



**SASKATOON** \_\_\_\_\_  
**POLICE SERVICE**

**TO:** Jo Custead, Chairperson  
Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** Troy Cooper  
Office of the Chief

**DATE:** 28 April 2023

**SUBJECT:** 2022 Use of Force Annual Report

**FILE #:** 10,030

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**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, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

**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 SPS 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 SPS 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.

**“PUBLIC AGENDA”**

<b>Use of force Comparison 2019-2022</b>			
<b>Type of Force Used</b>			
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Firearm Discharged	2	0	5
Firearm Pointed	5	7	9
Firearm - animal Destruction	12	14	6
Less Lethal	4	7	6
Baton	1	0	1
OC Spray	8	4	4
Chemical Weapon	5	10	11
Canine	42	29	30
Diversionsary Device	18	16	7
Conducted Energy Weapon	25	26	31
Conducted Energy Weapon - Point	15	8	18
Neck Restraint	1	1	3
Pressure Point Stun	3	2	2
Physical Strike	52	72	73
Joint Lock	15	7	7
Takedown/Throw	40	39	28
Restraint Strap	12	10	10
Spit Sock	41	25	23
Restraint Chair	12	15	21
Tactical Team	45	49	48
Explosive Forced Entry	0	0	1

<b>Injury Status</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Suspect Injured</b>	108	93	82
Death	0	0	1
Medical Attention	80	71	58
Hospitalized	38	25	24
<b>Officer Injured</b>	22	18	7
Medical Attention	3	7	3
Hospitalized	2	1	2

**DISCUSSION:**

The above chart shows the breakdown of the types of force that were used in 2022 in comparison to the previous two years. It should be noted that these are the individual types of force that were used. There were 266 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 – 6 occurrences.
- Spit Sock – 23 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 – 21 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) – 48 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 2022, TSU used diversionary devices 7 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 2022 has increased by 19% compared to 2021. However, after decreasing over the two previous years, CEW deployment is now almost on par to the year 2019. In 2022 CEW deployments made up 12% of the total uses of force.

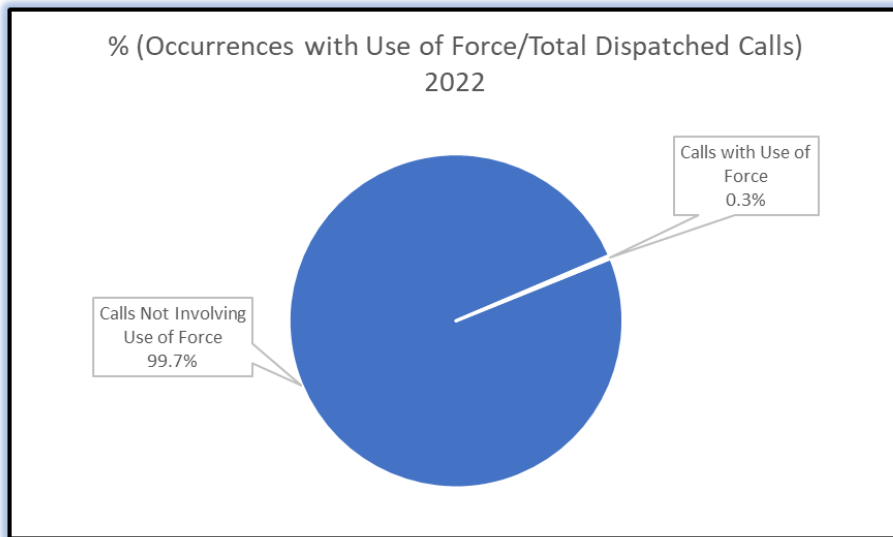
# “PUBLIC AGENDA”

## Injuries

In 2022, 31% of use of force incidents resulted in injuries to suspects. This is a slight increase from the previous year but is on par to the year 2020. 2.6% of use of force incidents resulted in injuries to officers.

