

## INTRODUCTION

Each year, Policing and Security Branch (PSB) collects summary data from police agencies in BC on their use of the following intermediate weapons: **extended range impact weapons** (ERIWs), **oleoresin capsicum** (OC) **spray**, **batons**, and **conducted energy weapons** (CEWs). PSB also collects more detailed information regarding police use of CEWs, pursuant to the associated [BC Provincial Policing Standards](#), and this information is available on [BC's crime, police, and police resource statistics web site](#).

Since 2019, the data request has included questions about intermediate weapon displays, where an officer displayed an intermediate weapon against a person but did not apply or discharge it. Data about the perceived emotional state of subjects has been collected and reported for CEW discharges since the 2013 data request, and this was expanded to include other intermediate weapons and CEW displays in 2019. The new information is presented in [Table 6](#) and [Table 7](#), and in [Figure 2](#) and [Figure 3](#), for 2019 and 2020 data.

The 2020 data request introduced new questions about general occurrence (GO) reports recorded by police agencies, to provide additional context for the use-of-force data. A GO report is typically written when officers are involved in an operational policing response to an incident. This report presents intermediate weapon use data in relation to GO report data, for 2020 ([Table 1](#)).

Intermediate weapon use may be attributed to a different police agency from where the involved officer was employed in some cases, such as incidents involving seconded police officers, integrated emergency response teams, or requests for assistance from other police agencies.

Each year, PSB also collects summary data on the use of **police service dogs** (PSDs). PSDs are intermediate weapons but are reported on separately. Reports on the use of PSDs are available on [BC's crime, police, and police resource statistics web site](#).

In addition to public reporting, PSB uses the information collected from police agencies about the use of force to monitor compliance with provincial policing standards and identify priorities for further study, standards, or training. The information is also used by police agencies to inform local training and policies.

## SUMMARY

- The vast majority of incidents that police respond to are resolved without the use (display and/or application) of intermediate weapons. Across all BC agencies in 2020, the rate of intermediate weapon applications (including discharges) was less than 0.5 per 1,000 GO reports, which corresponds to less than 0.05% of all GO reports. Intermediate weapon displays had a GO report rate of 0.9 per 1,000, higher than the rate for applications but still rare and less than 0.1% of all GO reports. ([Table 2](#)).
- The overall number of intermediate weapon applications reported to PSB has been increasing since 2014 (see [Figure 1](#)). In 2020, a total of 734 applications were reported. Patterns vary by intermediate weapon:
  - OC spray discharges have generally decreased each year since 2013, with the number reported in 2020 (182) less than half of the number reported in 2012 (375).
  - Baton applications in 2020 (63) are also notably lower than the number reported in 2012 (118). The number reported each year fluctuated from 2012 to 2016 and has been decreasing since 2017.
  - ERIW and CEW discharges in 2020 (145 and 344, respectively) have been trending upwards since 2012 (31 and 88). In particular, ERIW discharges saw their largest increases in 2019 and 2020.
- In 2020, the overall number of intermediate weapon displays (1,412) increased by 351 compared to 2019, driven by increases in ERIW (+169) and CEW displays (+195).
- Overall proportions of applications and displays for specific intermediate weapons in 2020 were similar to 2019.
  - Most applications were from CEWs (47%), followed by OC spray (25%), ERIWs (20%), and batons (9%).
  - Most displays were from CEWs (57%), followed by ERIWs (39%), batons (3%), and OC Spray (2%).

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2020

- Overall and for specific intermediate weapons, subjects perceived as emotionally disturbed<sup>1</sup> (EDP) tended to be in the minority (except for CEW and ERIW applications), and total proportions to EDP subjects in 2020 were similar to 2019.
  - The total proportion of intermediate weapon applications to EDP subjects increased from 44% (2019) to 48% (2020), with the highest proportions in CEW (56%) and ERIW (50%) applications (see [Figure 2](#)).
  - The total proportion of intermediate weapon displays to EDP subjects decreased slightly from 34% (2019) to 33% (2020), with the highest proportion in OC spray (46%) displays (see [Figure 3](#)).
- Caution must be used when interpreting a one-year change in numbers. More longitudinal data will better support analyses of trends.

