



SASKATOON POLICE SERVICE

TO: Jo Custead, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Troy Cooper
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2022 May 09

SUBJECT: 2021 Use of Force Report

FILE #: 10,030

ISSUE:

The Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) provides statistical reporting to the Board of Police Commissioners on an annual basis. This report details the Use of Force that was reported from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

This report supports several strategic priorities including Crime & Safety, Innovation and Our People, mainly by ensuring our members have the best equipment, technology and training to do their jobs in an efficient, effective and safe manner.

BACKGROUND:

The primary objectives of the Saskatoon Police Service are; the safety of lives and protection of property, the preservation of peace and order, the prevention of crime, the detection of offenders, and the enforcement of the law. Meeting these objectives sometimes requires an application of force providing that it is reasonable, in direct response to another's resistance and is not excessive.

Every application of force by a member of the Saskatoon Police Service is carefully reviewed and scrutinized by members of the Use of Force Review Board. The Board is an independent review mechanism that provides opinions on the appropriateness of the force used and the quality of the supervision at the time of the incident. The Board will also attempt to identify any training issues or emerging trends.

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| Use of force Comparison 2019-2021 | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Type of Force Used | | | |
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| Firearm Discharged | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| Firearm Pointed | 14 | 5 | 7 |
| Firearm - animal Destruction | 12 | 12 | 14 |
| Less Lethal | 0 | 4 | 7 |
| Baton | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| OC Spray | 10 | 8 | 4 |
| Chemical Weapon | 0 | 5 | 10 |
| Canine | 43 | 42 | 29 |
| Diversionary Device | 10 | 18 | 16 |
| Conducted Energy Weapon | 32 | 25 | 26 |
| Conducted Energy Weapon - Point | 14 | 15 | 8 |
| Neck Restraint | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Pressure Point Stun | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Physical Strike | 107 | 52 | 72 |
| Joint Lock | 18 | 15 | 7 |
| Takedown/Throw | 50 | 40 | 39 |
| Restraint Strap | 16 | 12 | 10 |
| Spit Sock | 28 | 41 | 25 |
| Restraint Chair | 18 | 12 | 15 |
| Tactical Team | 35 | 45 | 49 |
| Explosive Forced Entry | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| Injury Status | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|----|
| | | | |
| Suspect Injured | 119 | 108 | 93 |
| Death | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Medical Attention | 91 | 80 | 71 |
| Hospitalized | 32 | 38 | 25 |
| | | | |
| Officer Injured | 26 | 22 | 18 |
| Medical Attention | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| Hospitalized | 1 | 2 | 1 |

DISCUSSION:

The above chart shows the breakdown of the types of force that were used in 2021 in comparison to the previous two years. It should be noted that these are the individual types of force that were used. There were 310 occurrences where force was used; however, there is sometimes more than one type of force used in a single occurrence.

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Preventative Uses of Force

SPS officers often take actions to prevent injury, prevent assaults or prevent suffering to animals. These are recorded as force and are included in the SPS use of force statistics. The following are examples:

- Euthanizing an injured animal – 15 occurrences
 - A pellet gun, not meeting the legal definition of firearm, was used in the destruction of a bird in one event.
- Spit Sock – 25 occurrences
 - Officers slip a disposable cover over the head of an arrest that is spitting at them without having to use any further physical force to prevent the assault against police.
- Restraint Chair – 15 occurrences
 - The Restraint Chair is an approved restraint system designed to limit the movement of prisoners who require extreme measures of control while in custody of the SPS Detention unit. The Restraint Chair is only used as a “last resort” when no other means is available to control or keep a prisoner from hurting themselves or others.
- Modified Restraint Strap – 10 occurrences
 - Modified Restraint Strap may be used when a subject within lawful custody requires a greater level of restraint in order to prevent harm to themselves or others, to prevent the destruction of property, or to prevent escape.
- Tactical Support Unit (TSU) – 49 occurrences
 - TSU has access to specialized training and equipment which increases the likelihood of a peaceful resolution. The decision to utilize TSU should not be considered an escalation, but rather a de-escalation of force. The mere presence of the TSU team is often enough to have suspects surrender peacefully. Even when TSU is able to resolve a situation peacefully, it is considered a use of force.
 - In 2021, TSU used Diversionary Devices 16 times. These devices are meant to distract and divert the suspects to allow police a safe opportunity to ensure public and officer safety in order to arrest the suspect.

