

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTRODUCTION

Each year, Policing and Security Branch (PSB) collects summary data from police agencies in BC on intermediate weapons and their use, in keeping with the reporting requirements detailed in *BC Provincial Policing Standard 1.7.2 Reporting and Investigation Following the Use of Force*. This includes the use of **extended range impact weapons** (ERIWs), **oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray**, **batons**, and **conducted energy weapons** (CEWs). PSB collects additional detailed information regarding police use of CEWs, pursuant to the associated *BC Provincial Policing Standards*. This additional CEW information is reported separately, and posted on [BC's crime, police, and police resource statistics web site](#). 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 also available on [BC's crime, police, and police resource statistics web site](#).

Since 2019, the intermediate weapon 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 2022 display data is presented below, both on its own and alongside discharge / application data.

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 2020 to 2022.

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.

## 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).

**Baton:** approved models of expandable/collapsible and straight batons are fabricated from metal or other rigid material and are available in lengths of between 12 to 36 inches (30 to 100 cm).

A complete list of intermediate weapons approved for operational use in BC is available in Appendix A for [BCPPS 1.2.2 Intermediate Weapons](#).

## SUMMARY OF TRENDS

- The majority of incidents that police respond to are resolved without the use (display and / or application) of intermediate weapons. Across all BC agencies in 2022, the rate of intermediate weapon applications / discharges for select weapons tracked in this summary report (ERIWs, OC spray, batons, and CEWs) was 0.67 per 1,000 GO reports, which corresponds to 0.067% of all GO reports. Intermediate weapon displays had a GO report rate of 1.14 per 1,000 or 0.114% of all GO reports ([Table 1](#)), higher than the rate for applications but still rare.
- Overall use of the tracked intermediate weapons (displays and applications) has trended upwards over time, declining in 2021, but rising to a new record high in 2022 of 2,365 uses ([Figure 1](#)).
- The number of intermediate weapon discharges / applications reported to PSB has been increasing since 2013 (see [Figure 2](#)). As noted, 2022 marked a new high after a slight year-over-year decline from 2020 to 2021. A total of 876 discharges / applications were reported in 2022. Patterns vary by intermediate weapon:
  - ERIW discharges have generally been increasing since 2015 (31), declined slightly in 2021 but rising to a new high of 165 discharges in 2022 ([Table 2](#) and [Figure 2](#)).
  - Baton applications in 2022 (49) were lower than the number reported in 2012 (118), decreasing after 2016, but up from the 2021 low of 28 applications ([Table 3](#) and [Figure 2](#)).
  - OC spray discharges have generally decreased over time but have risen from a 2020 low (182) to 218 discharges in 2022 ([Table 4](#) and [Figure 2](#)).
  - CEW discharges have increased each year since 2012, but rose over 20% from the 368 discharges in 2021 to the 444 discharges in 2022 ([Table 5](#) and [Figure 2](#)).
- 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 2022, most applications were from CEWs (51%), followed by OC spray (25%), ERIWs (19%), and batons (6%); see [Figure 3](#).
- The number of intermediate weapons displays has also trended upward, declining in 2021, but reaching a new high in 2022 of 1,489 displays ([Figure 6](#)). This was driven by increases in displays of ERIWs (+88) and CEWs (+90).
- In 2022 most displays were from CEWs (57%), followed by ERIWs (39%), Batons (3%), and OC Spray (2%); see [Figure 7](#). These proportions are similar to those reported in past years since 2019.
- Overall and for specific intermediate weapons, subjects perceived as emotionally disturbed (EDP)<sup>1</sup> tend to be in the minority except for CEW and ERIW applications.
  - The total proportion of intermediate weapon applications to EDP subjects was 44% in 2022. The highest proportions in 2022 were applications of ERIWs (55%) and CEWs (49%). The use of these weapons on EDP subjects has increased ([Figure 4](#)), but so has overall use, so proportions have been fairly stable ([Figure 5](#)).
  - The total proportion of intermediate weapon displays to EDP subjects was 32% in 2022. Both the number and proportion of EDP subjects have been fairly stable overall ([Figure 8](#) and [Figure 9](#)), though the proportion of CEW displays against EDP subjects has been slowly declining ([Figure 9](#)).

<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." As of October 23, 2022, the term "person in crisis" has replaced "emotionally disturbed persons" within the RCMP reporting system.