## DEFINITIONS OF INTERMEDIATE WEAPONS

**Intermediate Weapon:** a device intended or designed to be used as a weapon, but for which the normal use is not intended or likely to cause serious injury or death. Impact weapons, aerosols, and conducted energy weapons fall within this category. Intermediate weapons may also be referred to as less-lethal weapons.

**Extended Range Impact Weapon (ERIW):** a type of intermediate weapon that fires less-lethal rounds from an extended range (e.g., a beanbag shotgun).

**Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray:** an aerosol spray composed partly of oleoresin capsicum that is designed to temporarily disable the subject by causing irritation to and of the eyes, nose, throat, and skin.

**Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW):** a weapon designed to use a conducted electrical current in order to incapacitate a person (probe mode) or to generate compliance through pain (contact stun mode).

## TOTAL INTERMEDIATE WEAPON USE

**Table 1: Total Intermediate Weapon Use in Relation to General Occurrence (GO) Reports, 2020**

	2020
GO Reports	1,524,168
Total IW use	2,146
IW applications	734
IW displays	1,412
Rate of IW use per 1,000 GO Reports	1.41
Rate of IW applications	0.48
Rate of IW displays	0.93

**Note 1:** Total IW use includes applications and displays of ERIWs, OC spray, batons, and CEWs.

**Note 3:** Rates are rounded to the nearest 0.01, which may affect calculations.

<sup>1</sup>EDP figures are based on whether the subject was perceived by the officer to be, and recorded by the officer as, an emotionally disturbed person (EDP). As counts of EDP subjects are reflective of an officer's perception and records, they may not be completely reflective of the actual number of EDP subjects. The term "emotionally disturbed person" in the police records management system is defined as "a subject who appears to be mentally unstable and who might pose a threat to an investigator, him/herself, or others."

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS

**Table 2: ERIW Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2020**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Abbotsford	2	2	8	2	10	7	10	14	40
Central Saanich	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1
Nelson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Westminster	3	0	1	0	0	2	3	0	5
Oak Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Saanich	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Stl'atl'imx	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transit Police	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vancouver	20	19	24	24	19	23	27	67	65
Victoria	0	0	2	3	5	7	5	12	15
West Vancouver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RCMP	4	6	5	2	5	1	11	10	18
<b>Total for BC</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>145</b>

**Table 3: Baton Applications by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2020**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Abbotsford	3	3	1	2	4	7	5	4	7
Central Saanich	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	1
Nelson	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
New Westminster	3	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	1
Oak Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Saanich	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1
Stl'atl'imx	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Transit Police	2	0	2	0	1	3	7	3	1
Vancouver	50	24	47	37	39	48	35	43	41
Victoria	8	0	4	3	16	4	4	0	6
West Vancouver	0	2	0	1	0	5	6	2	0
RCMP	48	35	27	28	29	22	11	15	4
<b>Total for BC</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>63</b>

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2020

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

**Table 4: OC Spray Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2020**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Abbotsford	13	5	5	12	8	9	13	21	28
Central Saanich	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Delta	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Nelson	2	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	0
New Westminster	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Oak Bay	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
Port Moody	0	2	1	0	0	4	2	0	0
Saanich	3	1	3	1	0	1	3	0	1
Stl'atl'imx	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Transit Police	2	4	2	1	0	3	4	4	1
Vancouver	39	30	21	40	48	52	39	49	27
Victoria	22	8	14	11	23	12	22	18	17
West Vancouver	2	0	0	3	1	5	3	2	2
RCMP	290	238	205	193	141	119	141	120	102
<b>Total for BC</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>182</b>

