

PUBLIC

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

APRIL 19, 2017

Use of Force Statistics

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board receive this report pursuant to Use of Force Board Policy No. 01/14.

SYNOPSIS

As per the Board's Use of Force Policy No. 01/14, a summary of the statistical information collected along with identified trends and issues related to Use of Force during 2016 are contained in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND

Police officers are authorized to use a range of use 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 upon the number of officers involved, there may be several Use

of Force Reports submitted for each incident. The Use of Force Report provides a province-wide standardized method for the collection of local data by individual police services 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 (AI-012), the *Police Services Act* (O. Reg. 926 s. 14.5) and York Regional Police Use of Force Procedure (AI-012/ AI-014). In accordance with the Policing Standards Manual and the *Police Services Act*, York Regional Police Use of Force Procedure (AI-012/ AI-014) states, in part, the following:

A member shall submit a Use of Force Report when:

- a) a member draws a handgun in the presence of a member of the public, excluding a member of the police force who is on duty, points a firearm at a person or discharges a firearm. A member of the public includes a suspect or arrested person;*
- b) a member uses a weapon other than a firearm on another person;*
- c) a Conductive Energy Weapon is unholstered and displayed in the demonstrated force presence mode; or*
- d) a member uses physical force on another person, not in relation to training conducted by the Training and Education Bureau, that results in an injury requiring medical attention.*

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 Training and Education Bureau and then to the Use of Force Review Committee. The Use of Force Review Committee is comprised of the Officer-in-Charge of the Training and Education Bureau, a Staff Sergeant in the Training and Education Bureau, a Sergeant in the Use of Force Unit, the Use of Force Training Analyst, a Duty Inspector and a Patrol Sergeant.

York Regional Police Use of Force Procedure (AI-012/ AI-14) sets out the duties of the Use of Force Review Committee as follows:

The Use of Force Review Committee shall:

- a) meet quarterly and review a Use of Force summary;*
- b) evaluate procedures relating to:*
 - (i) drawing, exhibiting and discharging of a firearm; and*
 - (ii) use of force.*
- c) evaluate training methods;*
- d) annually produce a Use of Force Study that provides critical use of force data and trends which does not contain information that identifies reporting police officers;*
- e) direct the findings of the Use of Force Study to:*
 - (i) the Chief of Police;*
 - (ii) the Deputy Chief of Operations; and*
 - (iii) the Deputy Chief of Administration.*

The Training and Education Bureau compiles 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 2016 Use of Force Study:

- In 2016, York Regional Police members attended a total of 337,355 calls for service. These calls included traffic stops, citizen generated calls for service and officer initiated contacts. Of these calls for service, 282 resulted in the submission of Use of Force Reports. Consequently, only 0.08 percent of police interactions with the public resulted in a Use of Force Report being submitted. In comparison, 293 incidents were submitted in 2015. There was a 3.75 percent decrease of the number of incidents requiring Use of Force Reports from 2015 to 2016.
- The following is a five year comparison of the total number incidents where Use of Force Reports were submitted:
 - 2012 – 185
 - 2013 – 161
 - 2014 – 165
 - 2015 – 293
 - 2016 – 282
- A total of 282 use of force incidents, recorded on 337 Use of Force Reports were filed in 2016, involving a total of 527 officers. In 2015, there were 293 use of force incidents, recorded on 429 Use of Force Reports submitted, involving a total of 457 officers. This change reflects a 3.75 percent decrease of the number of incidents requiring Use of Force Reports from 2015 to 2016 and a 15.3 percent increase in the number of officers involved in incidents that required Use of Force Reports (Chart 1). The factors contributing to the increase are described in more detail within the Trending Section of this Report.
- Humane dispatch of injured animals (46 incidents in 2016 compared to 81 incidents in 2015), displaying firearms (169 incidents in 2016 compared to 129 incidents in 2015) and displaying a Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW) (52 incidents in 2016 compared to 17 incidents in 2015). The displaying of CEW effectively works to de-escalate incidents and minimize the potential for injury to the community and officers.
- In 2016, there were 83.6 incidents requiring Use of Force Reports for every 100,000 demands for service. In 2015, there were 140.7 incidents requiring Use of Force Reports for every 100,000 demands for service. This represents a 40.6 percent decrease of incidents requiring Use of Force per 100,000 demands for service, from 2015. This can be attributed to a 43.2 percent decrease in humane dispatching of injured animals and a 9.6 percent decrease in CEW reporting.
- The following is a five year comparison of the total number of incidents where a Use of Force Report was submitted for every 100,000 calls for service.
 - 2012 - 73.4 per 100,000
 - 2013 - 71.9 per 100,000
 - 2014 - 74.8 per 100,000
 - 2015 - 140.7 per 100,000
 - 2016 – 83.6 per 100,000

