Open Report:	2026-157
To:	The Waterloo Regional Police Service Board
From:	Professional Development and Organizational Culture Branch
Meeting Date:	March 18, 2026
Report Title:	Use of Force 2025 Q4 and Annual Report

Recommendation

For information only.

Summary

This report provides a statistical summary of interactions with Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) officers and the public where intervention with an individual or individuals met the requirements for the completion of a Use of Force Report by regulation or procedure. This report presents the Q4 and Annual 2025 Use of Force incidents. To align Use of Force reporting with WRPS' Race-Based Data Collection Strategy (RBDCS), race-centered analyses are included in this report.

Reporting requirements are outlined in *Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), Regulation 391/23*. WRPS meets and significantly expands upon reporting requirements in its Use of Force Procedure, criteria for both are set out in Appendix A. This is done in an effort to better capture incidents in which intervention techniques were required in order to evaluate these and determine if there is need for further individual or Service-wide training. The combined total of incidents for which a report is required is herein referred to as "reportable incidents".

A reportable incident may generate several Use of Force Reports as multiple officers respond, each of which may be required to complete a Use of Force Report. Further, as officers transition from one use of force option to another in response to changes in a subject's profiled behaviour, they will document all force options deployed within their Report (e.g., an officer transitioning from a firearm to a CEW will include both force options when they complete their Report). The Emergency Response Team (ERT) is the only unit permitted to complete a Team Use of Force Report. Within a team

response, modernized reporting now requires officers to submit an individual report when use of force options are discharged or when use of force results in an injury. Appendix C contains a summary of all incidents which necessitated a Use of Force Report including those where a subject was not located or where subject race was identified through Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) information from callers or a police data base (Niche).

Overview of Q4 Use of Force Incidents

During the fourth quarter of 2025, including incidents involving the humane dispatch of animals, 96 *reportable incidents* occurred which resulted in 151 *Use of Force Reports*. For this report, data was pulled on February 24th, 2026. Any Modernized Use of Force Reports approved and filed for Q4 after this date were not included in this report.

Each report was reviewed and the actions of the reporting officer were analyzed by the platoon Staff Sergeant, the Divisional or Branch/Unit Inspector, and then members of the Training and Education Branch. From this review, officers were found to be utilizing good judgment and de-escalation techniques when required and intervention methods were found to be in compliance with regulation and procedure.

There were 47,633 police occurrences and 3,788 arrests during the fourth quarter. The number of occurrences decreased dramatically from Q3 to Q4 (-40%)[1]. The number of reportable use of force incidents also decreased (104 in Q3 vs. 96 in Q4; -8%). The number of Modernized Use of Force reports likewise decreased (206 in Q3 vs 151 in Q4; -27%). The proportion of occurrences involving use of force did change: in Q4, unlike all other quarters in 2025, 0.2% of all police occurrences involved a Use of Force incident, compared to the usual 0.1%. This can be explained by changes in procedure with respect to the creation of CAD Occurrences, rather than indication of heightened rates of use of force.

It is important to consider these numbers within the context of legislative and/or WRPS procedural requirements to complete a report. Reports are required, in the case of firearms and conducted energy weapons (CEWs), for every incident when these are drawn and/or demonstrated in the presence of a member of the public. This is true even if officers do not interact with a Subject person.

Eight subjects were injured this quarter. One subject required first aid treatment, two subjects received medical attention by personnel at the scene, while four subjects received medical attention at a facility. No officers were injured in this quarter.

Beginning on January 1, 2020, officer perception of subject race became a reportable category in Use of Force incidents. The collection and analysis of this data is part of the provincial and the WRPS commitment to transparency and accountability. The race-based data related to Use of Force that is presented in this report is integrated into the

[1] The decline in the number of occurrences is a result of a change in procedure, where CAD Occurrences are no longer created for Dropped 911 Calls or Filed 911 Calls.

comprehensive WRPS Race- and Identity-Based Data Collection Strategy (RIBDCS). The RIBDCS supports our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2024-2027).

The Training and Education Branch will continue to monitor Use of Force Reports to ensure the accuracy of our statistics. De-escalation training will remain a cornerstone feature of our intervention training

Report

1. Police Response

In 2023, a new Use of Force model was approved, titled the *Ontario Public-Police Interaction Training Aid*. This model has an increased emphasis on de-escalation and conflict prevention. Starting in 2023, all new officers were trained on the new model. As of January 1st 2025, all officers have been trained on the new model. Appendix B provides a description of the model. This model is the foundation of intervention training provided to officers and officers will be tested on it annually (as was the case with the previous model). The model governs all interventions with members of our community and includes officer responses which are present in all interactions, specifically officer presence and communication. These elements form the foundation of de-escalation.

