



SASKATOON _____
POLICE SERVICE

TO: Shirley Greyeyes, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Dave Hays
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2024 April 22

SUBJECT: 2023 Use of Force Annual 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, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

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.

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.

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

The Use of Force Model (Appendix B) is a reference and training tool used nationwide a for explaining 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.

Every application of force by a member of the SPS is carefully reviewed 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, striving to ensure proper application of force.

DATA:

Use of force Comparison 2020-2023						
Type of Force Used	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023-2022 change	2023 % of Total Uses of Force
Firearm Discharged	2	0	5	2	-3	1%
Firearm Pointed	5	7	9	13	4	4%
Firearm - Animal Destruction	12	14	6	10	4	3%
Less Lethal	4	7	6	4	-2	1%
Baton	1	0	1	2	1	1%
OC Spray	8	4	4	2	-2	1%
Chemical Weapon	5	10	11	8	-3	2%
Canine	42	29	30	32	2	9%
Diversionsary Device	18	16	7	5	-2	1%
Conducted Energy Weapon	25	26	31	33	2	9%
Conducted Energy Weapon - Point	15	8	18	17	-1	5%
Neck Restraint	1	1	3	7	4	2%
Pressure Point Stun	3	2	2	4	2	1%
Physical Strike	52	72	73	82	9	22%
Joint Lock	15	7	7	10	3	3%
Takedown/Throw	40	39	28	39	11	11%
Restraint Strap	12	10	10	9	-1	2%
Spit Sock	41	25	23	53	30	14%
Restraint Chair	12	15	21	8	-13	2%
Tactical Team	45	49	48	31	-17	8%
Explosive Forced Entry	0	0	1	0	-1	0%

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

Injury Status	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Suspect Injured	108	93	82	93		
Death	0	0	1	0		
Medical Attention	80	71	58	72		
Hospitalized	38	25	24	26		
Officer Injured	22	18	7	27		
Medical Attention	3	7	3	11		
Hospitalized	2	1	2	3		

DISCUSSION:

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:

- Firearm – Animal Destruction – 10
- Spit Sock – 53
- Restraint Chair – 8
- Restraint Strap – 9
- Tactical Support Unit (TSU) – 31

Injuries

In 2023, 33% of use of force incidents resulted in injuries to suspects. This is a 2% rise as compared to 2022, but the 93 instances are the same number as 2021, and much fewer than 2020.

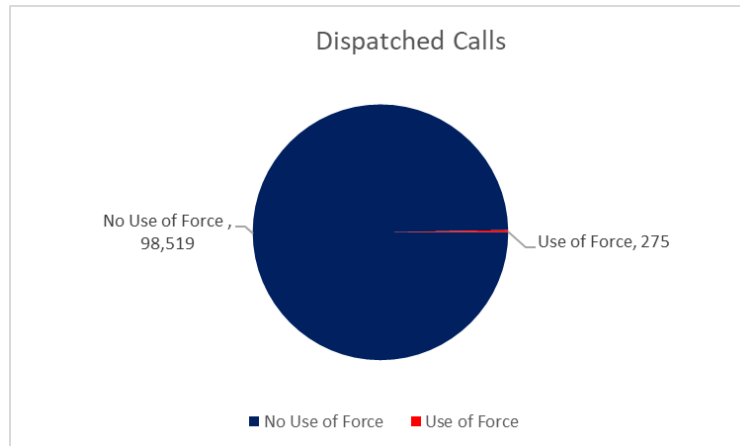
Officers were injured in 27 instances; 20 more members being hurt in 2023 over 2022. However, due to the higher volume of calls attended in 2023, the ratio of officer injuries remains the same in 2023 as compared to 2022.

Overall, suspect and officer injuries have remained static from 2022 to 2023.

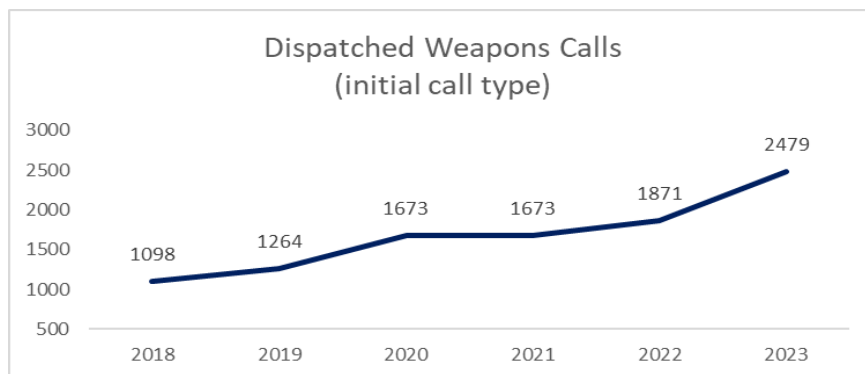
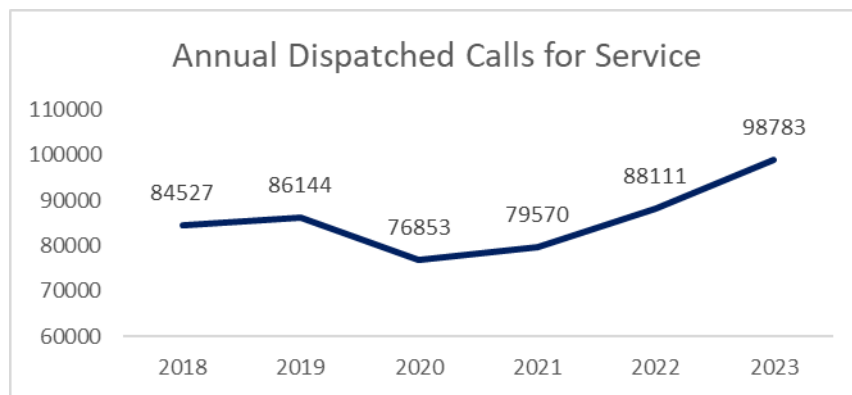
Frequency of Use of Force

In 2023, the SPS was dispatched to 98,783 calls for service, which resulted in 275 occurrences where force was used (0.269%). This ratio is similar to 2022 and means no use of force is required for 99.7% of calls.