- The types of calls for service resulting in use of force were varied in 2016 as it was in 2015. The percentage of calls that officers responded to that resulted in the submission of a Use of Force Report is as follows in Chart 1.

Chart 1

Types of Citizen Generated Calls for Service			
	2015	2016	Variance (%)
			1 Year
Animals	81	46	-43.2
Assaults	6	6	0
Break and Enters	10	28	180.0
Domestic Disputes	28	16	-42.9
Emotionally Disturbed Persons	42	45	7.1
Homicides	0	0	0
Other Disturbances	13	17	30.8
Robberies	4	8	100.0
Search Warrants	5	3	-40.0
Suspicious Persons	7	3	-57.1
Traffic Stops	11	10	-9.1
Weapons	51	51	0
Other*	35	49	40.0

*Other includes: Theft of Vehicle, Wanted Person, Intoxicated Person, Drugs and various other arrests.

- In 2016, 60.1 percent of all use of force incidents involved more than one officer. In 2015, 79.1 percent of all use of force incidents involved more than one officer; this represents a 24.0 percent decrease over last year.
- 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 2016, firearms were drawn and pointed at a person 178 times, compared to 162 times in 2015. This represents a 9.9 percent increase. This increase can be directly attributed to better uniform response and management of weapons calls and arrests of subjects during break and enter calls.
- The types of incidents reported include; weapons calls, silent 911 calls, robbery calls, break and enter calls, armed and suspicious person calls, high risk search warrants and high risk vehicle stops.
- In 2016, 46 incidents resulted in 69 firearm rounds being discharged. In all of the incidents firearms were discharged to humanely dispatch injured animals. In 2015, 81 incidents resulted in 163 firearm rounds being discharged. In one incident, a bear was dispatched due to the risk to public safety. The remaining incidents where firearms were discharged were to humanely dispatch injured animals. This represents a 43.2 percent decrease over last year.
- The decrease can be attributed to the Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board sending a letter in 2016 to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. In

addition, our nine municipalities advising that, York Regional Police would no longer respond to animal complaints related to sick or injured animals that do not pose a risk to public safety. An exception would be if the animal is injured in relation to a motor vehicle collision.

- The decrease can also be attributed to a reduction of canine distemper in the wildlife population. This resulted in less calls for service.
- In 2016, 73 use of force incidents involved a suspect armed with a weapon, compared to 72 use of force incidents in 2015. This represents a 1.4 percent increase in the number of use of force incidents involving suspects armed with weapons.
- In 2016, officers encountered suspects armed with a weapon in 73 of 234 use of force incidents which represents 31.2 percent of the incidents. The most common weapons encountered were edged weapons at 41.1 percent and firearms at 23.2. Comparatively, in 2015 officers encountered suspects armed with a weapon in 72 of 293 use of force incidents which represents 24.6 percent. The most common weapons encountered were edged weapons at 52.8 percent and firearms at 23.6 percent.
- In 2016, officers were confronted with edged weapons a total of 30 times versus 38 times in 2015 representing a 21.1 percent decrease.
- In 2016, CEWs were used (drawn, displayed, and discharged) a total of 73 times by front line officers and members of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) compared to 83 times in 2015. This represents a decrease of 12.0 percent.
- In 2016, there were 1,984 emotionally disturbed persons apprehended. In these incidents there were only 45 requiring a Use of Force report which represents 2.3 percent of the incidents. In 2015, there were 1,904 emotionally disturbed persons apprehended. In these incidents there were only 42 requiring a Use of Force report which represents 2.2 percent of the incidents.
- There are several factors that contribute to the success of a canine assisted arrest of a subject. In 2016, there were 16 incidents requiring a Use of Force report where Canine was utilized as an option to assist in officers in the arrest of a subject versus five times in 2015 representing a 220 percent increase. This increase can be attributed to an increased number of subjects being found hiding in buildings due to better front line response times.
- Subjects complied once canine located them. They hid as a result of quick response times and subjects not having the time to escape prior to front line officers arriving. When front line officers arrived, subject hid, hoping to evade police.