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## TOTAL INTERMEDIATE WEAPON USE

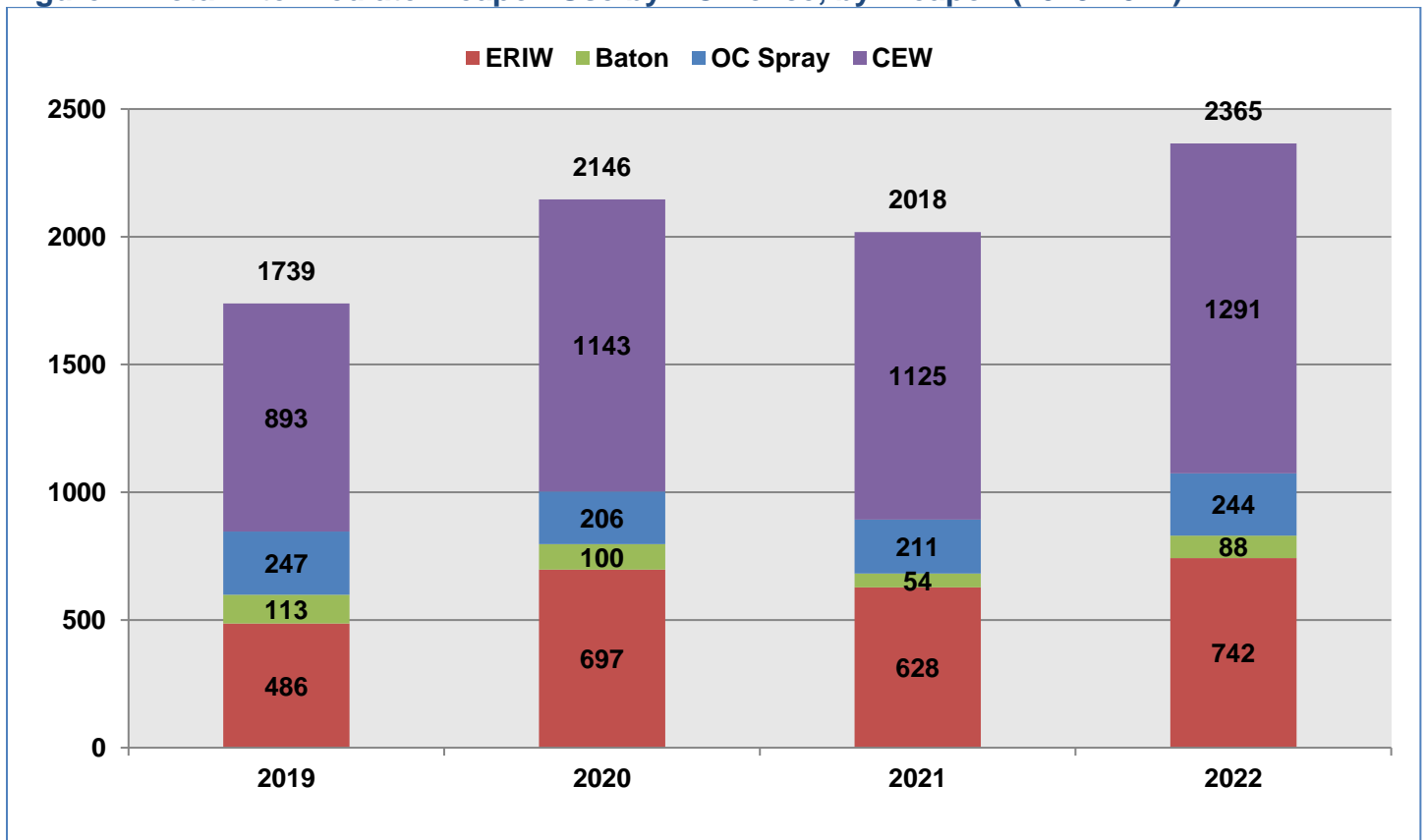
**Table 1: Total Intermediate Weapon Use per General Occurrence (GO) Report (2019-2022)**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
GO Reports	N/A	1,357,302	1,375,212	1,300,697
<b>Total IW use</b>	<b>1,739</b>	<b>2,146</b>	<b>2,018</b>	<b>2,365</b>
<i>IW applications</i>	678	734	728	876
<i>IW displays</i>	1,061	1,412	1,290	1,489
<b>Rate of IW use per 1,000 GO Reports</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1.58</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>1.82</b>
<i>IW applications per 1,000 GOs</i>	N/A	0.54	0.53	0.67
<i>IW displays per 1,000 GOs</i>	N/A	1.04	0.94	1.14

**Note 1:** Total IW use includes both applications and displays of ERIWs, OC spray, batons, and CEWs. PSD deployments have not been included.