Conducted Energy Weapon

Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs) are authorized by the Saskatchewan Police Commission and the Chief of Police for use by trained members who qualify on an annual basis. A member’s training, judgment and discretion are crucial when responding to the variety of situations in which CEWs may be employed.

The use of CEWs in 2021 has increased by 4% compared to 2020 however compared to the year prior (2019), CEW deployment has decreased by 18.75%. In 2021 CEW deployments made up 7% of the total uses of force which is a 2.5% decrease from 2020.

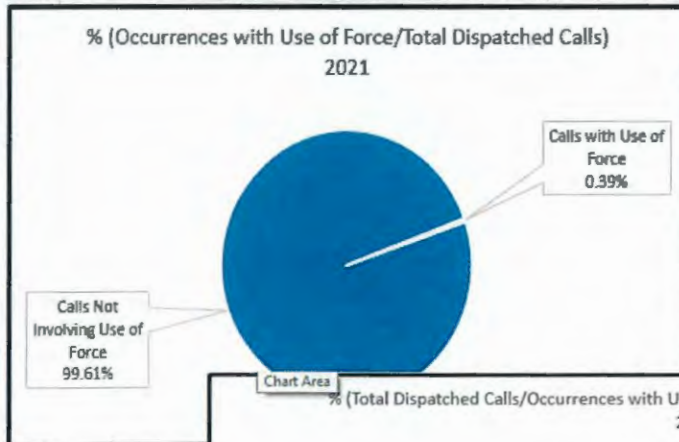
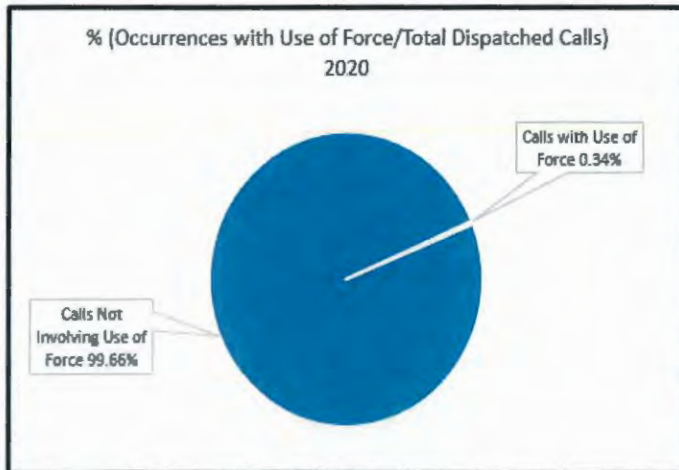
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Injuries