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

Chart 2

Type of Force Used			
Use of Force Option	2015	2016	Variance (%)
			1 Year
Firearm Discharged	81	46	-43.2
Firearm Pointed at Person	162	135	-16.7
Firearm Drawn	129	34	-73.6
Aerosol Weapon	6	6	0
Impact Weapon – Hard	8	9	12.5
Impact Weapon – Soft	2	1	-50.0
Empty Hand – Hard	39	33	-15.4
Empty Hand – Soft	78	33	-57.7
Conducted Energy Weapon	83	75	-9.6
Canine	5	16	220.0
Other*	9	0	-100.0

*Other includes: Items of opportunity that were accessible to the officer in an emergent situation that were not issued or listed equipment. Examples include: tables, chairs and Muzzle Blast (a Less Lethal Powder Dispersion deployed by ERU)

- In 2016, there were seven officers injured in use of force incidents, compared to four officers in 2015. This represents a 75 percent increase. In each of these instances, the officer’s injuries were minor in nature.
- In 2016, 76 subjects were injured in use of force incidents, compared to 64 subjects in 2015. This represents a 18.75 percent increase in injuries to subjects. This increase in the number of reported injuries to subjects in 2016 were minor in nature as a result of probe removals from CEW deployments.
- In 2016, 90.5 percent of the use of force incidents involved uniform personnel and 9.5 percent of officers assigned to plain clothes duties. In 2015, 90.7 percent of the use of force incidents involved uniform personnel and 9.3 percent of officers assigned to plain clothes duties.
- In 2016, the largest percentage 41.6 percent of use of force incidents took place on a roadway.
- In 2016, 53.8 percent of all use of force incidents took place between 6:00 pm and 6:00 am.

Trending – Use Of Force

The following areas were noted as trends in Use of Force categories for 2016:

Empty Hand – Soft – There was a 57.7 percent decrease in Empty Hand – Soft (physical control) from 2015 to 2016.

Conducted Energy Weapon – There was a 9.6 percent decrease in the reported use of the Conducted Energy Weapon from 2015 to 2016.

Handgun Drawn – There was a 73.6 percent decrease in handguns drawn from 2015 to 2016.

Firearms Discharged – There was a 43.2 percent decrease in firearms discharged from 2015 to 2016.

The overall decreases in the various uses of force can be attributed to officers using de-escalation methods more effectively, as opposed to using a higher level of force option. Better scene management, utilization of resources and the issue of canine distemper naturally running its course, also contributed to the decrease.

The Training and Education Bureau continues to monitor information provided by the Use of Force Review Committee in order to adapt practical skills training where required. This is often conducted through firearms skills, defensive tactics and scenario-based training exercises, that emphasise de-escalation and communication. This skills-based training is delivered on the Annual Uniform Requalification Training Program. Through data gathered from the Use of Force Reports, the Training and Education Bureau is able to provide officers with the knowledge and skills based training required to protect the public and themselves.

Recommendations

The ongoing commitment to de-escalation techniques and training will continue to be a focus of practical skills training.

The Use of Force Review Committee will continue to review all Use of Force Reports and assess the circumstances and outcomes for trends and patterns. This information will be integrated into various training opportunities to ensure members are properly prepared to deal with situations that arise requiring the appropriate tactical considerations.

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 these reports unless requested.

In conclusion, the review of the processes and methods that York Regional Police employ in reporting and dealing with use of force incidents are in compliance with the Policing Standards Manual, the *Police Services Act* and York Regional Police Use of Force Procedure (AI-012).

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request