**Table 5: CEW Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2020**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Abbotsford	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	7	5
Central Saanich	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	2
Nelson	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	1	1
New Westminster	2	7	2	3	3	3	2	1	3
Oak Bay	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Saanich	2	2	0	3	3	1	3	1	2
Stl'atl'imx	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Transit Police	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1
Vancouver	7	6	9	25	36	47	47	65	63
Victoria	3	6	4	5	6	7	11	14	16
West Vancouver	0	0	0	2	1	2	2	0	1
RCMP	70	64	103	127	172	187	181	199	250
<b>Total for BC</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>344</b>

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2020

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

Table 6: Applications\* by Intermediate Weapon (IW) and EDP Status, 2019–2020

2019	Police Agency**															
		AB	CS	DE	NE	NW	OB	PM	SA	STP	TP	VA	VI	WV	RCMP	BC Total
ERIW	Total	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	12	0	10	103
	EDP	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	6	0	8	55
Baton	Total	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	43	0	2	15	68
	EDP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	11	0	2	5	22
OC Spray	Total	21	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	49	18	2	120	218
	EDP	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	10	0	41	71
CEW	Total	7	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	65	14	0	199	289
	EDP	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	33	8	0	104	152
IW Total	Total	46	1	3	1	3	0	0	1	0	7	224	44	4	344	678
	EDP	19	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	6	87	24	2	158	300

2020	Police Agency**															
		AB	CS	DE	NE	NW	OB	PM	SA	STP	TP	VA	VI	WV	RCMP	BC Total
ERIW	Total	40	0	1	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	65	15	0	18	145
	EDP	17	0	1	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	33	9	0	7	72
Baton	Total	7	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	41	6	0	4	63
	EDP	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	11	4	0	2	22
OC Spray	Total	28	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	27	17	2	102	182
	EDP	10	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	7	8	0	38	68
CEW	Total	5	0	2	1	3	0	0	2	0	1	63	16	1	250	344
	EDP	4	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	34	6	0	141	191
IW Total	Total	80	0	6	1	10	0	0	5	2	3	196	54	3	374	734
	EDP	34	0	5	0	6	0	0	3	2	3	85	27	0	188	353

\*Figures are presented by number of subjects.

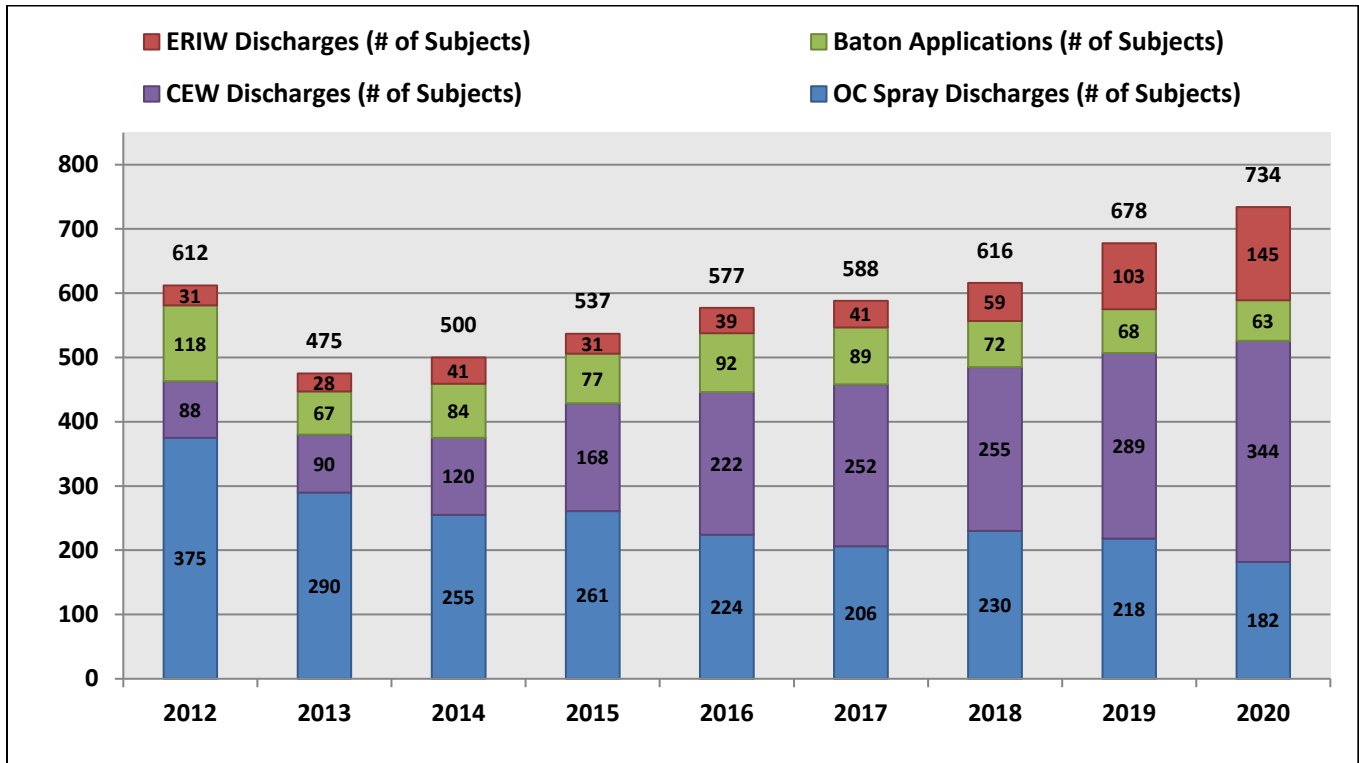
\*\*As follows: Abbotsford (AB), Central Saanich (CS), Delta (DE), Nelson (NE), New Westminster (NW), Oak Bay (OB), Port Moody (PM), Saanich (SA), Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service (STP), Transit Police (TP), Vancouver (VA), Victoria (VI), and West Vancouver (WV) Police Departments.

