



# WINNIPEG POLICE SERVICE

## REPORT TO THE WINNIPEG POLICE BOARD

TO: Chair, Winnipeg Police Board

FROM: Chief Gene Bowers

SUBJECT: 2025 Use of Force Report

DATE: May 22, 2026

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### RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received as information by the Winnipeg Police Board.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications within this report.

### BACKGROUND

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) requires that the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) establish and maintain written procedures on the use of force that guide the decisions of members. In addition, the CALEA standards require that all police members authorized to carry weapons receive appropriate training and pass mandatory recertification on safe handling and proper usage of weapons and control tactics. Less than lethal weapons and weaponless control techniques require recertification on a biennial basis, while firearms and Conducted Energy Weapons (CEW) proficiency must be recertified annually. Written reports and administrative reviews are required whenever force is used, and firearms or CEW are discharged or presented to coerce compliance.

The Service provides this Report to the Winnipeg Police Board and the public for information, context and transparency.

### DISCUSSION

The authority of WPS members to use force is established by the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Police Officers are issued lethal (i.e. firearms) and intermediate weapons, whereas Auxiliary Cadets and Central Processing Officers are issued intermediate weapons only. The WPS requires each member to complete qualification training before being issued weapons, with annual recertification training for CEW and firearms and biennial recertification training for intermediate weapons. Classroom lectures accompany all hands-on training on the decision-making framework in the Service's procedures for the use of force to ensure members are aware of their obligations to act within the legal authorization provided by the *Criminal Code*. While the WPS Professional Standards Unit carefully investigates complaints of excessive force received by the Service, the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba investigates cases where use of force results in a serious injury or the loss of life.

## Reporting Use of Force

In all cases where force is used, except during training purposes, a Use of Force Report is required. The report allows for independent review and assessment by experts as to whether the force application was reasonable and necessary given the totality of circumstances. It also allows the Service to identify trends and opportunities for improvement through training, equipment or procedural updates. The statistical data in the tables of this report are subject to regular review and reclassification. Minor changes may occur over time; however, historical statistics are not revised retroactively.

The WPS dispatched events totaled 254,183 in 2025. Within these events, 780 reported incidents resulted in either the application of force or the presentation of a weapon by police members to gain compliance. Members resolved 99.7% of all dispatched events without using force or displaying a weapon. For context, in 2025, there was approximately one Use of Force Report for every 326 dispatched events.

### 5-Year Comparison of Use of Force Reports

Year	Dispatched Events for Service	Use of Force Reports	Percentage of Use of Force Encounters
2020	241,795	741	0.31%
2021	234,058	696	0.30%
2022	234,212	784	0.33%
2023	247,373	863	0.35%
2024	239,903	968	0.40%
5-year average	239,468	810	0.34%
<b>2025</b>	<b>254,183</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>0.31%</b>

\*Review of reports and classifications is an on-going process which may result in minor variations over time.

The number of Use of Force Reports is dictated by interactions in the field. As such, these numbers are determined by the behaviour of subjects and their willingness to comply with members. In 2025, both the number of reports and the percentage of dispatched events for service were lower than the 5-year average.

### 5-Year Comparison of Assaultive and Violent Resistance

Year	Defensive Resistance	Active Aggression	Aggravated Active Aggression
2020	69.95%	51.75%	21.02%
2021	71.53%	47.93%	20.74%
2022	72.05%	48.59%	20.64%
2023	69.76%	47.74%	21.67%
2024	70.87%	49.90%	22.42%
5-year average	70.83%	49.18%	21.30%
<b>2025</b>	<b>69.53%</b>	<b>46.86%</b>	<b>18.57%</b>

The table above shows the frequency of each type of resistance recorded in a Use of Force Report. A single report may document multiple levels of resistance and corresponding control measures.

In 2025, Defensive Resistance, Active Aggression and Aggravated Active Aggression percentages were lower than both the prior year and the 5-year average. However, members continued to encounter situations of Aggravated Active Aggression, which accounted for 18.57% of all resistance incidents. These encounters often involve weapons, are highly volatile, and present a significant risk of death or grievous bodily harm to members, subjects, and bystanders.

### Types of Control Used

The *Criminal Code*, policy and procedure, as well as training dictate that members regulate their actions based on the threat level presented by a subject and that the minimum level of force required to gain compliance be used. In the vast majority of calls, tactical communication and member presence are sufficient to restore order or gain compliance.

