



Year End Report – 2025

Use of Force Options Utilized in the Field

St. Thomas Police Service

Incidents requiring *Use of Force (Ministry Reportable)*

2021 – 55 Ministry submissions (individual officer actions) for 37 incidents

2022 – 65 Ministry submissions (individual officer actions) for 34 incidents

2023 – 60 Ministry submissions (individual officer actions) for 40 incidents

2024 – 63 Ministry submissions (individual officer actions) for 39 incidents

2025 – 77 Ministry submissions (individual officer actions) for 48 incidents

Identified Trends in 2025

- The total number of annual incidents in 2025 reached **24,345** which represents a significant increase over a 5-year period. The 2025 annual incidents have increased by 17.7% from 2021 (21,924). The proceeding three years showed increasing incident response in the community as follows: 2022 (20,682), 2023 (22,628), 2024 (23,451). **In 2025 – the St. Thomas Police Service averaged 67 incidents/24hrs** – increasing from the year totals as follows: 2024 averaged 64 incidents/24hrs, 2023 averaged 62 incidents/24hrs, and 2022 averaged 56 incidents/24hrs, while 2021 averaged 60 incidents/24hrs.

- Incidents that are classified as requiring the Use of Force by our officers increased by 23.1% from 2024, (39 - 48). The individual officer decisions to apply a Use of Force option (based on the presentation of a threat) remained consistent with the 2025 data as a 22.2% increase from 2024. Of these reported Use of Force interactions it can be noted that the use of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) contributed to 15 reported interactions where the team was actioned.
- There are strong indicators (from ongoing incident reviews) that our officers fully understand that a reasonable application of force requires awareness of the facts and circumstances of each particular situation, including the severity of the issue, whether the subject poses an immediate threat to the safety of officers or others and whether the subject is actively resisting or attempting to evade arrest by flight.

Race-Based Data Collection

A requirement of Ministry Reporting is on perceived subject race. In 2025, nine (9) subjects identified as Black, East/Southeast Asian, Indigenous, Latino, Middle Eastern, or South Asian. In 2024, twelve (12), 2023 one (1), zero (0) in 2022. There was a 25% decrease in the use of force incidents involving racialized individuals from 2024 to 2025.

Firearms

In 2025, officers drew their firearm in twenty-three (23) operational incidents compared to 30 in 2024. This represents a 23.3% decrease in police accessing firearms during high risk incidents. The most prevalent weapons that officers faced on the street were edged weapons and the potential for firearms. Nine (9) separate incidents involved the dispatching of injured animals by the use of a firearm.

The implementation of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) has provided the resources to deploy highly trained and skilled team of 13 officers who respond to high-risk incidents. CIRT were involved in 15 of the 23 operational incidents where firearms were drawn in the presence of the public, representing 65.2% of firearm related use of force submissions. The activation of the team directly supported an increase in planned search warrant executions and deployments that were tactical in nature. CIRT is deployed in high-risk scenarios, typically with pre-planning including arresting persons who are known to be violent or to have access to weapons.

Conducted Energy Weapons (CEW)

In 2025, the Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW) or more commonly known as the Taser, was used in deployment mode (probes were fired from the cartridge) 4 times, and was used in display mode (de-escalation compliance option and no probes were fired from the cartridge) on twenty (20) times. This is consistent with the below 2024 reported use of the CEW as follows: In 2024, (CEW) was used in deployment mode (probes were fired from the cartridge) 4 times (4 in 2023), and was used in display mode (de-escalation compliance option and no probes were fired from the cartridge) on twenty two (22) different occasions.

Undoubtedly, the CEW remains a very important tool available for police officers to de-escalate violent situations. This tool provides less than lethal use of force options supporting officer and community safety when it comes to encountering violent interactions.

Oleoresin Capsicum (OC Spray)

O/C (Pepper) Spray was used in 2 interactions in 2025. Previously this use of force option has not been used operationally between 2016 - 2024 (Ministry submissions). This less than lethal use of force option consideration provided the intended for an officer to gain and maintain control of an individual displaying assaultive behaviour and completing an arrest while reducing the chance of injury to the officer and subject.

ASP Baton

The (Asp) baton was not used operationally between 2016 - 2025 (Ministry submissions).

Empty Hand Techniques

In 2025, Empty Hand Techniques were used in one (1) operational incident (1 in 2024).

Police Service Dogs (PSD's)

PSD Rocky was involved in one (1) incident in 2025 in which he had bit a non-compliant, break and enter suspect hiding inside a dryer in the basement of a residence. In 2024, K9 involved in one (1) incident relating to Use of Force and a K9 bite. These are required Ministry Use of Force Reporting submissions due to the bite injuries sustained. The PSD remains a strategic de-escalation compliance tool for many operational incidents that are perceived to be volatile. There is great value in the PSD patrolling as a supplemental resource for frontline officers.

Body-Worn Cameras (BWC's)

In 2021, all frontline STPS officers began wearing BWC's. The PSB's decision to implement this piece of equipment has provided visual and audio evidence that independently verifies police-citizen encounters and works to widely enhance citizen perceptions of police transparency and legitimacy. Equally, we are seeing positive cost-benefit analysis data that is reflecting a more streamlined approach to public complaint investigations, which offers evidence-ready video accounts, especially with Use of Force matters. There are compelling positive financial impacts to the swift resolution of these professional standards matters. Importantly, the ongoing and vital maintenance of our officers' mental and physical well-being due to the early clearance of conduct investigations is being positively addressed with this equipment. BWC recordings are proving to be a game-changer that definitively benefit the delivery of public safety services.

The policing environment continues to be complex and increasingly influenced by issues related to the social determinants of health. Non-core policing demands associated with mental health, homelessness, poverty, and substance use disorders remain prevalent and show a continued shared community response is needed to address these issues. In response, public safety personnel must continue to adapt and enhance Use of Force training to ensure it reflects these evolving operational realities. The Service remains committed to the ongoing review of Use of Force incidents, training programs, and issued equipment to support informed, appropriate, and effective responses.

A comprehensive review of all Use of Force incidents and associated Ministry reporting submissions for the year was conducted, including supervisory oversight. This review indicates that Use of Force applications in 2025 were consistent with legislative requirements, policy, and training standards. Overall, the data supports that force was applied judiciously and effectively, reinforcing the Service's commitment to accountability, continuous improvement, and the safe delivery of public safety services to the community.

Respectfully Submitted,



Steven Bogart,
Deputy Chief of Police