

DOCUMENT 4 – 2021 Use of Force Report

2021 Use of Force Report

In 2021, Ottawa Police Service (OPS) officers were dispatched to 220,600 calls. This was in response to emergency calls through the 911 system, traffic and road safety enforcement, and other community policing activities.

Last year, about 5 percent of calls resulted in an enforcement action, such as an arrest (7,875) or mental health apprehensions (2,260). These calls led to 280 reportable Use of Force incidents involving 322 members of the public. Less than 1 percent of all incidents involving police required Use of Force. Nearly all were resolved through de-escalation without any force applied.

The top five occurrence types represent 60 percent of all interventions requiring force. These include Weapons Calls (22%), Mental Health Act (17%), Disputes/ Disturbances (8%), Warrants (5%), and Traffic Stops (7%).

Type of force

Force Category	Type of Force	2020	2021	Change 2020- 2021	Growth 2020- 2021
Aerosol Weapon Oleoresin Capsicum Spray or Pepper Spray	Aerosol Weapon	5	1	-4	-80%
Physical Control	Soft empty hand	33	38	5	15%
	Hard empty hand	29	28	-1	-3%
	Sub-Total	62	66	4	7%
Impact Weapon	Soft Impact weapon	0	3	3	100%
	Hard Impact weapon	2	1	-1	-50%

	Sub-Total	2	4	2	100%
Firearm	Rifle – Pointed	32	35	3	9%
	Handgun – Drawn	281	212	-69	-25%
	Handgun – Pointed	158	108	-50	-32%
	Discharged ¹	27	39	12	44%
	Sub-Total	498	394	-104	-21%
Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW)	CEW Demonstrated force	118	118	0	0%
	CEW Deployed	75	73	-2	-3%
	Sub-Total	193	191	-2	-1%
Other	Arwen ² , Gas, LRAD ³ , DD ⁴	11	1	-10	-91%
Total		771	656	-115	-15%

¹Firearm Discharge: Last year a single firearm incident involved a member of the public. This incident was investigated and cleared by the Special Investigations Unit. Further information on the file can be found here: [Special Investigations Unit -- Director's Report Details, Case Number: 21-OFI-102 \(siu.on.ca\)](#). All other incidents involved the humane dispatch of injured animals.

² ARWEN refers to a less-lethal weapon that fires a plastic munition.

³ LRAD refers to a Long-Range Acoustic Device

⁴ DD refers to a distraction device

According to the Police Service Act (PSA), a Use of Force report must be submitted when an officer:

- Draws a handgun in the presence of a member of the public, points a firearm at a person or discharges a firearm;
- Uses a weapon other than a firearm on another person; or

- Uses physical force on another person that results in an injury requiring medical attention.

Relative to 2020, there were 115 (-15%) fewer uses of force in 2021. This decline was largely driven by a reduction in the number of times a handgun was drawn (-69) and the number of times a handgun was pointed (-50).

Collection of Race-Based Data

In 2020, Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards required the collection of race-based data for many areas, including on the Use of Force reports submitted by police officers. Police officers collect their perception of the subject's race on the Ministry of Solicitor Generals required Use of Force reports. The goal of this new data collection requirement is to help address systemic racism concerns and promote equitable service delivery.

Perceived Race of Use of Force Subjects, 2021

Perceived Race by Officer	Use of Force Subjects	2021 Percentage of Total Subjects
Black	84	26%
East/Southeast Asian	5	2%
Indigenous	18	6%
Middle Eastern	34	11%
White	167	52%
Other Racialized Minorities	14	4%
Total	322	100%

Proportions of Resident Populations, by Race, in Ottawa, based on the 2016 Census, in comparison to Use of Force Subjects, 2020 and 2021

Race Groups	Resident Populations (%)	2020 Percentage of Total Subjects (%)	2021 Percentage of Total Subjects (%)	Ratio of Share of Subjects to Share of Population (1 + x-y/y)
Black	6%	28%	26%	4.3 times
East/Southeast Asian	12%	3%	2%	0.2 times
Indigenous	2%*	4%	6%	3 times
Middle Eastern	5%	12%	11%	2.2 times
White	73%	52%	52%	0.7 times
Other Racialized	2%	1%	4%	2 times
Total	100%	100%	100%	N/A

Note: Resident population data is based on data collected in the 2016 Statistics Canada census.