In the period covered by this report, WRPS officers were involved in 47,633 occurrences resulting in 3,788 arrests and 96 reportable incidents (nine of which involved the humane destruction of animals). Of note, the total Use of Force incidents for the quarter is not the sum of patrol (i.e., individual), team, and animal incidents because some incidents will involve both patrol and team.

Table 1. Summary of 2025 Q4 Modernized Use of Force Reports and Reportable Incidents.

Modernized Use of Force Reports and Incidents Compared to Occurrences and Arrests								
	2022	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**
	Annual Statistics	**Annual Statistics**	**Annual Statistics**	**Annual Statistics**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**
CAD Occurrences[1]	323,730	372,165	347,110	292,878	81,439	84,281	79,525	47,633
Arrests	14,746	15,421	15,516	15,618	3,645	4,104	4,081	3,788
Modernized Use of Force Reports[2]	**559**	**707**	**780**	**676**	**168**	**151**	**206**	**151**

Individual	413	547	592	542	134	120	171	120
Team (Special Response)[3]	111	137	160	100	24	24	30	22
Animals	35	21	28	31	10	7	5	9
Reportable Use of Force Incidents	**374**	**417**	**461**	**421**	**115**	**106**	**104**	**96**
Individual	250	314	305	290	81	75	69	65
Team (Special Response)	111	137	160	100	24	24	30	22
Animals	35	21	28	31	10	7	5	9

[1] Data provided by WRPS Strategic Services Branch, Planning and Project Management.
[2] Since some incidents require the attendance of more than one officer and each officer must submit their own Modernized Use of Force report, there are more reports than there are incidents.
[3] Team reports represent specialized teams which submit one Modernized Use of Force report for one coordinated incident (e.g. The Emergency Response Team). An incident involving a Team Report may also result in the submission of Individual Reports.

In comparison to the third quarter of 2025, the number of reportable incidents declined from 104 (in Q3) to 96 (Q4; 8% decrease). The number of Modernized Use of Force Reports submitted by officers in this quarter also decreased (-27%; 206 in Q3 to 151 in Q4).

In 2025, excluding reports related to the human destruction of animals, 74% of Modernized Use of Force Reports were generated by Citizen-Generated Occurrences, 23% were generated by police (10% were generated due to Warrants, 13% were Officer Initiated calls), and 3% were generated to Assist Other Services (see Figure 2). As compared to 2024, we see that proportionately fewer reports were generated by Warrants (-5%). The overall split between the number of reports generated by Citizen Calls for Service versus those generated by police is similar to what was observed in 2024 (in 2024, 73% of calls were generated by Citizen Calls for Service, while 24% were generated by police).

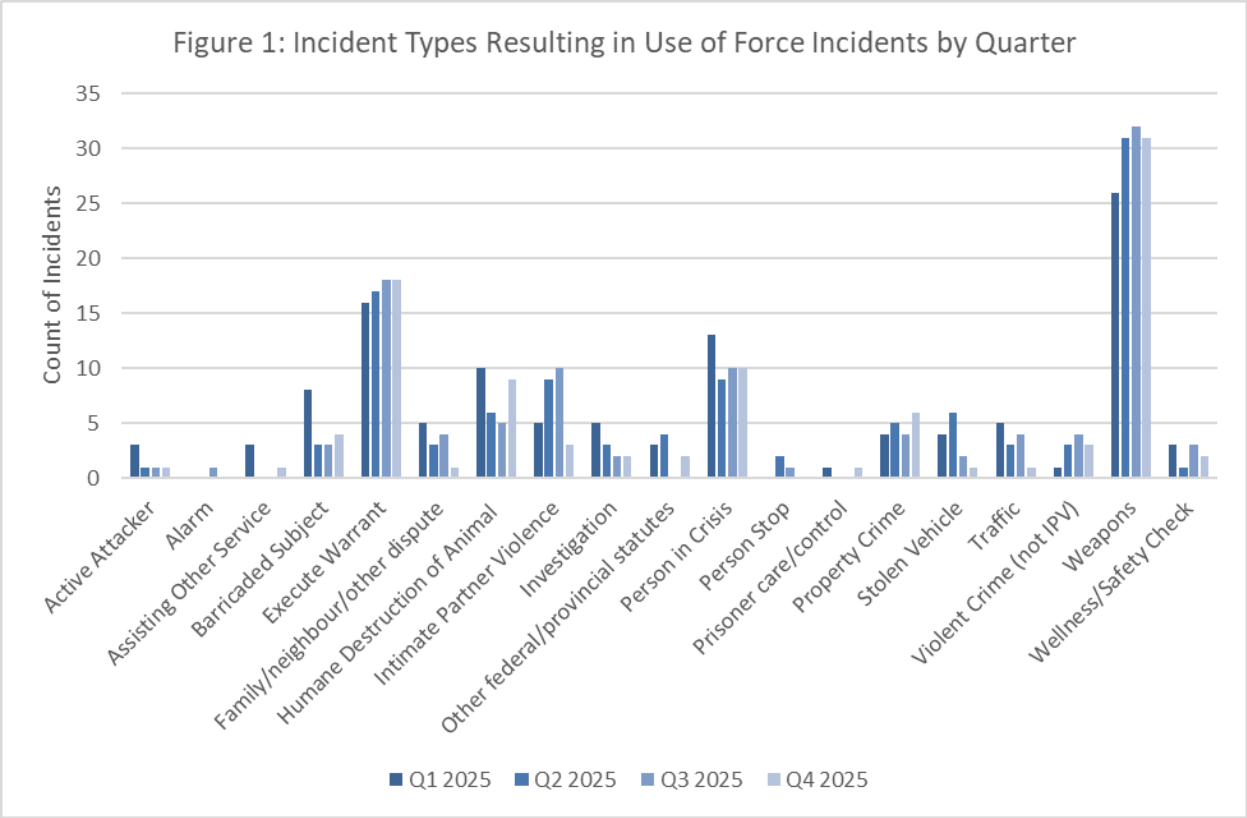
Overall, in 2025, as with previous years, force options were deployed in only about 0.1% of all police occurrences. This number has been consistent since at least 2020.