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

**Figure 1: Total Intermediate Weapon Use by BC Police, by Weapon (2019-2022)**



# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS

**Table 2: ERIW Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2022**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Abbotsford	2	2	8	2	10	7	10	14	40	36	51
Central Saanich	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	3
Nelson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
New Westminster	3	0	1	0	0	2	3	0	5	4	2
Oak Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Saanich	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4
Stl'atl'imx	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transit Police	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vancouver	20	19	24	24	19	23	27	67	65	54	62
Victoria	0	0	2	3	5	7	5	12	15	14	8
West Vancouver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RCMP	4	6	5	2	5	1	11	10	18	26	35
<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>	<b>139</b>	<b>165</b>

**Table 3: Baton Applications by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2022**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Abbotsford	3	3	1	2	4	7	5	4	7	6	6
Central Saanich	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	0
Nelson	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Westminster	3	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Oak Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Saanich	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
Stl'atl'imx	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Transit Police	2	0	2	0	1	3	7	3	1	0	2
Vancouver	50	24	47	37	39	48	35	43	41	12	27
Victoria	8	0	4	3	16	4	4	0	6	2	1
West Vancouver	0	2	0	1	0	5	6	2	0	5	0
RCMP	48	35	27	28	29	22	11	15	4	0	13
<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>	<b>28</b>	<b>49</b>

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

**Table 4: OC Spray Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2022**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Abbotsford	13	5	5	12	8	9	13	21	28	33	31
Central Saanich	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Delta	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1
Nelson	2	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
New Westminster	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	4
Oak Bay	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	2	1	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0
Saanich	3	1	3	1	0	1	3	0	1	3	0
Stl'atl'imx	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Transit Police	2	4	2	1	0	3	4	4	1	2	3
Vancouver	39	30	21	40	48	52	39	49	27	35	37
Victoria	22	8	14	11	23	12	22	18	17	13	8
West Vancouver	2	0	0	3	1	5	3	2	2	1	2
RCMP	290	238	205	193	141	119	141	120	102	102	132
<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>	<b>193</b>	<b>218</b>

**Table 5: CEW Discharges by BC Police (Number of Subjects), 2012–2022**

Police Agency	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Abbotsford	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	7	5	20	9
Central Saanich	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Delta	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	4	1
Nelson	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	4	4
New Westminster	2	7	2	3	3	3	2	1	3	1	3
Oak Bay	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1
Saanich	2	2	0	3	3	1	3	1	2	3	5
Stl'atl'imx	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Transit Police	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	3	9
Vancouver	7	6	9	25	36	47	47	65	63	66	63
Victoria	3	6	4	5	6	7	11	14	16	26	20
West Vancouver	0	0	0	2	1	2	2	0	1	0	0
RCMP	70	64	103	127	172	187	181	199	250	238	328
<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>	<b>368</b>	<b>444</b>

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

Figure 2: Intermediate Weapon Applications by BC Police, by Weapon (2012–2022)

