

Police Taser boy with broken back 19 times Authorities say they were trying to 'keep him from getting hurt'

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Parents of a 16-year-old boy in intensive care with a broken back want to know why police Tasered their son 19 times rather than calling an ambulance for help.

Citizens noticed [Branson](#), Mo., teenager Mace Hutchinson walking alongside the road and, fearing for his safety, called 9-1-1.

"We called the police. My wife was afraid he was going to get ran over or hit," said witness Doug Messersmith. "He looked a little agitated but, other than that, he didn't look to be falling down drunk or anything like that."

When police arrived, they found Hutchinson under an overpass on U.S. 65 Saturday morning, Springfield's KY3 News reported. The boy had fallen 30 feet off the overpass and was lying on the shoulder.

When the boy didn't respond to police, they Tasered him, repeatedly.

"I'm not an officer, but I don't see the reason for Tasering somebody lying there with a broken back. I don't consider that a threat," his aunt Samantha said.

Hutchinson was later admitted to the hospital, where he was put under intensive care for his injuries and is listed in fair condition. His family believes police added to the trauma after he fell from the overpass.

"According to the doctors, all injuries are consistent with a fall," Samantha said.

His father said Hutchinson did not jump but fell onto the pavement; however, no one knows why.

"They tested his system. He was clean of drugs and alcohol. We don't know why unless just being in shock and the whole thing in itself caused him to forget everything," Hutchinson told the television station.

While Hutchinson remains in the hospital for major surgery on his broken back and heel, the family questions police actions that morning. His father claims if police hadn't stunned the teenager 19 times, his critical surgery would not have been delayed by two days.



Mace Hutchinson, KY3 [video](#)



Mace Hutchinson, KY3 video

"The Tasing increased his white blood cell count and caused him to have a temperature so they could not go into the operation," he said.

However, Ozark police say the wounded boy was a threat.

"He refused to comply with the officers and so the officers had to deploy their Tasers in order to subdue him," Capt. Thomas Rousset said. "He is making incoherent statements; he's also making statements such as, 'Shoot cops, kill cops,' things like that. So there was cause for concern to the officers."

Authorities say their use of a Taser weapon should not be questioned, because they were trying to help Hutchinson to safety.

"It's a big concern for the officers to keep this guy out of traffic, to keep him from getting hurt," Rousset said.

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