Q4 Use of Force Reportable Incidents Analysis

Officers interacted with members of the public in 47,633 occurrences during the fourth quarter of 2025. In these occurrences, 3,788 arrests were made. During these interactions, reportable Use of Force incidents occurred 96 times (including animal calls). In Q4 2025, nine incidents involved the humane destruction of animals. These

calls are removed from subsequent analyses and only the 87 reportable incidents involving person subjects are reported below.

Figure 1 displays the incident types that corresponded to Use of Force reportable incidents. In Q4 2025, Use of Force incidents were most often “Weapons” calls (31 calls; 36% of all non-animal calls), a trend that continues from previous quarters and years. Note, this is the highest proportional representation of weapon-related calls in Use of Force incidents for all quarters in 2025.



Use of Force Options

Table 2. Summary of Application of Use of Force Options. Humane destruction of an animal reports are not included in these numbers.

Frequency of Use of Force Option							
	2023	**2024**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**
	Annual Statistics	**Annual Statistics**	**Annual Statistics**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**
Handgun							
Drawn	41	54	58	13	13	18	14
Pointed	126	138	125	24	34	39	28
Discharged	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Rifles							
Drawn	70	105	85	27	21	17	20
Pointed	80	123	102	22	23	32	25
Discharged	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oleoresin Capsicum	8	12	5	1	0	1	3
Baton	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Physical Control	143	140	148	45	28	36	39
Canine	10	7	6	2	1	2	1

Table 3. Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW) statistics.

Frequency of CEW Options							
	2023	**2024**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**
	Annual Statistics	**Annual Statistics**	**Annual Statistics**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**
Options							
Drawn only	53	10	30	8	6	7	9
Pointed only	99	106	113	34	22	35	22
Arc Displayed	4	3	5	2	2	0	1
Deployed probes	47	35	46	12	14	9	11

Three Point Contact	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Drive Stun	8	1	6	2	0	0	4
Total	212	156	200	58	44	51	47

2. Firearms

Incidents with handguns drawn decreased from 18 in Q3 to 14 in Q4 (-22%) and handguns pointed decreased from 39 in Q3 to 28 in Q4 (-28%). Carbine rifles drawn increased from 17 in Q3 to 20 in Q4 (+18%) and carbine rifles pointed decreased from 32 in Q3 to 25 in Q4 (-22%). Overall, compared to 2024, we saw increases in incidents involving handgun drawn (+7%) and decreases in incidents involving handgun pointed (-9%), rifle drawn (-19%), and rifle pointed (-17%).

3. Oleoresin Capsicum (OC)

OC was deployed three times in Q4 2025. From 2024 to 2025 we observed a 58% decrease in the number of incidents where OC was used. The limited use of OC by patrol officers is related to the more frequent use of the conducted energy weapon (CEW) as an intermediate use of force option.

4. Baton

The baton was not used in 2025. The lack of use of the baton is a continuing trend, as the CEW has been preferred as a more effective intermediate use of force option.

5. Physical Control

There was an increase in the number of Physical Control reports between Q3 and Q4, increasing from 36 in Q3 to 39 in Q4 (+8%). Compared to 2024, there was an increase in the use of Physical Control (+6%).

6. Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW)

The CEW is frequently used as a means to de-escalate a situation and often negates the need to use other use of force options. It also creates safe and advantageous space away from a violent or potentially deadly subject. Similar to firearms, the displaying of a CEW is often enough to de-escalate a situation. Overall, there was a decrease in CEW reports in Q4 relative to Q3 (-8%). There was an increase in the number of CEW reports in 2025 compared to 2024 (+28%).

