local police departments operate in the United States. While policies and procedures may vary across departments, police throughout the nation use similar safety equipment and emerging technologies to protect themselves and the public. Findings from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) 2013 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) Survey show that more officers are using conducted energy devices (i.e., Tasers and stun guns), video-camera technology, and protective body armor while on patrol, compared to previous years.

Defensive tactics and equipment

The number of local police departments authorizing their officers to deploy Tasers and stun guns increased more than 10 fold between 2000 and 2013—from 7% to 81%. About 9 in 10 departments also allowed the use of pepper spray and batons. Additionally, a majority of departments authorized defensive physical tactics, including open-hand (91%), takedown (89%), and closed-hand (85%) techniques. Nearly a fifth (18%) of departments authorized the use of neck-restraint tactics.

Use of cameras

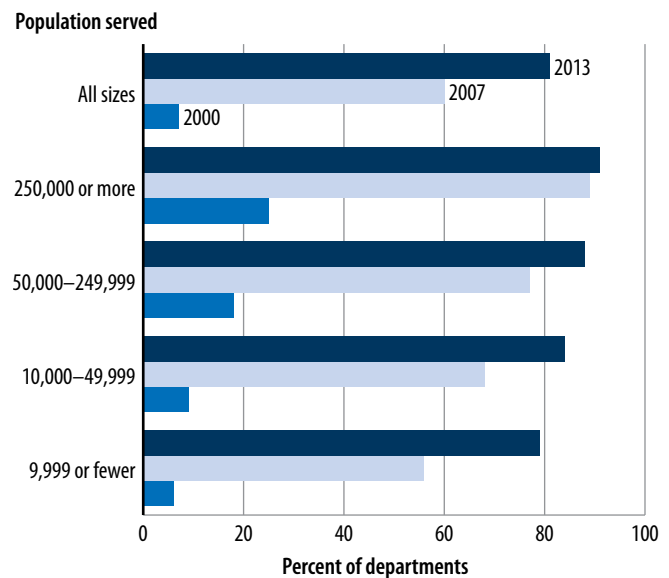
Nearly a third (32%) of local police departments provided at least some officers with body-worn cameras and 6% provided at least some officers with weapon-attached cameras in 2013. As this was the first time that the BJS LEMAS survey asked about body-worn and weapon-attached cameras, no trend data are available. The percentage of departments using in-car video cameras increased from 61% in 2007 to 68% in 2013.

Nearly 90% (about 11,000) of local police departments used some type of video camera technology in 2013. An estimated 17% used automated license plate readers and about half (49%) used video cameras for public area surveillance. Small percentages of departments deployed drones (less than 1%) or used advanced audio technology in the form of gunshot detection systems (4%).

Use of body armor and field computers

About 7 in 10 departments required uniformed patrol officers to wear protective body armor at all times while in the field. Departments with a mandatory body armor requirement employed 82% of all local police officers in 2013, compared to 67% in 2007 and 25% in 1990. In 2013, an additional 8% of departments required uniformed field officers to wear body armor in certain high-risk situations, such as when serving warrants. Departments with any type of body armor requirement employed 92% of all officers in 2013—about a 3-fold increase since 1990.

Local police departments authorizing the use of conducted energy weapons, by size of population served, 2000, 2007, and 2013



Note: Conducted energy weapons include Tasers and stun guns. See appendix table 1 in the report for the total number of departments. See appendix table 11 in the report for estimates and standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) Survey, 2000, 2007, and 2013.

About 9 in 10 local police officers were employed by a department that provided in-field computerized access to vehicle and driving records. Departments providing remote access to vehicle records employed 93% of all officers in 2013, compared to 86% in 2007. In 2000, less than a third of departments transmitted incident reports electronically from the field, but that number increased to 68% in 2013.

The full report (*Local Police Departments, 2013: Equipment and Technology*, NCJ 248767), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov.

