

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

26 MARCH 2008

2007 Use of Force Statistics

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board receive this report pursuant to Use of Force Board Policy No. 02/04.

SYNOPSIS

As per the Board's Use of Force Policy No. 02/04, a summary of the statistical information collected, identified trends and issues related to the Use of Force during 2007 are contained in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND

Police Officers are authorized to use a range of force options in response to an event or incident in order to protect life, preserve the peace, prevent crimes, maintain order and apprehend suspects. When an incident occurs and an officer uses any of these force options, a Use of Force Report must be completed. Depending on the number of officers involved, there may be several Use of Force Reports submitted for each incident. The Use of Force Report provides a provincial wide standardized method for the collection of data from use of force incidents that occur during the day-to-day operations of a police service.

The authority and direction to collect use of force information are found in the Policing Standards Manual (procedure AI-012) and the *Police Services Act* (O. Reg. 926 s. 14.5). Procedure AI-012 came into force in 1993, and states in part the following:

- 14.5. *A member of a police force shall submit a report to the chief of police or Commissioner whenever the member,*
- (a) draws a handgun in the presence of a member of the public, excluding a member of the police force while on duty, or discharges a firearm;*
 - (b) uses a weapon other than a firearm on another person; or*
 - (c) uses physical force on another person that results in an injury requiring medical attention.*

The exceptions to this are:

- (a) a handgun is drawn or a firearm is discharged in the course of a training exercise, target practice or ordinary firearm maintenance in accordance with the rules of the police force.*
- (b) a weapon other than a firearm is used on another member of a police force in the course of a training exercise in accordance with the rules of the police force.*
- (c) physical force is used on another member of a police force in the course of a training exercise in accordance with the rules of the police force.*

After a Use of Force report is submitted by an officer, the member's immediate supervisor reviews the report. The report is then forwarded to the York Regional Police Use of Force Review Board. The Use of Force Review Board is comprised of the Officer in Charge of Training and Education, a qualified Use of Force Instructor from the Training and Education Unit, a Duty Inspector and a front line Supervisor.

York Regional Police Use of Force Procedure #LE-069 sets out the duties of the Use of Force Review Board as follows:

The Use of Force Review Board shall:

- a) meet and review the Use of Force summary monthly;
- b) thereafter destroy Part B of the Use of Force Form 1 and file Part A of the Form in accordance with the Police Services Act R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 926 Section 14.5;
- c) evaluate procedures relating to the drawing, exhibiting and discharge of firearms and the use of force generally;
- d) evaluate training methods;
- e) annually produce a Use of Force Study which provides critical use of force data and trends;
- f) direct their findings to the attention of the Chief of Police, the Deputy Chief of Administration and the Deputy Chief of Operations.

The Training & Education Unit compile the data collected from the Use of Force Reports and uses this information in an attempt to establish trends and identify problems that may be corrected through training or other administrative procedures.

Summary of the 2007 Use of Force Study:

- A total of 245 use of force incidents recorded on 327 Use of Force Reports were filed in 2007, which involved a total of 670 officers. In 2006, there were 290 use of force incidents recorded on 406 Use of Force Reports submitted which involved 1210 officers. This change reflects a 15.5 per cent decrease in the incidents requiring Use of Force Reports from 2006 to 2007 and a 44.6 per cent decrease in the number of involved officers.
- In 2007, there were 107.5 incidents requiring Use of Force Reports for every 100,000 demands for service. In 2006, there were 128.9 use of force incidents per 100,000 demands for service, a decrease of 21.4 incidents per 100,000 demands for service.
- Calls for service resulting in the use of force were varied in 2007 and in 2006. The percentage of calls that officers responded to that resulted in the submission of a Use of Force Report are as follows:

Type of Call	2006		2007		Variance
	Incidents	Percentage	Incidents	Percentage	+/(-)
Animal Destruction	40	13.8%	30	12.2%	(1.6%)
Assaults	22	7.6%	24	8.3%	0.7%
Break and Enter	17	5.9%	14	5.7%	0.2%
Disputes	15	5.2%	16	6.5%	1.3%
Disturbances	32	11.0%	19	7.8%	(3.2%)
Domestic Disputes	21	7.2%	18	7.3%	0.1%
Keep the Peace	10	3.4%	12	4.9%	1.5%
Mentally Ill	13	4.5%	14	5.7%	1.2%
Other*	28	9.7%	20	6.9%	(2.8%)
Robbery	22	7.6%	16	6.5%	(1.1%)
Search Warrant	n/a	n/a	6	2.4%	2.4%
Suspicious Persons	14	4.8%	7	2.9%	(1.9%)
Traffic Stop	17	5.9%	22	9.0%	3.1%
Weapons	39	13.4%	27	11.0%	(2.4%)
TOTAL OCCURRENCES	290		245		(15.5%)

* Suspicious Vehicles, Fail to Remain, Various Other Arrests.