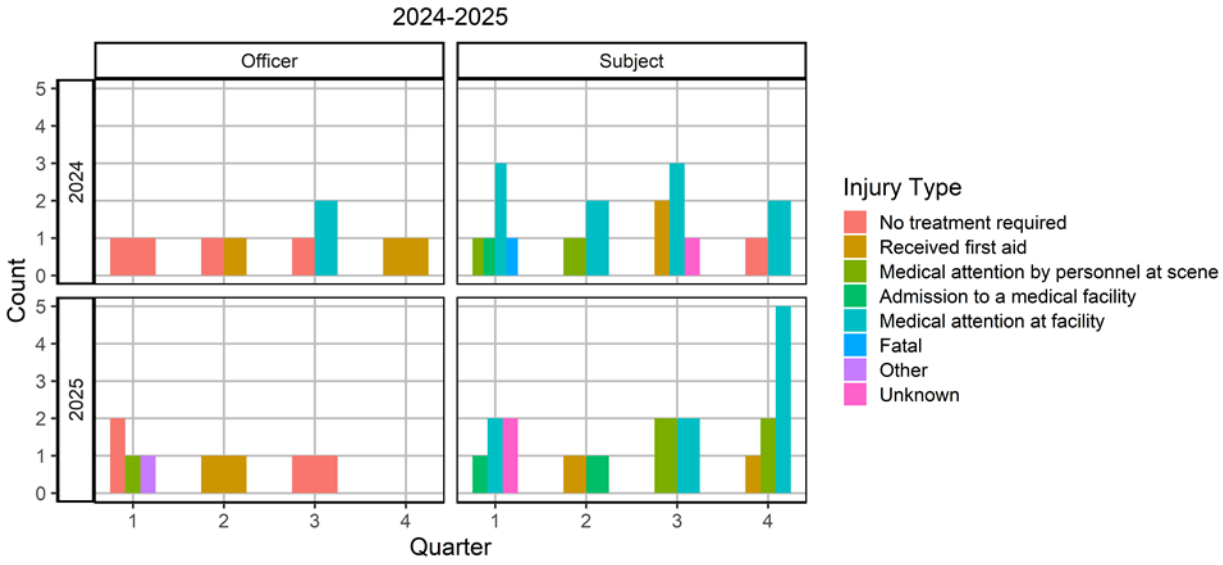
7. Canine

There was one instance of canine force employed in Q4 2025. In 2025, compared to 2024, there was a similar number of incidents involving canine force (7 in 2024 vs 6 in 2025).

8. Injuries During Intervention

Starting last quarter, we began reporting our Injury statistics to align with the Ministry of the Solicitor General's Modernized Use of Force Report. In the past, we reported injuries as "Major" or "Minor". Now, injury information reflects the level of treatment that the Subject or Officer receives, to the best knowledge of the officer at the time of completing their report (see Figure 2). This provides more detailed information about the injury. Overall, the number of subject injuries in 2025 was greater than what was observed in 2024 (11 in 2024; 18 in 2025). Injury information can also be found at the incident level in Appendix C.

Figure 2: Injuries Reported in Modernized Use of Force Reports



Officer Perception of Subject Race

Table 5. This table displays the perceived race of subjects in the Use of Force incidents since January 1st 2022 when the collection of this data began.

Perceived Race of Subject in Use of Force Incidents												
	2022		2023		2024		2025		2025		2025	
	Annual		Annual		Annual		Annual		Q3		Q4	
Black	75	18%	52	15%	69	18%	65	18%	15	16%	9	12%
East/Southeast Asian	10	2%	10	3%	15	4%	23	6%	7	7%	4	5%
Indigenous	4	1%	1	0.3%	5	1%	4	1%	2	2%	1	1%
Latino	9	2%	10	3%	15	4%	7	2%	2	2%	1	1%
Middle Eastern	35	8%	22	6%	27	7%	27	7%	9	9%	6	8%
South Asian	0	0%	6	2%	7	2%	8	2%	1	1%	1	1%
White	295	69%	248	70%	239	62%	224	61%	58	60%	55	71%
Undetermined*			6	2%	6	2%	7	1%	3	3%	1	1%
Total	339		355		383		365		97		78	

* Undetermined represents reportable incidents where multiple officers provided inconsistent race perceptions for the same Subject.

Disproportion

To meet the minimum requirements of *Ontario's Anti-Racism Act (2017)*, and the Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism (Data Standards, 2018), the proportion of racialized person subjects involved in reportable use of force incidents has been compared to local resident population demographics obtained from 2021 Census data[2]. Ratio values > 1.5 were used as the cut-off to identify over-representation (Lamberth, 1996; Police Foundation, 2003; Withrow et al., 2008). Caution is needed in the interpretation of patterns based on small numbers because the addition or subtraction of a few cases can drastically impact ratios.

