

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK  
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

25 FEBRUARY 2009

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**2008 Use of Force Statistics**

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**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 along with identified trends and issues related to the Use of Force during 2008 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 as a result of 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, which came into force in 1993, 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 it. 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 this information is used to establish trends and identify problems that may be corrected through training or other administrative procedures.

**Summary of the 2008 Use of Force Study:**

- A total of 184 use of force incidents recorded on 263 Use of Force Reports were filed in 2008, and involved a total of 574 officers. In 2007, there were 245 use of force incidents recorded on 327 Use of Force Reports involving a total of 670 officers. This change reflects a 19.6 percent decrease in the incidents requiring Use of Force Reports from 2007 to 2008 and a 14.3 percent decrease in the number of involved officers.
- In 2008 there were 76.7 incidents requiring Use of Force Reports for every 100,000 demands for service. In 2007, there were 107.5 use of force incidents per 100,000 demands for service which represents a decrease of 30.8 incidents per 100,000 demands for service.
- Calls for service resulting in the use of force were varied in 2008 and in 2007. 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	2007		2008		Variance
	Incidents	Percentage	Incidents	Percentage	+/(-)
Animal Destruction	30	12.2%	21	11.4%	(0.8%)
Assaults	24	8.3%	3	1.6%	(6.7%)
Break and Enter	14	5.7%	13	7.1%	1.4%
Disputes	16	6.5%	10	5.4%	(1.1%)
Disturbances	19	7.8%	18	9.8%	2.0%
Domestic Disputes	18	7.3%	18	9.8%	2.5%
Keep the Peace	12	4.9%	10	5.4%	0.5%
Mentally Ill	14	5.7%	7	3.8%	(1.9%)
Other*	20	8.2%	21	11.4%	3.2%
Robbery	16	6.5%	7	3.8%	(2.7%)
Search Warrant	6	2.4%	3	1.6%	(0.8%)
Suspicious Persons	7	2.9%	7	3.8%	0.9%
Traffic Stop	22	9.0%	14	7.6%	(1.4%)
Weapons	27	11.0%	32	17.4%	6.4%
<b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b>	<b>245</b>		<b>184</b>		<b>(24.9%)</b>

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

- In 2008, 78 percent of all use of force incidents involved more than one officer compared to 92 percent in 2007. This represents a 14 percent decrease.
- Members draw their firearms when they believe on reasonable grounds that it is necessary to protect against loss of life or serious bodily harm, or to destroy an animal. In 2008, firearms were drawn 123 times and in 2007, they were drawn 105 times, which

represents a 14.6 percent increase. The number of times a firearm was pointed at a person in 2008 was 94 and in 2007 it was 148 which is a decrease of 36.5 percent.

- Rounds were discharged 38 times during 22 incidents in 2008. In 2007, the number of rounds discharged was 63, arising from 34 incidents. This represents a 39.7 percent decrease in the number of rounds discharged. In 2008, shots were fired in 22 of the 22 incidents to humanely destroy an injured animal. 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 2008, 59, or 32 percent of all use of force incidents involved an armed suspect compared to 98, or 40 percent in 2007. This represents an 8 percent decrease 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	2007		2008		Variance + / (-)
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Aerosol Weapon	35	9.0%	23	7.9%	(1.1%)
Canine	18	4.6%	12	4.1%	(0.5%)
Empty Hand	135	34.6%	125	43.0%	8.4%
Firearm Discharged	34	8.7%	22	7.6%	(1.1%)
Firearm Pointed	148	38.0%	94	32.3%	(5.7%)
Impact Weapon	7	1.8%	8	2.8%	1.0%
Conductive Energy Device	13	3.3%	9	3.1%	(0.2%)

- In 2008, there were 31 use of force incidents where an officer was injured as compared to 24 in 2007 which represents a decrease of 22.6 percent. Use of force incidents where a subject was injured were 62 as compared with 90 in 2007 and this represents a decrease of 31 percent.
- In 2008, 133 of the 184, or 72.3 percent of incidents requiring Use of Force Reports were submitted by officers with less than 5 years of service compared with 207 of the 245 incidents, or 84.4 percent in 2007 which represents a decrease of 12.1 percent.
- The 184 Use of Force incidents resulted in 263 Use of Force Reports being submitted of which 157 or 85.3 percent of the incidents involved uniform personnel. This includes the Emergency Response Unit, Canine Unit 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 245 incidents submitted in 2007, 88 percent involved uniform officers, a decrease of 2.7 percent.
- In 2008, Conductive Energy Devices were used 9 times by members of the Emergency Response Unit compared to 13 times in 2007. This represents a 30.8 percent decrease

in the number of times members of the Emergency Response Unit used a Conductive Energy Device.

In 2008, we experienced an increase of 22.6 percent over 2007 in use of force incidents where an officer was injured, but a decrease of 31 percent 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 during In-Service Training.

In 2008, the Annual Requalification training included instruction to our members on excited delirium, dealing with armed persons, judgmental scenarios, officer safety and use of force legal requirements. This training has contributed to a decrease of 14.3 percent in the number of officers involved in use of force incidents.

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 2009 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 2009 Annual Requalification, Supervisor Workshops and Orientation Workshops for newly promoted Supervisors.
- Despite the decrease in occasions where a Use of Force Report was required, the frequency of an officer being injured when dealing with individuals where force is used has increased 22.6 percent. Education on such topics as wellness, fitness, stress management, communication and the care and handling of high risk prisoners has been included in the 2009 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. If such trends or patterns are identified investigations into the causes will be undertaken.

The Province of Ontario does not compile yearly use of force statistics. York Regional Police is 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, the other police services 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 Procedures.

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