- In 2007, 92 per cent of all use of force incidents involved more than one officer compared to 66 per cent in 2006. This represents a 26 per cent increase.
- Members draw their firearms when they believe on reasonable grounds that there is a threat and it is necessary to protect against loss of life or serious bodily harm, or to destroy an animal. In 2007, firearms were drawn 105 times and in 2006, they were drawn 127 times, which represents a 17.3 per cent decrease. The number of times a firearm was pointed at a person in 2007 was 146 and in 2006, it was 191, which is a decrease of 23.6 per cent.

- Rounds were discharged 63 times during 34 incidents in 2007. In 2006, the number of rounds discharged was 91, arising from 43 incidents. This represents a 30.8 per cent decrease in the number of rounds discharged. In 2007, shots were fired in 30 of the 34 incidents to humanely destroy an injured animal. Three of the remaining four incidents involved shots being fired at a subject during a robbery and hostage taking incident. The remaining incident involved shots being fired at a subject who was driving a vehicle at an officer. In 2006, shots were fired in 41 of the 43 incidents to humanely destroy an injured animal. The remaining two incidents involved shots being fired at subjects during home invasions.
- In 2007, 98, or 40 per cent of all use of force incidents involved an armed suspect, compared to 73 or 25 per cent in 2006. This represents a 15 per cent increase in the number of use of force contacts with suspects who were armed with weapons.

The chart below illustrates the variety of use of force options that were employed by officers during the past two years.

Use of Force Option	2006		2007		Variance
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	+/(-)
Aerosol Weapon	7	5.5%	2	1.5%	(4.0%)
Canine	4	3.1%	2	1.5%	(1.6%)
Empty Hand	20	15.6%	25	18.1%	2.5%
Firearm Discharged	1	.8%	3	2.2%	1.4%
Firearm Pointed/ Drawn	93	72.7%	102	73.9%	1.2%
Impact Weapon	3	2.3%	1	.7%	(1.6%)
Taser	0	0%	3	2.2%	2.2%

- In 2007, there were 24 use of force incidents where an officer was injured, as compared to 40 in 2006. Use of force incidents where a subject was injured were 90 as compared with 130 in 2006, a decrease of 30.8 per cent.
- In 2007, 172 of the 245 incidents requiring Use of Force Reports were submitted by officers with less than 5 years of service or 70 per cent, compared with 223 of the 290 incidents, or 77 per cent in 2006, a decrease of 7 per cent.
- The 245 Use of Force incidents resulted in 327 Use of Force Reports being submitted; 215 or 88 per cent of the incidents involved uniform personnel (including Emergency Response Unit, Canine and Court Security Officers). The remaining incidents were submitted by members assigned to non-uniform duties such as Hold Up, Drugs and Vice, Auto Recovery and Criminal Investigations. Out of the 290 incidents submitted in 2006, 89 per cent involved uniform officers, a decrease of 1 per cent.

In 2006, we experienced a decrease of 51.8 per cent over 2005 in use of force incidents where an officer was injured, but an increase of 2.3 per cent where a subject was injured. These incidents have been thoroughly reviewed by the Use of Force Review Board and any concerns associated to the incidents were addressed in In-Service Training.

In 2007, the Annual Requalification training included instruction to our members on threat recognition, communication, articulation as well as the effects of stress during a high risk event. This training has helped produce a further decrease of 40 per cent in the number of use of force incidents where an officer was injured and a 30.8 per cent decrease in incidents where a suspect was injured.

Two areas of interest that have been referred to The Training and Education Unit by the Use of Force Review Board that will be addressed in 2008 are as follows:

- Use of Force reporting by officers is continually improving, but there are common repetitive minor mistakes being made on reports. Specific instructions on this issue have been included in the 2008 Annual Requalification, Supervisor Operational Workshops and Orientation Workshops for newly promoted Supervisors.
- Despite the fact that occasions where a Use of Force Report was required has decreased, the frequency of an officer dealing with an armed person has increased 15 per cent. Instruction that educates our members on search techniques, threat recognition, communication and articulation have been included in the 2008 Annual Requalification.

The Use of Force Review Board will continue to monitor Use of Force reports and assess them for trends and patterns that are concerning in nature. If such trends or patterns are identified, investigations into the causes will be undertaken.

The Province of Ontario does not compile use of force yearly statistics. We are required by the Province of Ontario to complete Use of Force Reports, but there is no requirement to submit the reports unless requested. Use of force statistics from other policing organizations were sought in order to provide a meaningful comparison, however, those departments contacted could not or would not release their yearly statistics.

In conclusion, the review of the processes and methods that York Regional Police employ in reporting and dealing with the Use of Force, confirms that we are in compliance with the Policing Standards Manual, the *Police Services Act* and York Regional Police Regulations and Procedure

Armand P. La Barge, O.O.M.
Chief of Police

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