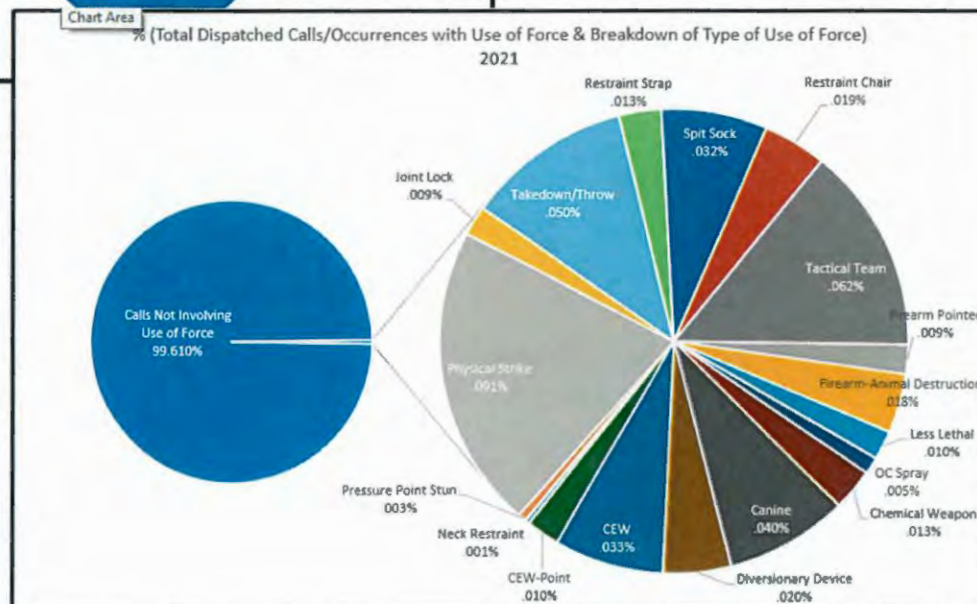
There has been a continual decrease of injuries to suspects in the previous two years. In 2021 25.5% of uses of force resulted in suspect injury compared to the previous year of 31%. Injuries to officers also decreased from 22 to 18.

Frequency of Use of Force

In 2021, the SPS had 310 occurrences where force was used. In the same year, we attended 79,121 dispatched calls for service.



If we consider this, the data shows that 78,811 calls were resolved without any force which is a rate of 99.61%. It is important to note, that this data does not include the countless daily interactions police officers have with the public without incident, for example, traffic stops, school and community liaison officer functions, regular patrols, foot patrols, recruiting, etcetera.



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Training

Standards for Use of Force training are found in the Saskatchewan Police Commission Policy Manual. All instruction of Use of Force training is carried out by instructors that are approved and trained by the Saskatchewan Police College. Human Resources is responsible for maintaining and managing records of training certification and re-certification, as well as overseeing compliance with training standards set by the Saskatchewan Police Commission. SPS officers are trained on the Use of Force model, Firearms, Defensive Tactics and De-escalation on an annual basis. During this training, reality-based training scenarios are implemented where officers practice their de-escalation and communication skills.

Recruits receive the following training while attending the Saskatchewan Police College:

- A full Verbal Judo course consisting of three, 8 hour days.
- De-escalation training is part of the Defensive Tactics training including scenario training.
- De-escalation training is also part of their CEW training and is a component of the final certification.
- Public and Officer Safety Training includes scenarios where de-escalation is utilized.
- Once back at the SPS, recruits are put through scenarios as part of their in-service training.

In 2021 SPS implemented additional de-escalation teaching into block training. The syllabus consists of the main points of the Verbal Judo curriculum. The Training Unit intends to continue evolving the de-escalation curriculum.

Finally, the SPS currently sits on a national use of force and de-escalation of force committee committed to identifying best practices in terms of use of force training, a national use of force model, including de-escalation curriculum and teaching.

CONCLUSION:

Some of the guiding principles listed in the Use of Force Model state that:

- The primary responsibility of a peace officer is to preserve and protect life.
- The primary objective of any use of force is to ensure public safety.
- Police officer safety is essential to public safety.

In the interest of public safety, officers have been granted the lawful authority to use force as outlined in sections 25, 26, and 27 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. This protection is conditional, officers must be able to justify their actions and are responsible for any force that is excessive.

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The Use of Force Model is used by members as a training reference tool for explaining their actions and decision making. It is a tool to facilitate understanding and articulation of the events associated with an incident involving a member's use of force. The Use of Force Board strives to ensure that the principles of this model and the law are adhered to, and in so doing, reinforces the SPS's commitment to public safety.

Written by: **Tonya Gresty**
Inspector, Central Division
Chair, Use of Force Board

Approved by: **Cam McBride**
Superintendent, Patrol

Randy Huisman
Deputy Chief, Operations



Submitted by: _____
Troy Cooper
Chief of Police

Dated: _____
May 9, 2022