

INTRODUCTION

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

Each year, PSB 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](#).

Since 2019, the data request has included questions about when 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 2013. This was expanded to include other intermediate weapons and CEW displays in 2019. The 2019 to 2021 display data for intermediate weapons is presented in [Table 6](#) as well as in [Figure 4](#) and [Figure 5](#).

The 2020 data request introduced new questions about general occurrence (GO) reports recorded by police agencies. Specifically, 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 2021 ([Table 1](#)).

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

In addition to public reporting, PSB uses use of force information collected from police agencies 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

- Most incidents that police respond to are resolved without the use (display and/or application) of intermediate weapons. Across all BC agencies in 2021, the rate of intermediate weapon applications (including discharges) was less than 0.6 per 1,000 GO reports, which corresponds to less than 0.06% 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 1](#)).
- The overall number of intermediate weapon applications reported to PSB has been increasing since 2013 (see [Figure 1](#)). In 2021, a total of 728 applications were reported. Patterns vary by intermediate weapon:
 - OC spray discharges have generally decreased each year since 2013, but the number reported in 2021 (193) was slightly higher than the number reported in 2020 (182).
 - Baton applications in 2021 (28) are significantly lower than the number reported in 2012 (118). The number of baton applications has been decreasing since 2016. In 2021 there was a decrease of 35 applications compared to the previous year.
 - ERIW and CEW discharges in 2021 (139 and 368, respectively) are significantly higher than in 2012 (31 and 88, respectively). ERIW discharges have been increasing since 2015 (31) but declined slightly in 2021 from 2020 (-6). CEW discharges have been increasing since 2012 (after declining sharply after 2007; see [CEW Trends 2007-2016](#)).

Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2021

- In 2021, the overall number of intermediate weapons displays (1,290) decreased by 122 compared to 2020, driven by decreases in ERIW (-63) and CEW displays (-42) and lower for all weapon types ([Table 6](#)).
- The proportion of specific intermediate weapons applications in 2021 has changed since 2012. In 2012, most applications were from OC Spray (61%), followed by batons (19%), CEW discharges (14%), and ERIW discharges (5%). In 2021, most applications were from CEWs (51%), followed by OC spray (27%), ERIWs (19%), and batons (4%).
- In 2021 most displays were from CEWs (59%), followed by ERIWs (38%), Batons (2%), and OC Spray (1%). This is similar to 2020.
- Overall, subjects perceived as emotionally disturbed¹ (EDP) tended to be in the minority but made up the majority of subjects for ERIW and CEW applications. Rates of use involving EDP subjects have been fairly stable across 2019, 2020, and 2021 (see [Figure 3](#) for applications and [Figure 4](#) for displays).
 - The total proportion of intermediate weapon applications to EDP subjects was 48% in both 2021 and 2020, but the highest proportions in 2021 were ERIW (59%) and CEW (53%) applications (see [Figure 3](#)).
 - The total proportion of intermediate weapon displays to EDP subjects decreased from 33% (2020) to 32% (2021), with the highest proportion in OC spray displays (39% to EDP subjects; see [Figure 5](#)).

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).

¹EDP 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, 2012–2021

TOTAL INTERMEDIATE WEAPON USE

Table 1: Total Intermediate Weapon Use in Relation to General Occurrence (GO) Reports, 2021

| | 2021 |
|--|------------------|
| GO Reports | 1,375,212 |
| Total IW use | 2,018 |
| <i>IW applications</i> | 728 |
| <i>IW displays</i> | 1,290 |
| Rate of IW use per 1,000 GO Reports | 1.47 |
| <i>Rate of IW applications</i> | 0.53 |
| <i>Rate of IW displays</i> | 0.94 |

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

Note 2: Rates are rounded to the nearest 0.01, which may affect calculations.

Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2021

INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS

Table 2: ERIW Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2021

| Police Agency | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Abbotsford | 2 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 40 | 36 |
| Central Saanich | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Delta | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Nelson | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| New Westminster | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 4 |
| Oak Bay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Port Moody | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Saanich | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Stl'atl'imx | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Transit Police | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Vancouver | 20 | 19 | 24 | 24 | 19 | 23 | 27 | 67 | 65 | 54 |
| Victoria | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 15 | 14 |
| West Vancouver | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RCMP | 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 11 | 10 | 18 | 26 |
| Total for BC | 31 | 28 | 41 | 31 | 39 | 41 | 59 | 103 | 145 | 139 |

Table 3: Baton Applications by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2021

| Police Agency | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Abbotsford | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 6 |
| Central Saanich | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Delta | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Nelson | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| New Westminster | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Oak Bay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Port Moody | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Saanich | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Stl'atl'imx | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Transit Police | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Vancouver | 50 | 24 | 47 | 37 | 39 | 48 | 35 | 43 | 41 | 12 |
| Victoria | 8 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 16 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 2 |
| West Vancouver | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| RCMP | 48 | 35 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 22 | 11 | 15 | 4 | 0 |
| Total for BC | 118 | 67 | 84 | 77 | 92 | 89 | 72 | 68 | 63 | 28 |

Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2021

INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

Table 4: OC Spray Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2021

| Police Agency | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Abbotsford | 13 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 21 | 28 | 33 |
| Central Saanich | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Delta | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Nelson | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| New Westminster | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Oak Bay | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Port Moody | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Saanich | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Stl'atl'imx | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Transit Police | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Vancouver | 39 | 30 | 21 | 40 | 48 | 52 | 39 | 49 | 27 | 35 |
| Victoria | 22 | 8 | 14 | 11 | 23 | 12 | 22 | 18 | 17 | 13 |
| West Vancouver | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| RCMP | 290 | 238 | 205 | 193 | 141 | 119 | 141 | 120 | 102 | 102 |
| Total for BC | 375 | 290 | 255 | 261 | 224 | 206 | 230 | 218 | 182 | 193 |

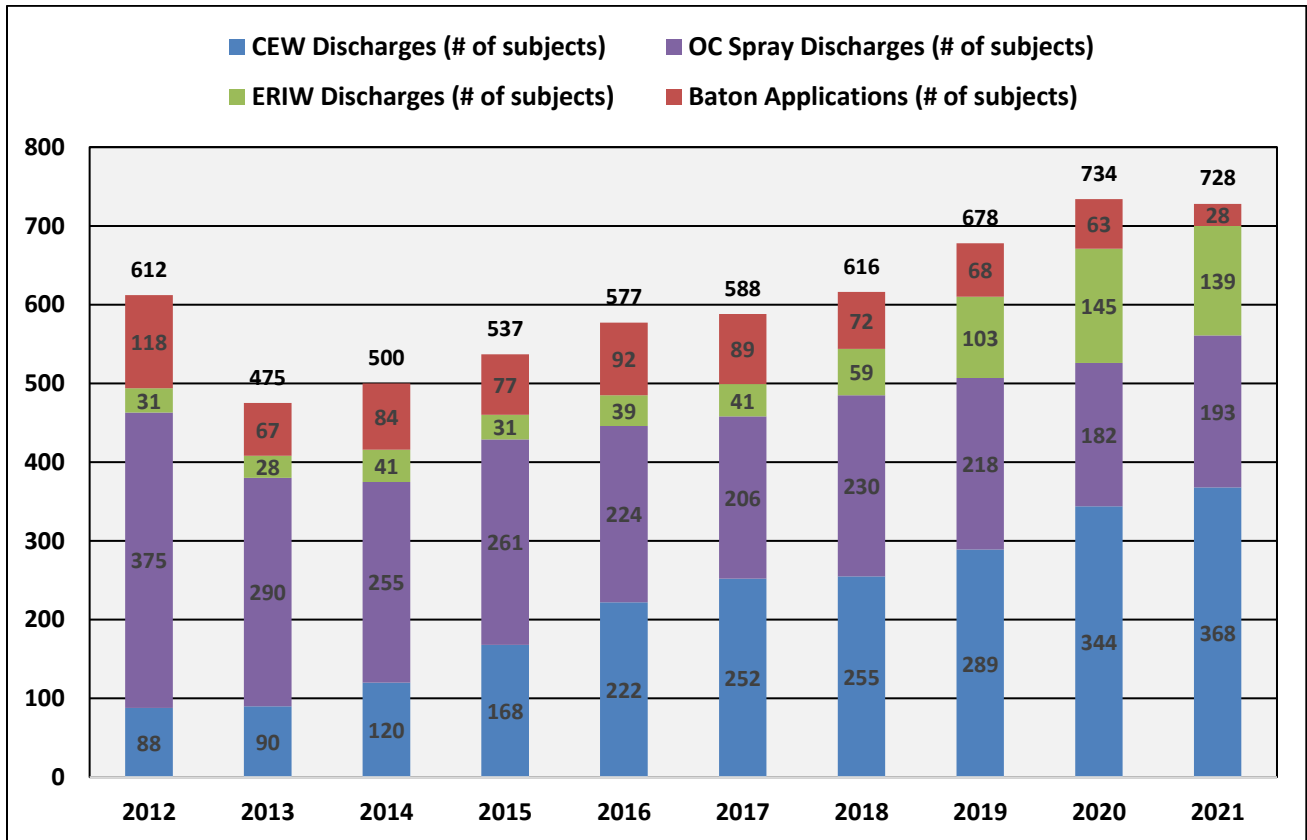
Table 5: CEW Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2021