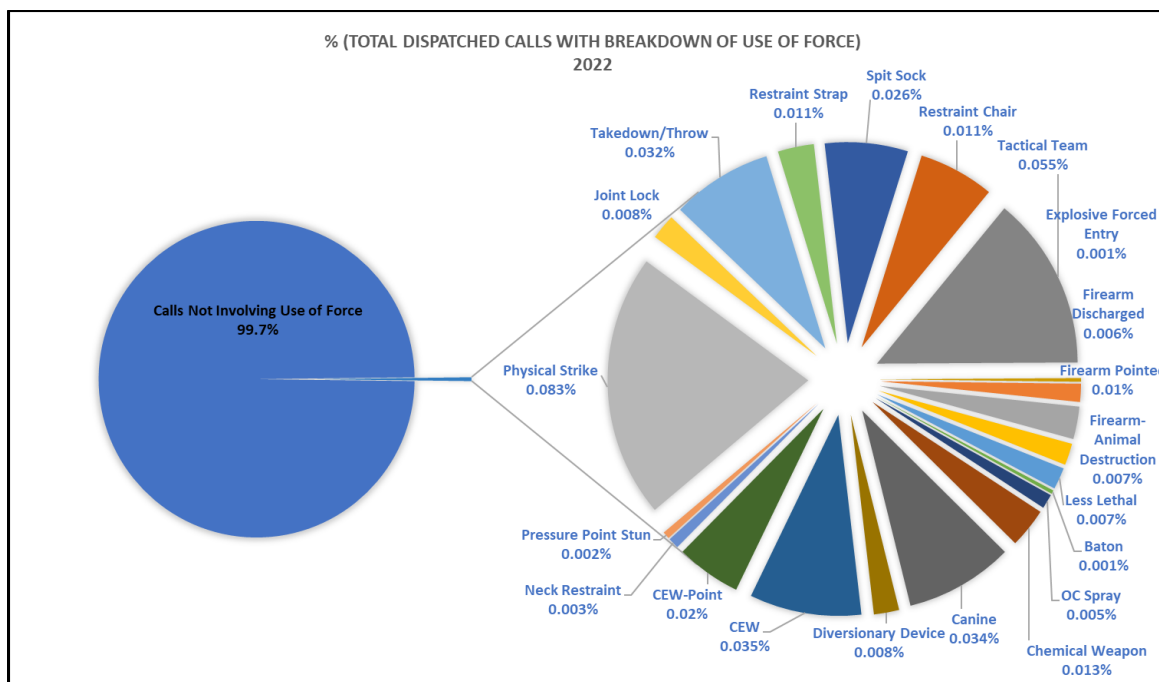
On October 27, 2022, officers were involved in an “officer involved shooting” which resulted in the death of a male individual. The Regina Police Service Major Crime Unit is investigating this incident with oversight being conducted by the Saskatchewan Serious Incident Response Team.

## Frequency of Use of Force



In 2022, the SPS had 266 occurrences where force was used. In the same year, we attended 88,111 dispatched calls.

In 2021 SPS attended 79,121 calls and had 310 use of force occurrences. Comparatively, 2022 saw a 14% decrease in use of force occurrences, with a 11.4% increase in dispatched calls.



## **“PUBLIC AGENDA”**

If we consider the information in the chart above, the data shows that 87,847 calls were resolved without any force which is a rate of 99.7%.

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.

### 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, Defensive Tactics and De-escalation on an annual basis. During this training, reality-based training scenarios are implemented where they can practice their de-escalation and communication skills.

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

- Elements of “verbal judo” in communication training along with crisis and de-escalation communication.
- 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 continues 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, 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.

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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.

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:** **Richard Bueckert, Inspector, Patrol A/B**  
**Chair, Use of Force Board**

**Approved by:** **A/Superintendent Dale Solie, Patrol**  
**Deputy Chief Cam McBride, Operations**

**Submitted by:** **Troy Cooper, Chief of Police**