**Note:** EDP figures are based on whether the subject was perceived by the officer to be, and recorded by the officer as, an emotionally disturbed person (EDP). As counts of EDP subjects are reflective of an officer's perception and records, they may not be completely reflective of the actual number of EDP subjects. The term "emotionally disturbed person" in the police records management system is defined as "a subject who appears to be mentally unstable and who might pose a threat to an investigator, him/herself, or others."

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2020

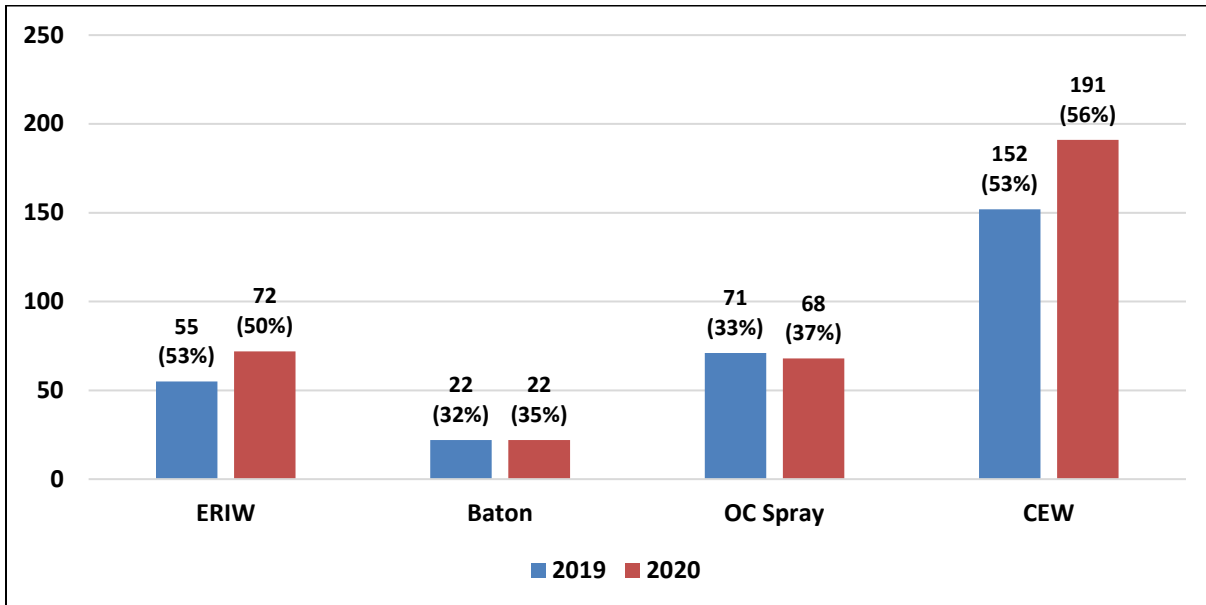
## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