2021 Findings

As in 2020, the 2021 findings are based on a 12-month period when race data collection was being collected through Use of Force Reports. There were 280 Use of Force incidents reported involving 322 subjects. The table above provides the perceived race of those 322 subjects and portion of the total subjects involved in Use of Force incidents.

When race groups are described as having “disproportionately high incidences in Use of Force” (above a ratio of 1.2 times), this means they are over-represented in Use of Force incidents when the share of subjects is greater than their shares in the population segments. A ratio of 1.0 times in the proportionality of incidences in Use of Force for a race group indicates that the group’s proportion of subjects in Use of Force incidents aligns to its proportion in the general population.

The table above shows that there were disproportionately high incidences in Use of Force involving Black, Middle Eastern, and Indigenous subjects for the Ottawa Police Service in 2021. Specifically:

- Individuals who were perceived by officers to be Black had force used against them 4.3 times more than what you would expect based on their segment of the population;
- Individuals who were perceived by officers to be Indigenous had force used against them 3 times more than what you would expect based on their segment of the population;
- Individuals who were perceived by officers to be Middle Eastern had force used against them 2.2 times more than what you would expect based on their segment of the population; and
- Individuals who were perceived by officers to be White had force used against them at a rate significantly less than equivalent to their segment of the population.

Disproportionate findings reflect long-standing and unresolved systemic racism and related intersectional issues that are still found within the justice system, other institutions, and our larger society – policing is no different. We need to work together to better understand these disparities and eliminate them.

Last month (May 2022), the OPS released its 2020 Use of Force report along with a third-party research report and a plan of action to address disproportionate findings. Relative to 2020 Use of Force statistics, there has been little movement in this disproportionality in 2021 year over year. You can review that full report in the Ottawa Police Service's Board (Board) agenda for its May 30, 2022 meeting.

Next Steps – Taking Action Together

In pursuit of professional and equitable policing to the diverse communities we serve, it is critical that the OPS continues to work with provincial and local partners like the Community Equity Council (CEC) to develop a larger policy framework for the collection, analysis, and reporting of race-based and other social identity data.

As outlined in last month's 2020 Use of Force report to the Board, the OPS is committed to working with police and community members to reduce Use of Force incidents and the disproportionate rates.

The OPS and the CEC have collaborated with the researchers to create locally based recommendations that are focused on collective action and meaningful change. Addressing systemic racism is an important priority area of work in the Service's three-

year Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan, which includes implementing these latest recommendations:

- Working in partnership with the CEC to develop a review committee comprised of police and community members to review Use of Force incidents;
- Hiring an equity and race data specialist to continue previous efforts to increase reporting on police data and building a community data hub for increased data transparency; and
- Increased human rights, anti-racism, and cultural awareness training, making it mandatory for all members.

What Kind of Training Do Officers Receive?

All new recruits will receive 1,600 (plus) hours of training prior to starting their first shift. This includes over 500 hours of Use of Force Training, with a strong focus on communication skills and de-escalation techniques.

Additionally, all OPS officers must participate in an annual full day of requalification for Use of Force training, which consists of lectures, tabletop exercise, ethics and human rights, and scenario-based training. The communication and de-escalation portion of the training is 3.5 hours, which is dedicated to working with people in crisis, including cases involving those in mental health distress.

Human Rights and EDI Learning

Significant human rights and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) learning modules have been introduced to all OPS members in recent years, with most of the content material developed through collaboration with experts on matters of human rights and EDI. Some of the 2021-2022 training for members includes:

- Anti-Indigenous racism and Indigenous cultural awareness with a five-part learning series;
- Call it Out! Understanding Systemic Racism training module from the Human Rights Commission;
- Trauma informed awareness workshop panel;
- Anti-Black racism learning sessions; and,
- Bystander training.

The OPS also launched a new e-learning platform called Degreed that supports a culture of accessible learning with dedicated Human Rights and EDI learning featuring: new legislation, videos, articles, and other relevant education tools that members can learn from and share with each other on an ongoing basis.

To learn more about the work the OPS has done to focus on human rights and EDI training, you can review the 2021 Human Rights and Racial Profiling Annual Report that was submitted to the Board at its May 30, 2022 meeting.

You can also review the 2020 Use of Force report, that was presented to the Board in May 2022, [on our website](#).