| Police Agency | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Abbotsford | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 20 |
| Central Saanich | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Delta | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Nelson | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| New Westminster | 2 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Oak Bay | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Port Moody | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Saanich | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Stl'atl'imx | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Transit Police | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Vancouver | 7 | 6 | 9 | 25 | 36 | 47 | 47 | 65 | 63 | 66 |
| Victoria | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 26 |
| West Vancouver | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| RCMP | 70 | 64 | 103 | 127 | 172 | 187 | 181 | 199 | 250 | 238 |
| Total for BC | 88 | 90 | 120 | 168 | 222 | 252 | 255 | 289 | 344 | 368 |

Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2021

INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

Figure 1: Intermediate Weapon Applications by BC Police, by Weapon, 2012–2021



Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2021

INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

Figure 2: Intermediate Weapon Applications to EDP Subjects (Number, 2019–2021)

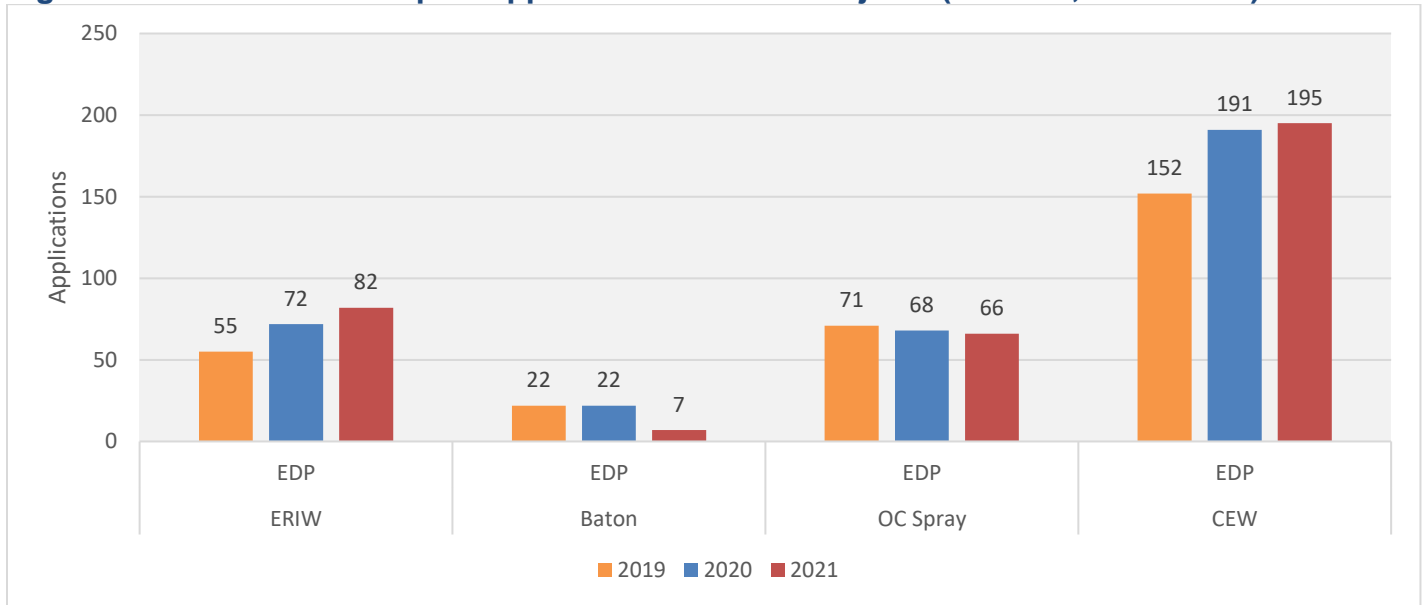
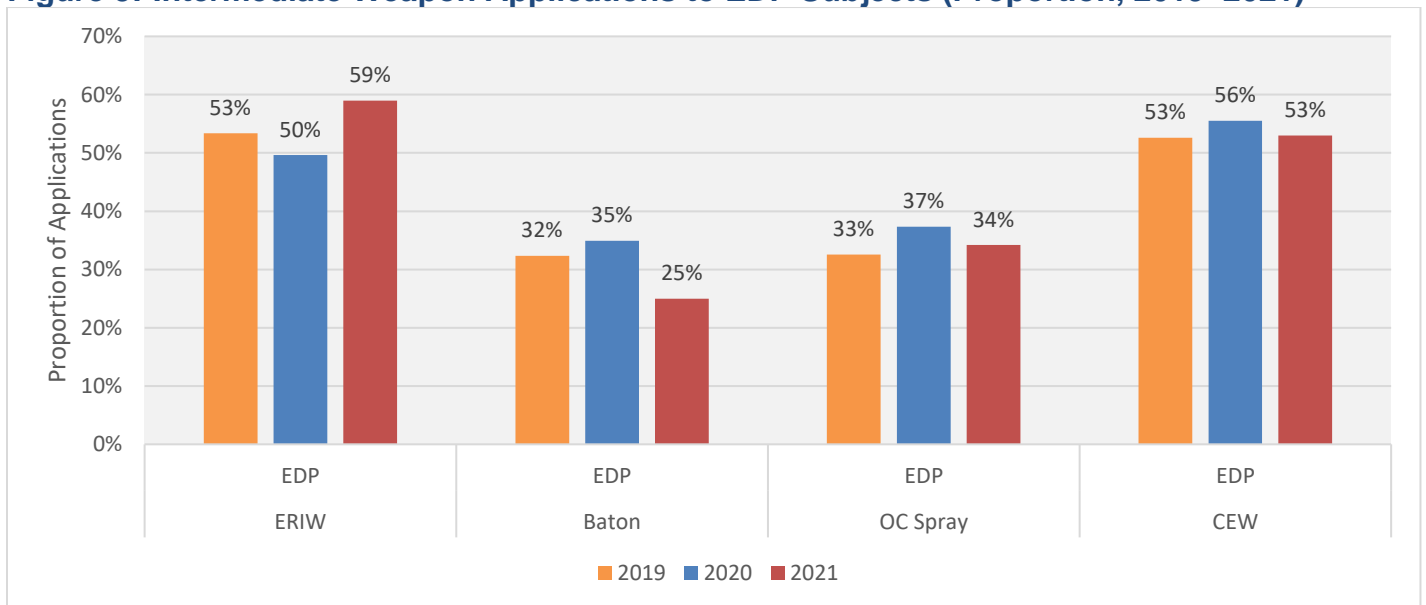