Based on the proportion of racialized individuals in the local resident population provided in the 2021 Census data, Black (ratio of 3.83) and Middle Eastern (ratio of 2.33) individuals were overrepresented in 2025 Use of Force reportable incidents (Table 6). The pattern of Black and Middle Eastern individuals being overrepresented is consistent with previous years. Unlike in 2024, Latino individuals were not overrepresented in 2025 Use of Force incidents.

[2] The boundaries of the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) do not align with the boundaries of the Region of Waterloo. The CMA boundaries exclude the Township of Wellesley.

Table 6. Disproportion and enforcement action ratios for each Perceived Race Category, 2025

	Black	East/ Southeast Asian	Indigenous Identity [4]	Latino	Middle Eastern	South Asian	White
# of Use of Force Incidents	65	23	4	7	27	8	224
Percentage in Use of Force Incidents	18%	5%	1%	2%	7%	2%	61%
Percentage in Population	4.7%	6.8%	1.7%	2.2%	3.0%	9.7%	72.0%
Disproportion Ratio	3.83	0.88	0.59	0.91	2.33	0.21	0.85
Enforcement Action Ratio	0.30	0.10	0.02	0.03	0.11	0.03	

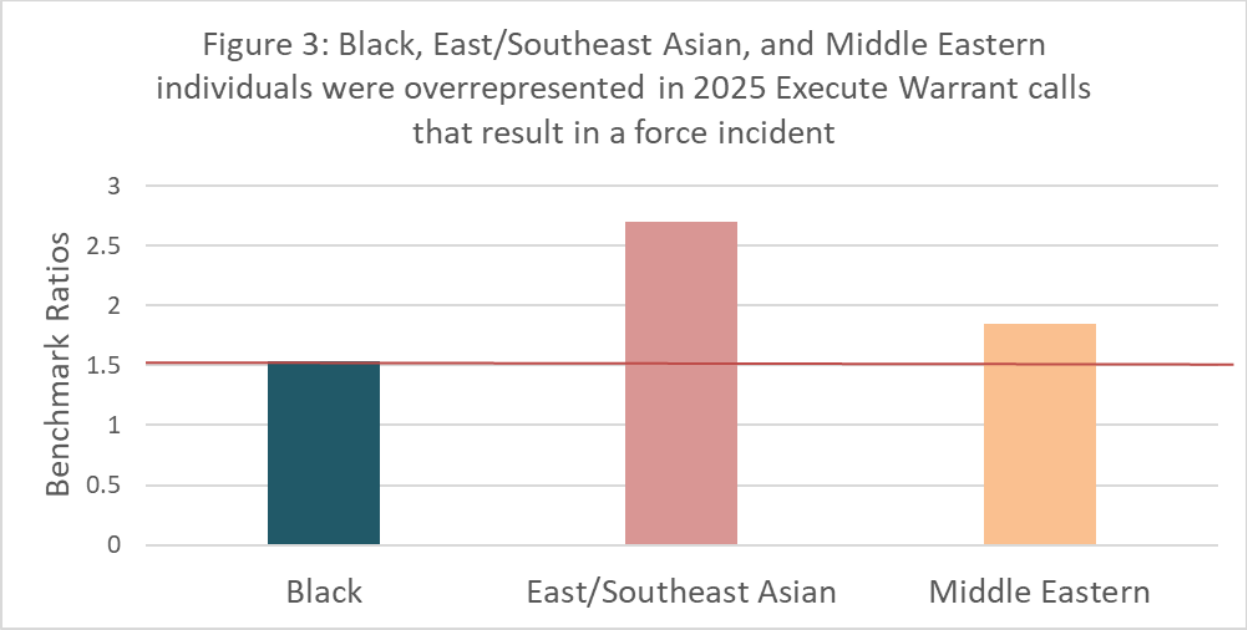
Enforcement-Action Benchmarking Disparities

To extend beyond disproportions to better understand the drivers underpinning observed overrepresentation, WRPS has engaged in a multiple benchmark strategy. Racial disparity is examined using Enforcement-Action benchmarking in order to make visible disparate outcomes at different decision-making points across the interaction. What we are asking with this analysis is: within Use of Force incidents, do racialized groups experience equal outcomes? To answer this question, the proportion of racialized individuals within a subset of interactions is compared to the proportion of White individuals, as outlined by the Data Standards (2018)[3]. Ultimately, this form of analysis flags areas of potential concern for further investigation, for the purpose of informing solutions that reduce racial disproportionalities and disparities (Foster & Jacobs, 2022). When looking at overall Use of Force incidents, we see no evidence of overrepresentation when comparing the proportional representation of racialized individuals to White individuals in Use of Force incidents (see Table 6).