“PUBLIC AGENDA”



Use of Force tends to go up with the quantity of calls dispatched along with the severity of calls for service. Dispatched calls for service increased by 12% in 2023 while dispatched weapons calls increased 32%



“PUBLIC AGENDA”

Use of Force Tracking

Training began towards the end of 2023 to prepare for the implementation of this new software, called BlueTeams, which will help track SPS Use of Force incidents. BlueTeam’s simplicity will help document accurately the use-of-force incidents by our members. These reports can then be routed through the chain-of-command with review and approval at each step in a timely manner.

CONCLUSION:

Use of Force tracked in this report increased 7.8% from 2022 to 2023, while dispatched calls increased by 12%. Increased severity or complexity of calls for service make it more difficult to avoid force and put everyone at an increased risk; including the public, suspects and officers involved as seen in the injuries section. The SPS continues to demonstrate its efforts to take use of force seriously by minimizing its use when possible, investing in Blue Teams to facilitate better tracking and by using the use of force model to make and explain decisions guided by the *Criminal Code*.

Written by: Lisa Nowosad, Inspector, Patrol A/B
Chair, Use of Force Board

Approved by: Darren Pringle, Superintendent, Patrol
Cameron McBride, Deputy Chief, Operations

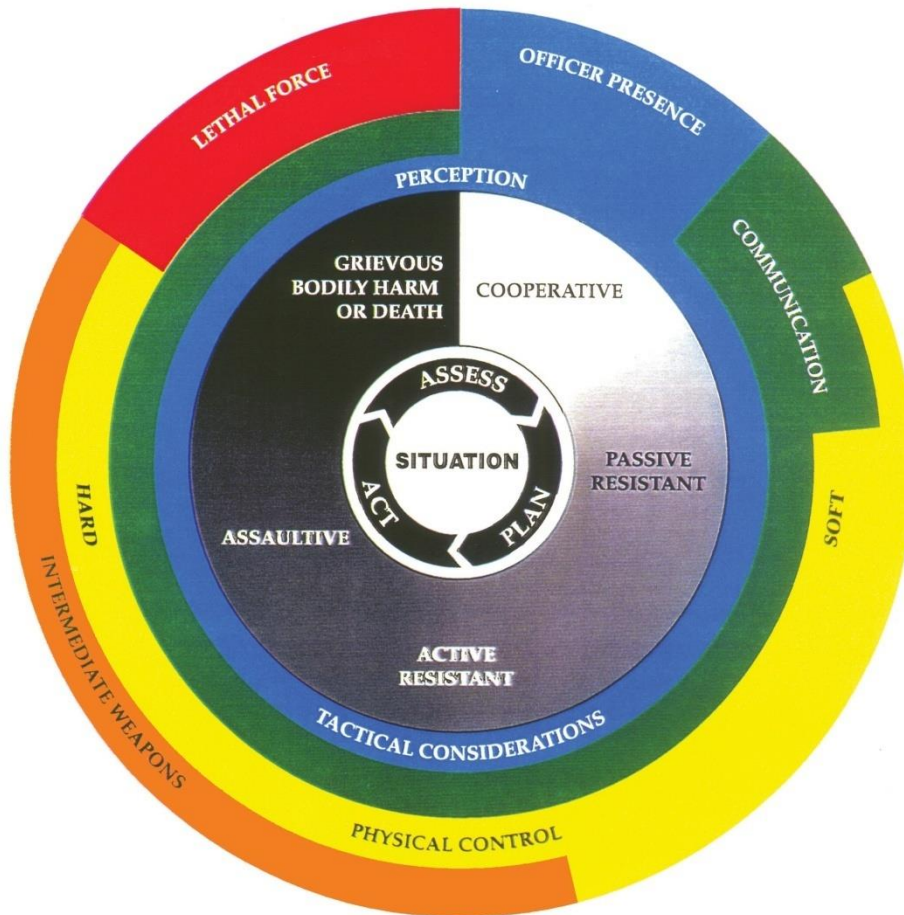
Submitted by: Dave Haye, Chief of Police

Appendix A
Glossary

- Less Lethal
 - Extended range impact weapon designed to debilitate or induce compliance authorized by the Chief of Police. This includes: 12-gauge Stabilized Bean Bag Round, ARWEN, and Pepperball Launching system.
- Modified Restraint Strap
 - 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.
- OC Spray
 - Oleoresin Capsicum Spray
- Restraint Chair
 - 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.
- Spit Sock
 - 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.
- Tactical Support Unit (TSU)
 - 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.

Appendix B
Use of Force Continuum

National Use of Force Model



The officer continuously assesses the situation and acts in a reasonable manner to ensure officer and public safety.