Figure 3: Intermediate Weapon Applications to EDP Subjects (Proportion, 2019–2021)



Note 1: 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 2: 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, 2012–2021

INTERMEDIATE WEAPON DISPLAYS

Table 6: Displays by Intermediate Weapon (IW), 2019–2021

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

| 2020 | AB | CS | DE | NE | NW | OB | PM | SA | STP | TP | VA | VI | WV | RCMP | BC Total |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| ERIW | 49 | 2 | 13 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 403 | 23 | 5 | 27 | 552 |
| Baton | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 27 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 37 |
| OC Spray | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 24 |
| CEW | 12 | 0 | 16 | 8 | 15 | 0 | 6 | 15 | 2 | 14 | 366 | 82 | 6 | 257 | 799 |
| IW Total | 62 | 2 | 31 | 8 | 36 | 0 | 6 | 28 | 2 | 15 | 802 | 114 | 14 | 292 | 1,412 |

| 2021 | AB | CS | DE | NE | NW | OB | PM | SA | STP | TP | VA | VI | WV | RCMP | BC Total |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| ERIW | 40 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 390 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 489 |
| Baton | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 26 |
| OC Spray | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 18 |
| CEW | 2 | 1 | 21 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 26 | 4 | 16 | 380 | 73 | 6 | 215 | 757 |
| IW Total | 48 | 2 | 34 | 1 | 25 | 0 | 3 | 35 | 4 | 16 | 793 | 85 | 15 | 229 | 1,290 |

**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, 2012–2021

INTERMEDIATE WEAPON DISPLAYS continued

Figure 4: Intermediate Weapon Displays to EDP Subjects (Number, 2019–2021)