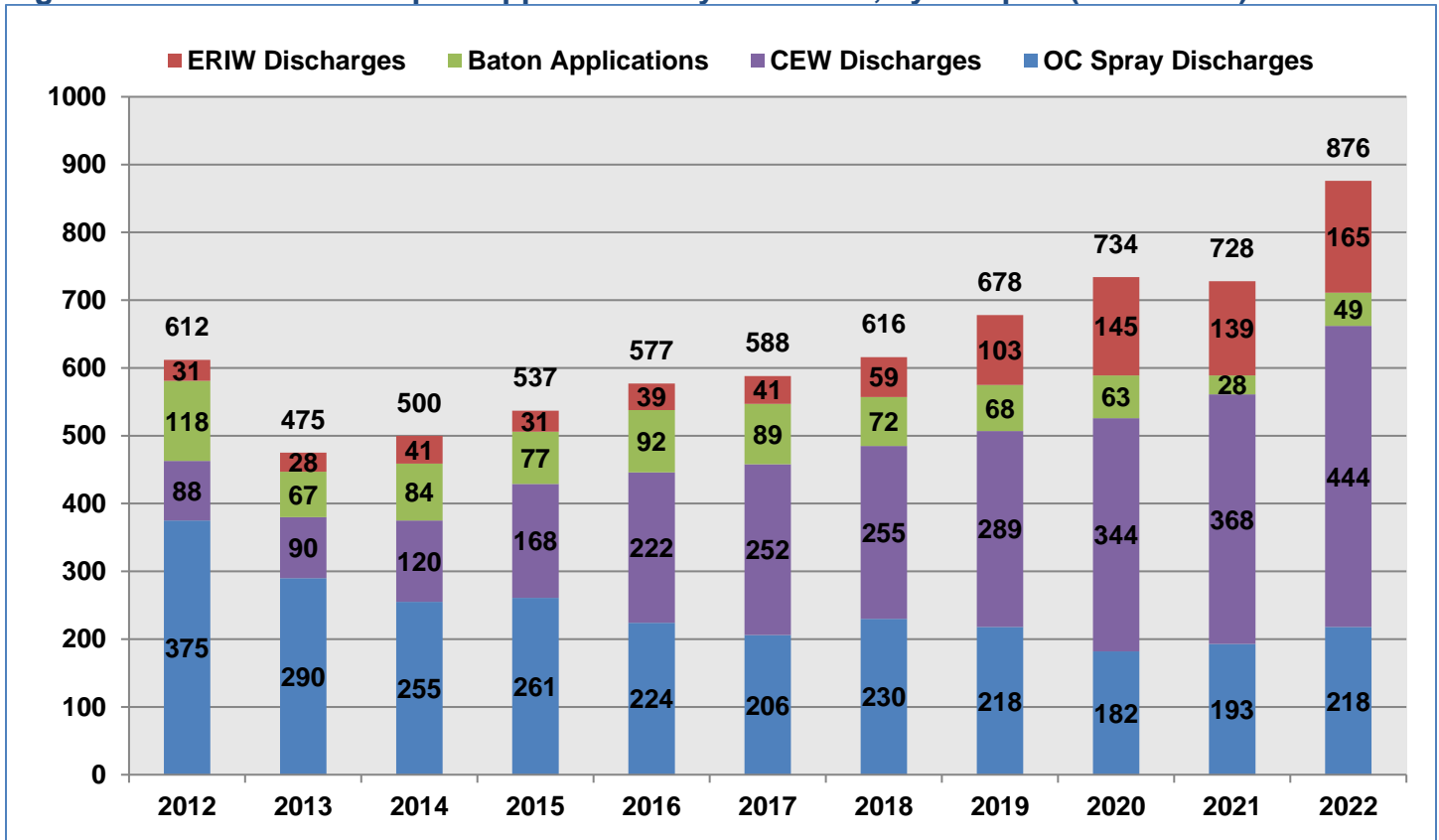
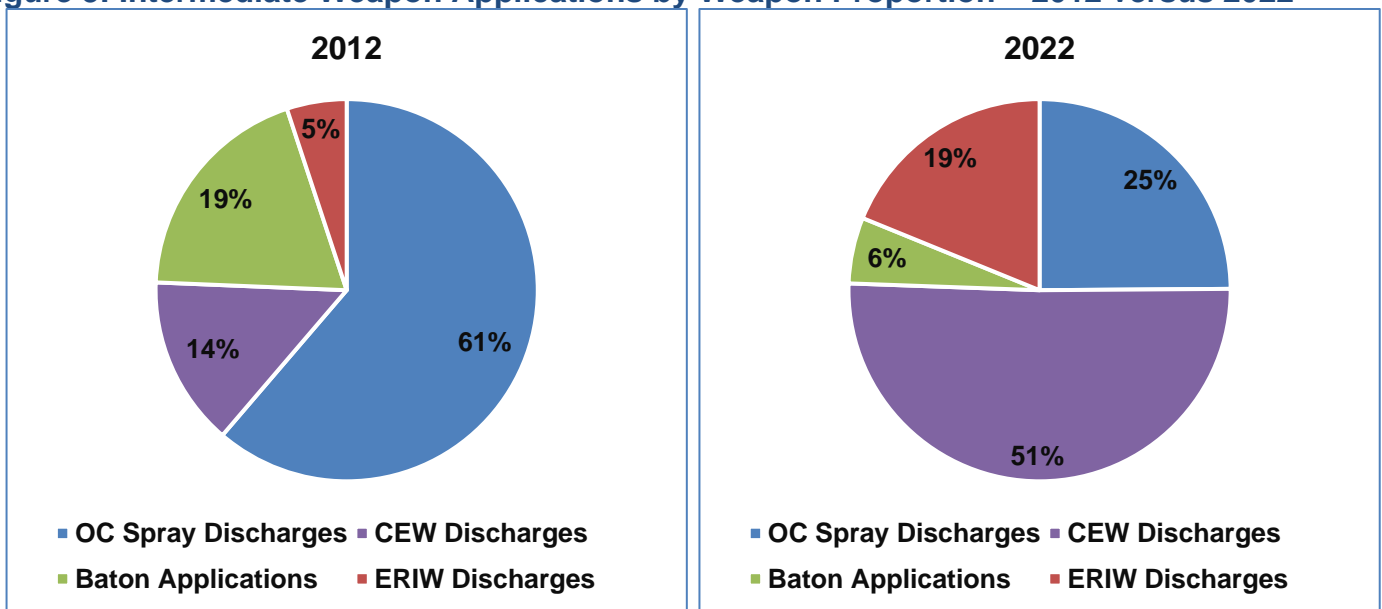


Figure 3: Intermediate Weapon Applications by Weapon Proportion – 2012 versus 2022



# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON APPLICATIONS continued

Figure 4: Intermediate Weapon Applications to EDP Subjects (Number, 2019–2022)