Incident Types

First, we examine the representation of racialized individuals by incident type, for all Use of Force reportable incidents in 2025. Only incident types with at least five occurrences with the race group represented were included in the analysis. Overrepresentation was observed only for the Incident Type of Execute Warrant (Figure 3); with ratios exceeding 1.5 for Black (ratio = 1.53), East/Southeast Asian (ratio = 2.71), and Middle Eastern (ratio = 1.84) individuals, as compared to White individuals. Overrepresentation was not observed for any other Incident Type. Overall, we had fewer Incident Types associated with racial overrepresentation in 2025 as compared to 2024.

[3] See also the Ministry of Solicitor General's *Police Use of Force: Race-based data technical report, 2023* for a discussion on calculating racial disparity indices.



Contextual Factors at incident level

In alignment with the *Ontario Public-Police Interaction Training Aid,* officers continually assess their situation to act in a reasonable manner to ensure public and officer safety. Perceptions of person subject behaviour is paramount to the reasonable deployment of Use of Force options. WRPS reviews perceptions of subject behaviour for Training and Education purposes.

Under the RIBDCS, disaggregate analysis focuses on incidents where a weapon was perceived as present (268 incidents, 69% of all non-animal reportable incidents; 79% of incidents where perceived race was collected) versus not (70 incidents, 18% of all incidents; 21% of incidents where perceived race was collected; See Table 9).

In the 70 incidents where weapons were not perceived to be present, the highest level of force applied was a firearm pointed, and this occurred most often in response to a citizen-generated call for service. In the 70 calls where no weapon was perceived present, the top three incident types were: Intimate Partner Violence (9 incidents; 13% of incidents without a weapon), Property Crime (8 incidents; 11% of incidents without a weapon) and Person in Crisis (7 incidents; 10% of incidents without a weapon). The most frequently deployed force option was Physical Control (32 incidents, 46% of incidents without a weapon) followed by CEW pointed or discharged (19 incidents, 27%). Unlike in 2024, there was no overrepresentation of any racialized groups within Use of Force incidents without a weapon present.

In incidents were weapons were perceived to be present, the highest level of force deployed was a firearm pointed. In the 268 incidents where weapons were perceived to be present, incidents were most often Citizen-generated occurrences. The top three incident types were: Weapons (67 incidents; 25% of all incidents where a weapon was perceived), Execute Warrant (51 incidents; 19% of all incidents where a weapon was

perceived), and Person in Crisis (27 incidents; 10% of all incidents where a weapon was perceived). Again, there was no overrepresentation of any racialized groups in overall Use of Force incidents where a weapon was perceived.

Firearms were the type of weapon most frequently observed to be present, and in line with the Ontario Public-Police Interaction Training, the most frequent police response was firearms pointed (98 incidents, 38% of all incidents with a weapon) and physical control (57 incidents, 22%). In incidents where firearms were perceived as present, we observed an over-representation of Black (22 incidents; ratio = 1.54), East/Southeast Asian (8 incidents, ratio = 1.94), and incidents involving Multiple Race Groups (21 incidents; ratio = 3.19).

Table 7.Type of Perceived Weapon by Perceived Race for Reportable Incidents.