Figure 1: Intermediate Weapon Applications by BC Police, by Weapon, 2012–2020



## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

**Figure 2: Intermediate Weapon Applications to EDP Subjects (and Proportion), 2019–2020**



\*Figures are presented by number of subjects.

**Note 1:** Number of intermediate weapon applications per year to EDP subjects (Proportion of intermediate weapon applications to EDP subjects)

**Note 2:** Caution must be used when interpreting this data, particularly in the context of frequency of use of intermediate weapons. Because the number of incidents each year for each force option is relatively small, the fluctuations are pronounced when expressed as percentage changes.

**Note 3:** EDP figures are based on whether the subject was perceived by the officer to be, and recorded by the officer as, an emotionally disturbed person (EDP). As counts of EDP subjects are reflective of an officer's perception and records, they may not be completely reflective of the actual number of EDP subjects. The term "emotionally disturbed person" in the police records management system is defined as "a subject who appears to be mentally unstable and who might pose a threat to an investigator, him/herself, or others."

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2020

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON DISPLAYS

Table 7: Displays\* by Intermediate Weapon (IW) and EDP Status, 2019–2020

		Police Agency**														
2019		AB	CS	DE	NE	NW	OB	PM	SA	STP	TP	VA	VI	WV	RCMP	BC Total
ERIW	Total	32	0	11	0	10	2	2	4	0	0	272	24	5	21	383
	EDP	4	0	4	0	5	1	1	3	0	0	70	5	5	11	109
Baton	Total	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	28	2	0	6	45
	EDP	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	8	1	0	3	17
OC Spray	Total	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	6	10	0	7	29
	EDP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	5	0	2	9
CEW	Total	12	1	11	1	7	3	1	7	0	7	275	43	3	233	604
	EDP	3	1	5	1	4	2	1	2	0	2	85	15	1	103	225
IW Total	Total	49	1	24	1	17	5	5	14	0	10	581	79	8	267	1,061
	EDP	9	1	9	1	9	3	4	6	0	4	163	26	6	119	360

2020		AB	CS	DE	NE	NW	OB	PM	SA	STP	TP	VA	VI	WV	RCMP	BC Total
ERIW	Total	49	2	13	0	19	0	0	11	0	0	403	23	5	27	552
	EDP	15	1	4	0	10	0	0	4	0	0	128	6	1	7	176
Baton	Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	27	3	2	3	37
	EDP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	0	1	8
OC Spray	Total	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	6	6	1	5	24
	EDP	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	0	1	11
CEW	Total	12	0	16	8	15	0	6	15	2	14	366	82	6	257	799
	EDP	3	0	8	7	7	0	2	4	1	5	110	20	2	108	277
IW Total	Total	62	2	31	8	36	0	6	28	2	15	802	114	14	292	1,412
	EDP	19	1	14	7	18	0	2	9	1	6	245	30	3	117	472

\*Figures are presented by number of subjects, except for CEW display figures, which are presented by number of officers who displayed their CEW (without discharge) per subject of the display in an incident.