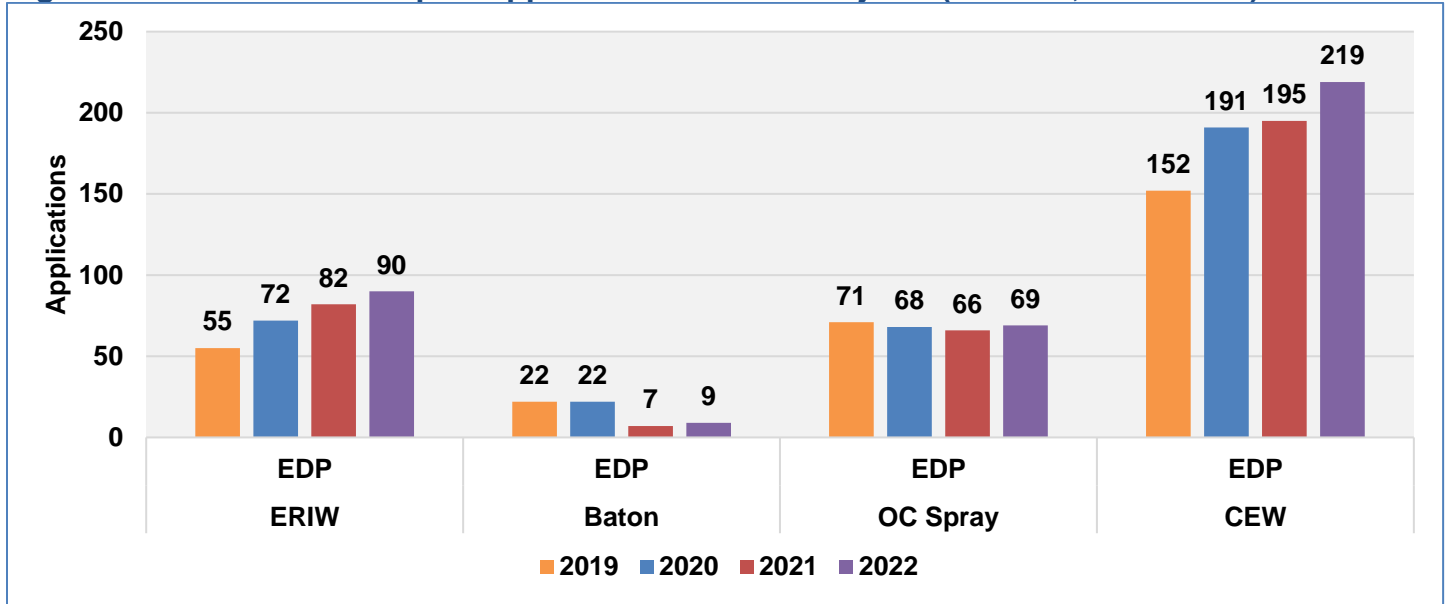
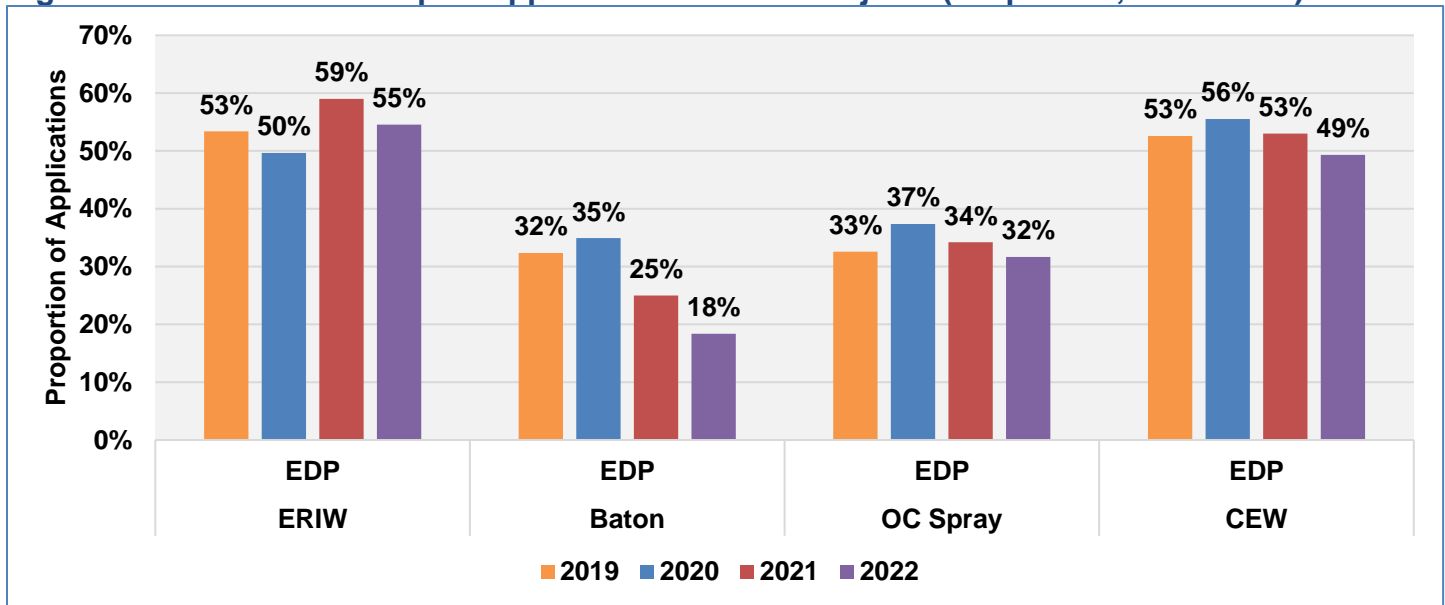


