



Police Firearm Discharges (2007–2019) and Displays (2019)

INTRODUCTION

Each year since 2007, Policing and Security Branch (PSB) has collected summary data from each police agency in BC on the number of police firearm discharge incidents, including whether the discharge resulted in injury or death.

The request for 2019 summary data included new questions on police firearm displays, where an officer drew their firearm and displayed it to, or pointed it at, a person but did not discharge the firearm. This included questions about the perceived emotional state of the subject.

This report presents a 13-year summary of police firearm discharge data from 2007-2019 and a one-year summary of police firearm display data for 2019.

Both the firearm discharge and display data presented in this report include operational incidents involving a person. Excluded from analysis are firearm discharges involving animals (for humanitarian or self-defence reasons) and accidental firearm discharges in a non-operational context (e.g., while cleaning a gun). Incidents are attributed to the police agency that was in command of the incident during which a firearm use occurred. This may be a different police agency to where the involved officer is employed in some cases, such as incidents involving seconded police officers, integrated Emergency Response Team callouts, or requests for assistance from other police agencies. An incident can include more than one discharge by the same officer or different officers.

Injuries and deaths included in this report are those caused by a police firearm.

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

- In 2019, there were 1,827 police firearm display incidents in BC, compared to 15 operational firearm discharge incidents. In other words, over 99% of police firearm use in BC was display only.
- From 2007 to 2019, the number of police firearm discharge incidents reported to PSB per year ranged from 5 to 26, averaging 12.7 incidents per year (see Table 1).
- From 2007 to 2019, there was an average of fewer than four deaths per year (range of 0 to 8) and an average of fewer than four persons injured per year (range of 1 to 9) by police firearm discharges (see Figure 1).
- In 2019, there were 15 police firearm discharge incidents in BC reported to PSB, 10 higher than in 2018. Also, in 2019, four people died and four people were injured as a result of police gunshot wounds, compared to three deaths and one person injured in 2018.
- Overall, there is no clear trend in police firearm discharges when considered in isolation or when compared to trends in other data available to PSB about the policing environment in BC. The number of discharges, deaths, and injuries have fluctuated, increasing in some years while decreasing in others. Furthermore, because the number of incidents each year is relatively small, the fluctuations are quite pronounced when expressed as percentage increases or decreases.
- The subject was listed as being perceived to be an emotionally disturbed person (EDP) in a minority (17%) of firearm displays in 2019, the first year where this information was collected by PSB.



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FIREARM DISCHARGES

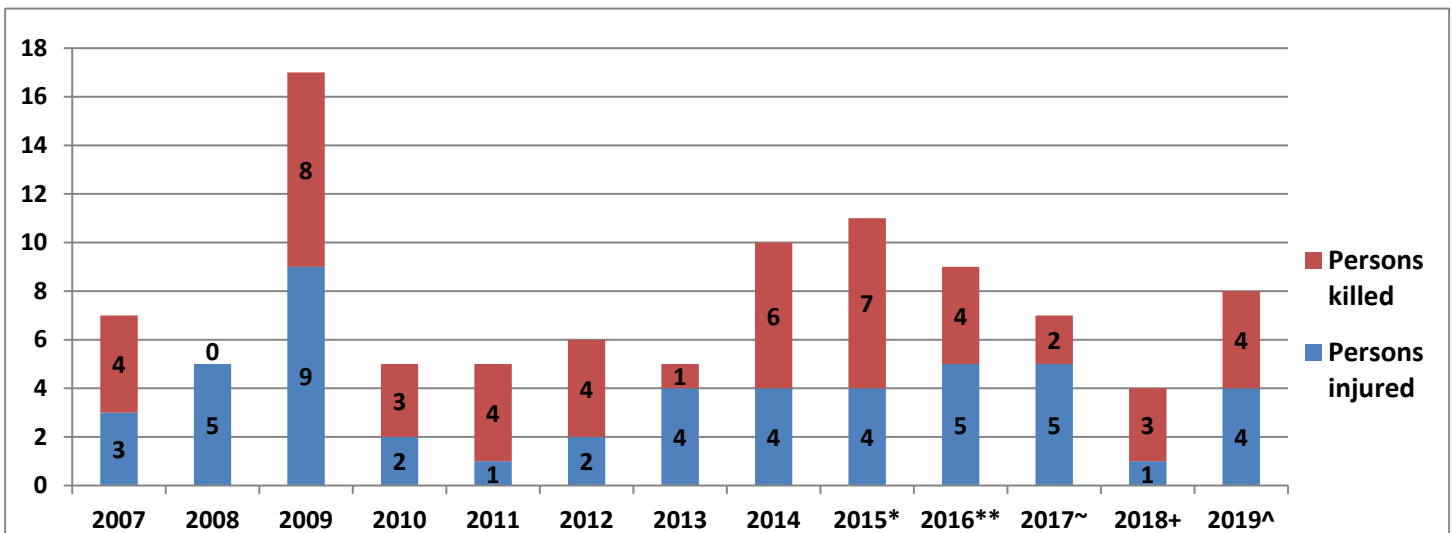
Table 1: Police Firearm Discharge Incidents in an Operational Setting by Agency, 2007 to 2019

POLICE AGENCY*															
	AB	CS	DE	NE	NW	OB	PM	SA	STP	TP	VA	VI	WV	RCMP	BC Total
2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	12	16
2008	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	13
2009	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	20	26
2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	9
2011	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	9
2012	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	8	10
2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	9	10
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	10	17
2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	11	12
2016	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	9
2017	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	12	14
2018	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
2019	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	13	15

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

Note: Counts are based on what agency was in command of the officer(s) who discharged the firearm(s), regardless of what agency the member may have been seconded from.

Figure 1: Number of Persons Injured and Killed by Police Firearms in BC, 2007 to 2019



Note: Figure 1 only includes injuries and deaths caused by a police firearm.

2015*: Persons-killed figure includes two people who died after being shot by police, who had also sustained other life-threatening injuries.

2016**: Persons-injured figure includes one incident counted as an injury where a subject was shot by police but died from another injury.

2017~: Persons-killed figure includes an incident where the subject died after being shot by police but had also sustained other life-threatening injuries.

2018+: Persons-killed figure includes an incident where the subject fatally shot himself at the same time as he was being fatally shot by police.

2019^: Persons-killed figure includes two people from an incident involving a hostage situation where the subject was shot and killed by officers, and in the course of this action, the hostage was accidentally struck by police bullets and subsequently died of the injuries.



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FIREARM DISPLAYS

Table 2: Police Firearm Display Incidents Against a Person, by EDP Status, 2019

		POLICE AGENCY*														
		AB	CS	DE	NE	NW	OB	PM	SA	STP	TP	VA	VI	WV	RCMP	BC Total
2019	EDP	10	1	6	0	5	1	2	4	0	3	107	26	6	141	312
	N/L EDP	78	6	35	4	37	2	15	8	2	23	426	93	27	759	1,515
	Total	88	7	41	4	42	3	17	12	2	26	533	119	33	900	1,827

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

Note: Figures are disaggregated based on whether or not the subject was perceived to be, and recorded by the officer as, an emotionally disturbed person (EDP). 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." A subject not listed as EDP (N/L EDP) does not necessarily mean that the subject was not an EDP subject, only that the subject was not recorded as being perceived to be an EDP subject. Counts of "N/L EDP" may include cases where the subject was an EDP subject but was not perceived and/or recorded as such.