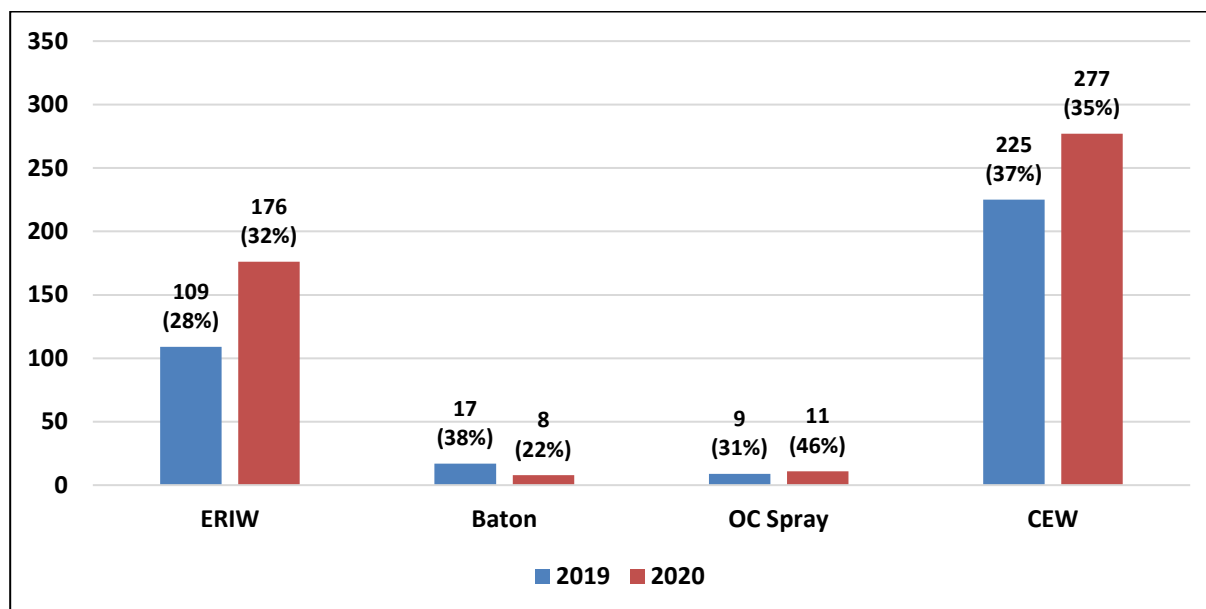
\*\*As follows: Abbotsford (AB), Central Saanich (CS), Delta (DE), Nelson (NE), New Westminster (NW), Oak Bay (OB), Port Moody (PM), Saanich (SA), Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service (STP), Transit Police (TP), Vancouver (VA), Victoria (VI), and West Vancouver (WV) Police Departments.

**Note:** EDP figures are based on whether the subject was perceived by the officer to be, and recorded by the officer as, an emotionally disturbed person (EDP). As counts of EDP subjects are reflective of an officer's perception and records, they may not be completely reflective of the actual number of EDP subjects. The term "emotionally disturbed person" in the police records management system is defined as "a subject who appears to be mentally unstable and who might pose a threat to an investigator, him/herself, or others."



## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON DISPLAYS continued

**Figure 3: Intermediate Weapon Displays to EDP Subjects (and Proportion), 2019–2020**



\*Figures are presented by number of subjects, except for CEW display figures, which are presented by number of officers who displayed their CEW (without discharge) per subject of the display in an incident.

**Note 1:** Number of intermediate weapon displays per year to EDP subjects (Proportion of intermediate weapon displays to EDP subjects)

**Note 2:** Caution must be used when interpreting this data, particularly in the context of frequency of use of intermediate weapons. Because the number of incidents each year for each force option is relatively small, the fluctuations are pronounced when expressed as percentage changes, particularly for the intermediate weapons with the least displays: OC spray and baton displays.

**Note 3:** EDP figures are based on whether the subject was perceived by the officer to be, and recorded by the officer as, an emotionally disturbed person (EDP). As counts of EDP subjects are reflective of an officer's perception and records, they may not be completely reflective of the actual number of EDP subjects. The term "emotionally disturbed person" in the police records management system is defined as "a subject who appears to be mentally unstable and who might pose a threat to an investigator, him/herself, or others."