Figure 5: Intermediate Weapon Applications to EDP Subjects (Proportion, 2019–2022)



**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.” As of October 23, 2022, the term “person in crisis” has replaced “emotionally disturbed persons” within the RCMP reporting system.

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON DISPLAYS

Table 6: Displays by Intermediate Weapon and by Police Agency (2019–2022)

		Police Agency*														BC Total
		AB	CS	DE	NE	NW	OB	PM	SA	STP	TP	VA	VI	WV	RCMP	
2019	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
	<b>IW Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1,061</b>
2020	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
	<b>IW Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>1,412</b>
2021	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
	<b>IW Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>1,290</b>
2022	ERIW	82	1	16	0	11	0	4	25	0	0	389	26	0	23	577
	Baton	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	25	1	0	4	39
	OC Spray	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	5	4	0	3	26
	CEW	24	5	22	6	0	1	5	44	0	34	413	24	2	267	847
	<b>IW Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>1,489</b>

\*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." As of October 23, 2022, the term "person in crisis" has replaced "emotionally disturbed persons" within the RCMP reporting system.

# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON DISPLAYS continued

Figure 6: Intermediate Weapon Displays by BC Police, by Weapon (2019–2022)

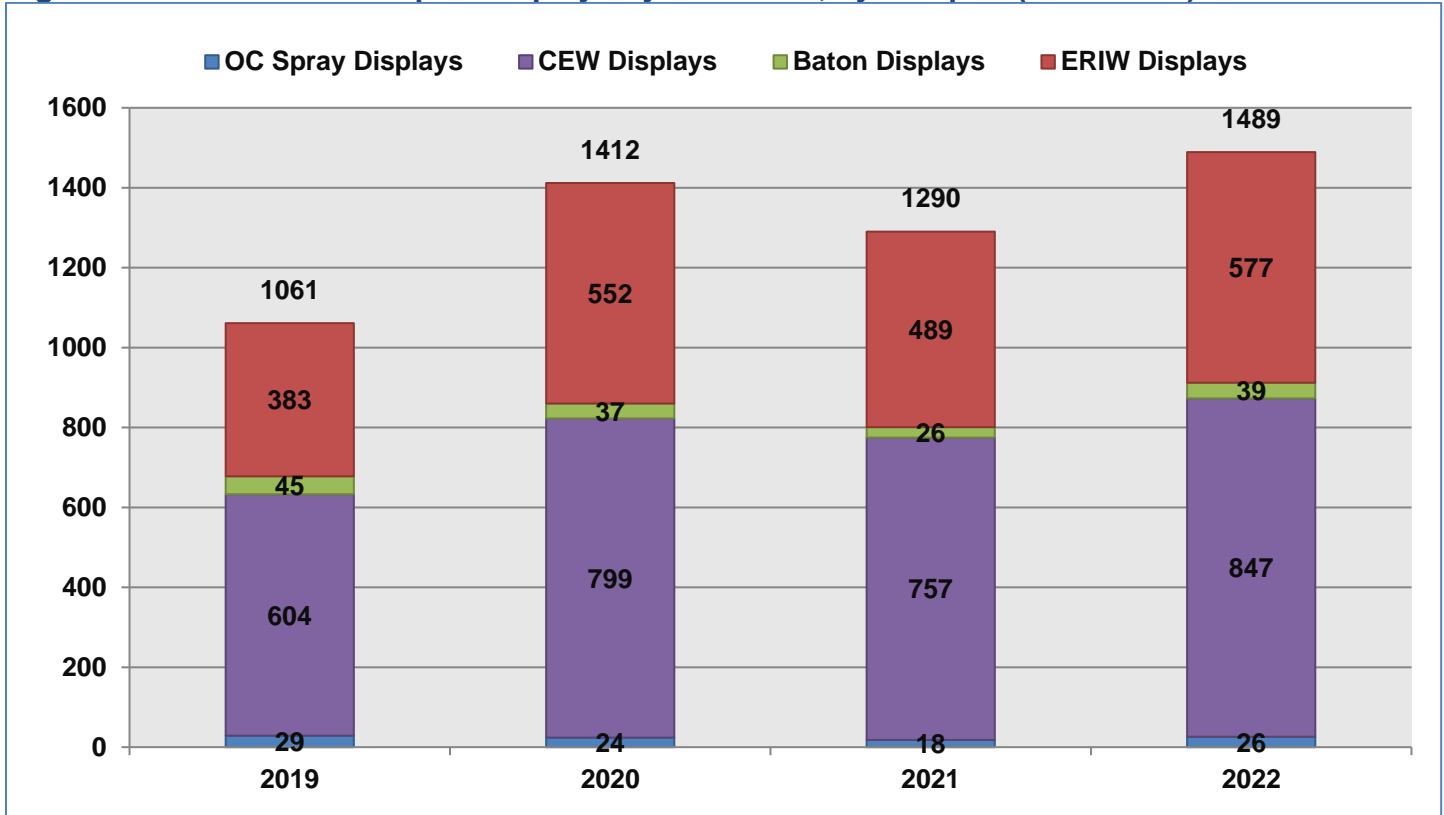
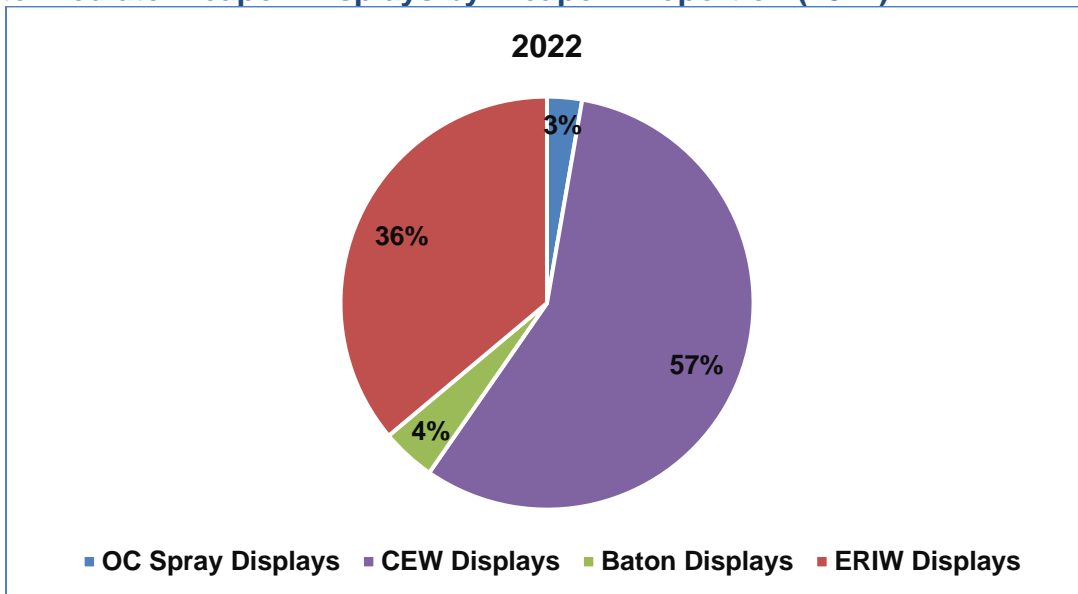


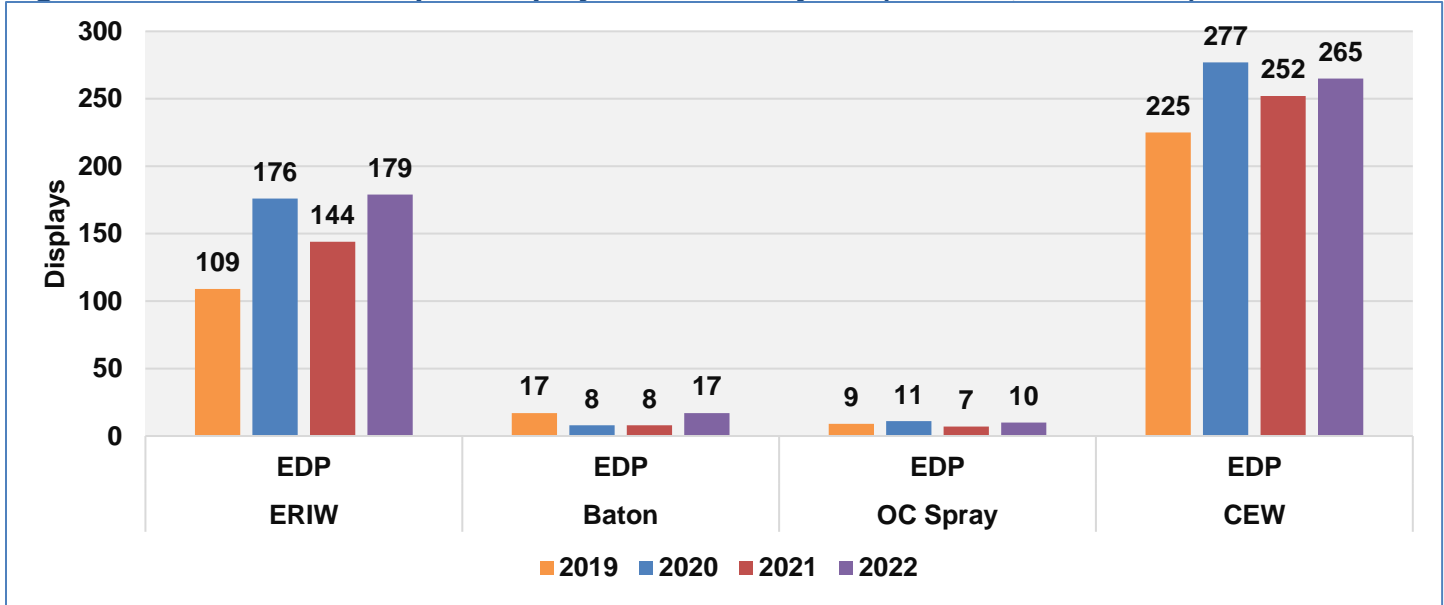
Figure 7: Intermediate Weapon Displays by Weapon Proportion (2022)



