

Peace Officer Statistics

2020 Year-end Report

Recommendation

That the March 24, 2021, Citizen Services report CS00185, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 2, 2020, City Council meeting the following motion passed:

That Administration provide:

1. the annual report on use of force that is submitted to the Solicitor General to Committee in First Quarter of 2021

Executive Summary

Each year, Administration submits an annual report to Alberta Justice and Solicitor General on the program's peace officer activities from the previous year. Program data and statistics, including use of force incidents, are also included as part of the report.

In 2020, peace officers were deployed to new tasks due to the COVID-19 pandemic including the EXPO Centre and assisting non-destination riders to disembark at the last transit stop and transfer to the shelter shuttle bus service. An increase in non-compliance coupled with an increase in responding to pandemic-related incidents resulted in an increase in the number of use of force incidents in 2020 of approximately 14 percent.

Peace officers continue to receive additional training. All standard operating procedures are updated regularly to ensure GBA+, diversity and inclusion, and cultural awareness lenses are being used to inform policy development and update procedures. A review of all use of force incidents is conducted immediately upon being reported to Administration.

Report

The City of Edmonton has approximately 160 peace officers divided into nine units. These officers responded to over 67,000 complaints and files throughout Edmonton in 2020. Each year, Administration submits an annual report to the Government of

Alberta outlining the activities of the City’s peace officers, deployments and staffing information as part of the reporting requirements of the provincial government.

The annual report submitted to the provincial government contains information pertaining to specific hours of operation, listing of individual peace officer’s names and identification numbers, team compositions and deployments. To maintain confidentiality and program integrity, Administration has provided an abridged version of the report focusing on information pertaining to use of force incidents from the previous year (Attachment 1).

Use of Force

Peace officers seek voluntary compliance and behavioural change through education, awareness, warnings and, when necessary, ticketing. On rare occasions, it is necessary for officers to use force during the course of their duties. In 2020, there were 576 use of force incidents with 14 incidents using a baton or oleoresin capsicum spray (OC spray or pepper spray). The use of a baton or OC spray is a defensive option for peace officers. Of the other 562 incidents, there were 477 incidents using soft, empty hand techniques (grabs, handcuffing, holds and escorts) and 85 incidents using hard, empty hand techniques (strikes/stuns).

Formal Complaints

In 2020, there were eight formal complaints filed against City peace officers. Two were complaints about the use of force, one was outside the mandate of the *Peace Officer Act* and forwarded to the Edmonton Police Service, two involved peace officer conduct and the three were found to be vexatious and/or complaints relating to files where the complainant does not agree with the outcome. Three of the complaints resulted in discipline or formal reviews, four were closed as being unfounded or without merit and one file remains under investigation.

2020 Complaints Against Peace Officers	
Type	Totals
Formal Complaints	8
Employer Initiated Investigations	3
Written Public Complaints	5
Reportable Events	20
Reportable - Use of Force	14
Reportable - Discipline	6

COVID-19 Impacts

In 2020, peace officers deployed for many COVID-19 services and requests such as enhanced transit enforcement, enhanced support in and around temporary shelters at the Edmonton EXPO Centre and Tipinawâw, monitoring and removal of encampments, and COVID-19 restriction enforcement. Statistics show a slight increase in use of force incidents in 2020. A portion of these incidents can be attributed to the nature of the service requests, increased interactions, and enforcement with the public due to COVID-19.

Training

Peace officers continue to take formal training with social agencies to better understand individuals experiencing homelessness and mental health distress. In order to determine root causes and identify opportunities to improve training and communication with officers, Administration continues to review each use of force incident. Administration also continues to increase cultural awareness and address unintentional bias through training and hiring practices for all staff including peace officers.

Administration will work with the Anti-racism Advisory Committee to review practices, policies, processes and approaches from an anti-racist lens and seek continued input on approaches for the development and training of officers.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome: Edmonton is a safe city.			
Outcome	Measure	Result	Target
Increased transparency and peace officer accountability	Number of use of force incidents	2020: 576 incidents 2019: 506 incidents	Decrease in incidents

Attachments

1. 2020 Annual Report - Abridged
2. Peace Officer’s Force Report Data

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- K. Armstrong, Deputy City Manager, Employee Services
- K. Fallis-Howell, Acting City Solicitor