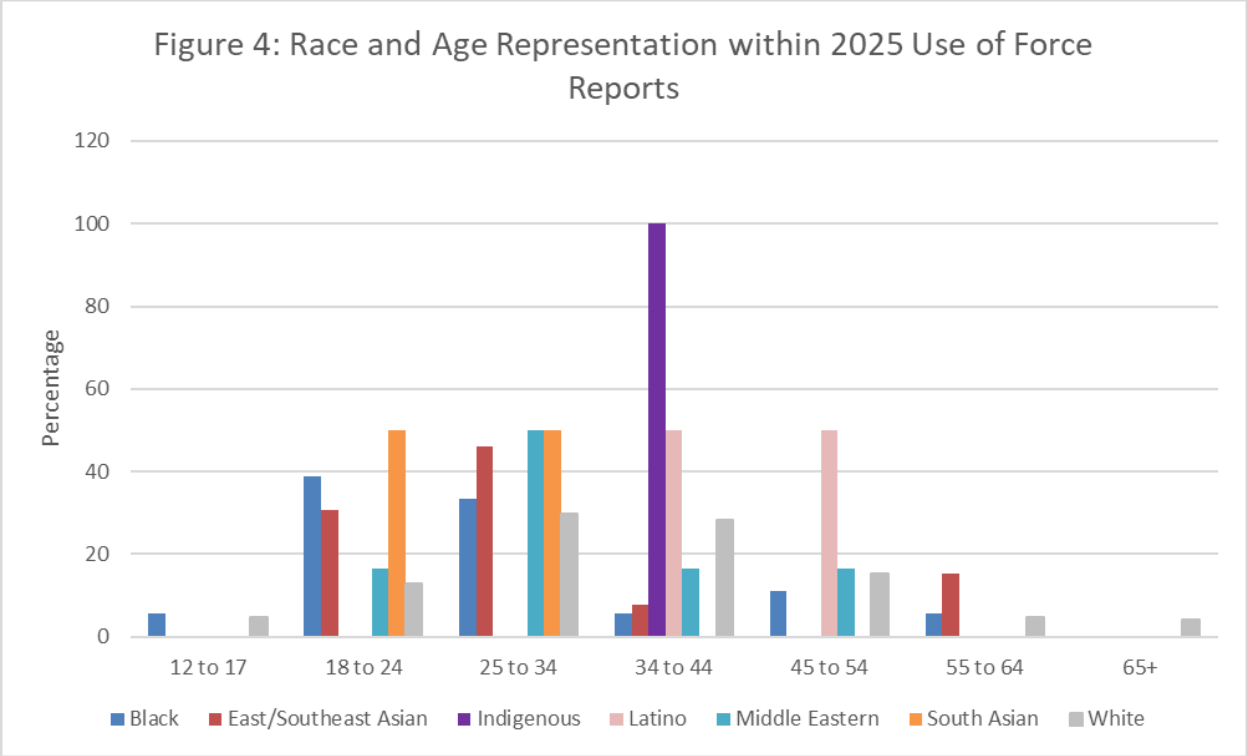
	Perceived Race of Incident								**Total**
	Black	East/ Southeast Asian	Indigenous	Latino	Middle Eastern	South Asian	White	Multiple Race Group	
No Weapon Present									
	9 (17%)	2 (13%)	1 (33%)	1 (17%)	5 (24%)	2 (33%)	50 (25%)		**70 (21%)**
Weapon Present									
Aerosol									
Club or Impact Weapon	3 (6%)				1 (5%)		4 (2%)		**8 (2%)**
Knife/ Edged Weapon	11 (21%)	2 (13%)	1 (33%)	4 (67%)	5 (24%)		58 (28%)	2 (8%)	**83 (25%)**
Firearm	15 (29%)	6 (40%)			8 (38%)	2 (33%)	40 (20%)	15 (63%)	**86 (26%)**
Motor Vehicle	1 (2%)	1 (7%)					3 (1%)		**5 (2%)**
Other Object	1 (2%)				1 (5%)		4 (2%)		**6 (2%)**
Unknown Weapons	4 (8%)				1 (5%)	1 (17%)	13 (6%)		**19 (6%)**
Various Weapons – No Firearms	1 (3%)	2 (13%)	1 (33%)	1 (17%)			16 (8%)	1 (4%)	**22 (7%)**
Various Weapons – Firearms Included	7 (13%)	2 (13%)				1 (17%)	16 (8%)	6 (25%)	**22 (7%)**
Total Weapons	43 (83%)	13 (87%)	2 (67%)	5 (83%)	16 (76%)	4 (67%)	154 (75%)	24 (100%)	**261 (79%)**

Total	52	15	3	6	21	6	204	24	**331**

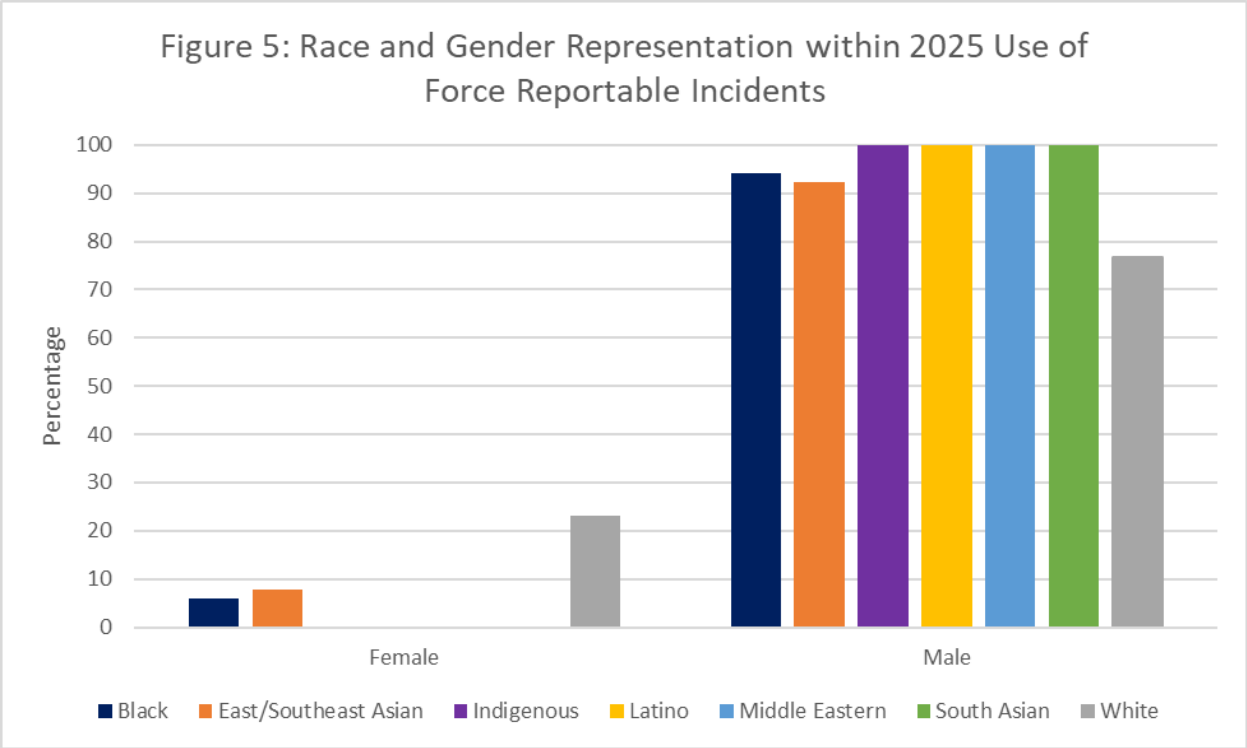
Intersectionality of Person Characteristics