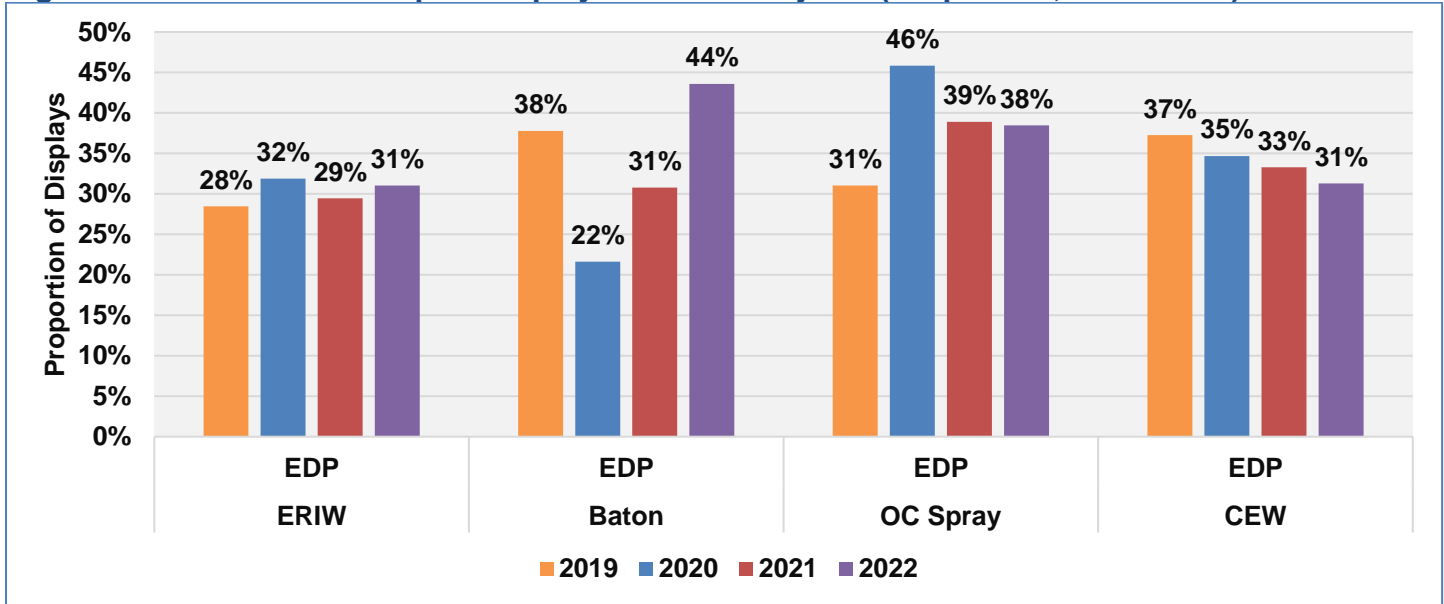
# Intermediate Weapon Use by Police, 2012–2022

## INTERMEDIATE WEAPON DISPLAYS continued

**Figure 8: Intermediate Weapon Displays to EDP Subjects (Number, 2019–2022)**



**Figure 9: Intermediate Weapon Displays to EDP Subjects (Proportion, 2019–2022)**



**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." As of October 23, 2022, the term "person in crisis" has replaced "emotionally disturbed persons" within the RCMP reporting system.