### 5-Year Comparison of Control Used

Year	Soft Empty Hand Control	Hard Empty Hand Control	Intermediate Weapons	Deadly Force Presented or Deployed
2020	76.82%	40.84%	35.71%	18.33%
2021	77.97%	38.77%	33.76%	21.32%
2022	79.36%	40.26%	37.82%	23.33%
2023	77.87%	39.17%	39.98%	23.75%
2024	77.79%	39.98%	41.74%	18.18%
5-year average	77.96%	39.80%	37.80%	20.98%
<b>2025</b>	<b>76.67%</b>	<b>44.36%</b>	<b>37.18%</b>	<b>20.51%</b>
Incidents (out of 780)	598	346	290	160

The table above shows a comparison of controls used, detailing the frequency by way of a percentage and count for each category of control as recorded within a Use of Force Report. Incidents may include more than one control option in either escalating and de-escalating order. As such, table totals are greater than one hundred percent for each year. In 2025, when compared to the 5-year average, the use of soft empty hand control, intermediate weapons and deadly force presented or deployed decreased, while hard empty hand control increased.

The Deadly Force presented or deployed category refers to incidents where members used their firearms to gain compliance, but did not necessarily discharge them. In 2025, firearms were used to coerce compliance in 20.51% of use of force incidents, with the vast majority of these instances involved only the presentation of a service pistol to gain compliance from a subject.

### 5-Year Comparison of Police Member Involved Shootings

Year	Member Involved Shooting	Fatalities
2020	5	4
2021	0	0
2022	6	3
2023	3	3
2024	6	4
5-year average	4	3
<b>2025</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

In 2025, the number of police-member involved shootings was lower than both the prior year and the 5-year average. As required by law, all such incidents are investigated by the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba.

### 5-Year Comparison of Intermediate Weapon Deployment

Year	Intermediate Weapon Deployment					
	OC Spray	ASP Baton	Conducted Energy Weapon			Canine Bite
Presented/ Coerce			Probes Deployed	Push Stun		
2020	8	12	94	124	25	11
2021	3	6	85	117	21	5
2022	10	10	106	129	30	9
2023	22	19	95	176	31	6
2024	7	4	221	216	87	12
5-year average	10	10	120	152	39	9
<b>2025</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>9</b>

In 2025, the Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW) was used 366 times, representing a decrease from the prior year (524). The CEW remains the most used intermediate weapon and is considered one of the most effective control options, with a lower likelihood of causing injury, compared to physical control techniques.

### 5-Year Comparison of Reported Injuries

Year	Use of Force Reports	Members injured	Percentage Injured	Subjects injured	Percentage Injured
2020	741	88	11.88%	192	25.91%
2021	696	73	10.49%	170	24.43%
2022	784	82	10.46%	165	21.05%
2023	863	88	10.20%	203	23.52%
2024	968	80	8.26%	195	20.14%
5-year Average	810	82	10.12%	185	22.84%
<b>2025</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>9.49%</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>21.54%</b>

In 2025, both the number of members and subjects injured during physical conflicts, as well as the injury rates per use of force event, decreased compared to the 5-year averages.

### Complaints Related to Use of Force

In 2025, the Professional Standards Unit received three use of force complaints not meeting the legislative criteria to refer to the Independent Investigation Unit (IIU). While this is higher than the prior year it aligns with the 5-year average. The public can submit formal complaints to the Law Enforcement Review Agency (LERA) or Manitoba Ombudsman for an independent investigation. The outcomes of investigations by both LERA, the Ombudsman, and the IIU are published separately from this report.

## 5-Year Professional Standards Unit – Excessive Force Allegation Dispositions

Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	5-Year Average	2025
Abandoned	1	0	2	0	0	0.6	2
Crown Opinion- No charge	0	1	0	0	0	0.2	0
Informal Resolution	0	0	1	0	0	0.2	0
Not Sustained	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Unfounded	1	0	0	0	0	0.2	1
Proper Conduct	3	0	0	0	0	0.6	0
Insufficient Evidence	1	1	0	0	0	0.4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3</b>

### Officer Safety Unit Initiatives

The Officer Safety Unit (OSU) is responsible for delivering use of force training across the Service. In 2025, the OSU added two constable instructors, increasing its capacity to meet mandatory training requirements for new Recruits, Auxiliary Cadets and Central Processing Officers, as well as recertifications for senior WPS members. A 99.7% rate of resolving dispatched events without the use of physical force suggests training is effective and underscores the importance of de-escalation techniques.

In 2026, the WPS will implement three intermediate weapon enhancements, all aimed at de-escalating events and reducing the need for deadly force. Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray will be replaced with OC gel to improve precision and minimize cross contamination. A 40mm single-round impact launcher will be issued to certified general patrol members, providing a long-range, less-lethal option to provide another intermediate option to de-escalate violent encounters with the goal of resolving the situation without resorting to deadly force.

In addition, the Service will transition from the Taser 7 to Taser 10 conducted energy weapon, which offers improvements in effectiveness, safety, and ease of use. Enhancements include the elimination of push-stuns, extended range, increased accuracy, and improved data collection and management capabilities. Initial certification training is planned for spring 2026, with deployment expected in the summer.

The OSU continues to review use of force reports, seek member feedback, engage with external agencies, and evaluate new equipment to ensure training remains current, effective, and responsive to operational needs.

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Gene Bowers  
Chief of Police