The Modernized Use of Force Report allows officers to collect information on Perceived Age and Perceived Gender, alongside Perceived Race. By investigating the intersection between person characteristics, we are able to gain a more nuanced understanding of representation within Use of Force incidents.

Use of Force reportable incidents most frequently involved individuals perceived to be 18-44 years old, male (81%), and White. Only cells with a minimum of five individuals were retained in the disaggregate analysis. When disaggregating by race and age (Figure 4), Black individuals aged 18-24 (ratio = 3.04) and East/Southeast Asian individuals aged 24-34 (ratio = 1.56) were overrepresented, as compared to White individuals.



When disaggregating by race and gender, no disparities were observed when comparing racialized females to White females, or racialized males to White males. One incident involved a perceived transgender individual, but was not included in the above analysis.



Analysis and Future Action

The *Modernized Use of Force Report* remains a valuable tool in analyzing officers' actions during *reportable incidents* relative to legislative or procedural requirements.

While aggregate analysis is important and illuminating, it remains crucial for individual encounters to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. **Appendix C** provides a catalogue of 2025 Q4 *reportable* incidents in chronological order. Each row represents a occurrence and lists (a) the subjects' perceived race (where OR is shown this indicates discrepancy of perceived race by different responding officers) (b) how the occurrence was generated (c) the type of incident (d) the subjects' behaviour as determined by the officer (see Appendix B) (e) the officer response based on this behavior and (f) any injuries documented.

Summary and Future Directions

Overall, in 2025, we saw a decrease in the number of Use of Force Reports and reportable incidents. However, as in all years observed since 2020, Use of Force reportable incidents represented 0.1% of all CAD Occurrences. Overall, we observed a decrease in the number of rifle-related reports, and an increase in the number of CEW-related reports. To better understand on a case-by-case basis, information about individual encounters is provided in Appendix C.

Contextualized information at the encounter level allows for a better understanding of use of force deployment across racial categories. Overall, we observed disproportions compared local regional population demographics for Black and Middle Eastern individuals within Use of Force incidents, a pattern that has remained consistent since 2020. Using Enforcement Action Benchmarking allows us to make visible disparate outcomes at different decision-making points across the interaction. There was no evidence of disparities in overall Use of Force incidents when comparing racialized

groups to the White group. However, disaggregate analysis revealed that Black individuals aged 18-24 and East/Southeast Asian individuals aged 25-34 were overrepresented as compared to White counterparts. Additionally, Black, East/Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern individuals were overrepresented in Use of Force incidents involving a Warrant. Finally, Black and East/Southeast Asian individuals were overrepresented in Use of Force incidents where a firearm was perceived.

Patterns of overrepresentation serve as flags for guiding more in-depth evaluation and review for the purpose of reducing systemic racism, where possible. This nuanced work in furthering our understanding is to be done in collaboration with the community.

Strategic Business Plan:

The above report aligns with the following Strategic Business Plan 2024-2027 objectives:

Our Connections

☒ Communicate and engage

Financial and/or Risk Implications:

Nil

Attachments:

- Appendix A: Use of Force Report Requirement

1. Appendix B: Ontario Public-Police Interaction Training Aid (2023)
2. Appendix C: Raw Data from Individual Occurrences, Q4 2025

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