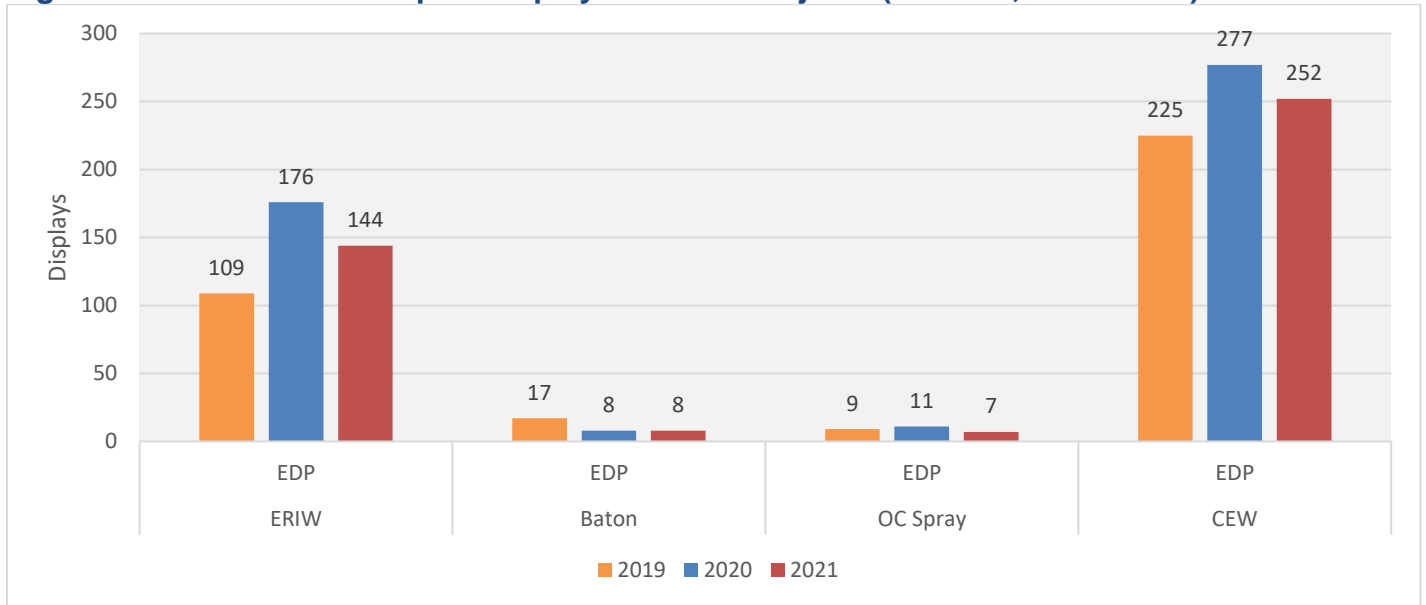
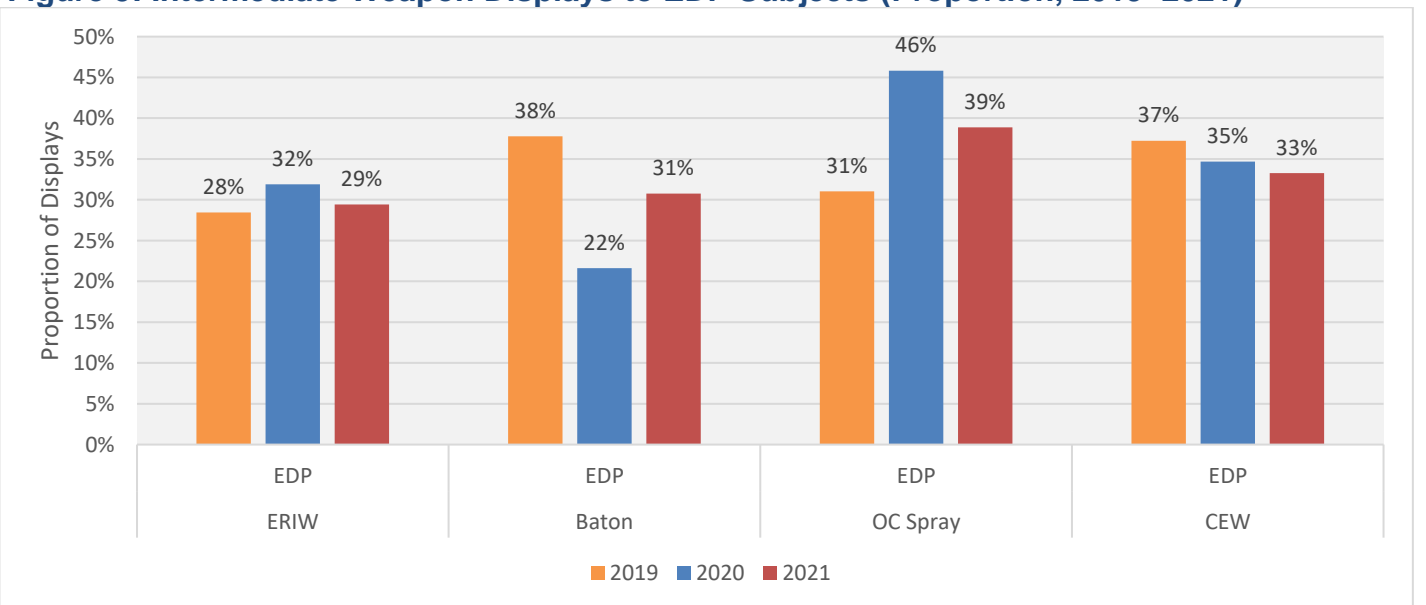


Figure 5: Intermediate Weapon Displays to EDP Subjects (Proportion, 2019–2021)



Note 1: 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 2: 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.”