



A Matter of Life and Death – Facts and highlights

Investigation into the direction provided by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to Ontario's police services for de-escalation of conflict situations

Investigation facts and timeline:

Number of complaints and submissions: **176**

Number of interviews conducted: **95**, in addition to review of thousands of documents, research on other jurisdictions and observation of police training sessions

Special advisors: **Mike Boyd**, formerly chief of Edmonton Police Service and interim chief of Toronto Police service; **Sen. Vern White**, formerly chief of Ottawa Police Service, Durham Regional Police Service and assistant RCMP commissioner

July 27, 2013: Sammy Yatim shot and killed by Toronto police

August 8, 2013: Ombudsman investigation launched

March 2015: First draft of Ombudsman report provided to Ministry

April 2015: Ministry responds that it has several initiatives in “development”

May 2016: Updated draft of Ombudsman report provided to Ministry and then-Minister

June 6, 2016: Ministry responds it is “committed to reviewing all Ombudsman recommendations and will respond with utmost due diligence once your final report is made public”

June 17: New Minister and Ministry offered chance to respond to final report

June 28: New Minister meets with Ombudsman

Key dates:

1993: Ontario implements first use-of-force model

1994: Ontario Police College manual takes into account recommendations from inquest in 1988 death of Lester Donaldson

1999: National Use of Force Framework developed

1999: Inquest in 1997 death of Edmond Yu recommends *Police Services Act* be amended to require at least one day's training for Ontario police in crisis resolution

1999: Ministry introduces regulation restricting high-speed police chases provincewide

2004: New Ontario use-of-force guideline and model developed

2009: B.C. implements recommendation from inquiry in 2007 death of Robert Dziekanski, requiring all officers to undergo crisis intervention and de-escalation training and refresh skills every three years

2012: Inquest in 2010 death of Evan Jones recommends review of Ontario Police College training and Ontario's use of force model

2012: Ministry announces review of police interactions with persons with mental illness

2012: Ministry creates Future of Policing Advisory Committee, with target to review *Police Services Act*

2013: Ministry extends use of Tasers to all officers, not just frontline

July 2014: Toronto Police release report by former judge Frank Iacobucci, *Police Encounters With People in Crisis*, calling for more de-escalation training

2015: Ministry announces plan to implement regulation on carding (in effect 2017)

2015: Ministry announces plan for “Strategy for a Safer Ontario,” including review of *Police Services Act* and consultation

Police shootings and inquests (for details, see pages 16-22):

Fatal police-involved shootings involving persons with mental illness since 2000: **40+**

Recommendations by coroner’s juries between **1989 and 2011** relating to fatal police interactions with persons with mental illness: **474**

Number calling for better police training, including de-escalation techniques: **109**

Fatal Ontario police shootings since start of this investigation: **19**

Ontario police training:

Basic constable training: **12 weeks** total, including **five 90-minute** sessions on “communication and de-escalation” (one-third of what they receive on driving skills)

On the job: **One day** of use-of-force and firearms training per year – no definition of or requirement for “de-escalation” training; varies according to each police service

Highlights of recommendations:

The Ministry should take the lead on this issue and:

- Develop and implement a regulation requiring all officers to use communication and de-escalation techniques in all situations of conflict before considering force options, wherever tactical and safety considerations permit
- Institute a new use-of-force model that identifies de-escalation options, within 12 months
- Publicly respond to all coroner’s jury recommendations involving police use of force and de-escalation
- Report back to the Ombudsman on its progress every three months

Police training should:

- Be made longer for recruits, with extra sessions added for de-escalation scenarios and dealing with persons in crisis/with mental illness
- Help officers recognize when standard police challenge isn’t effective, use alternatives
- Stress de-escalation as the first option in a situation involving an edged weapon
- Be extended for serving officers to two days per year, monitored by the Ministry
- Be standardized by the Ministry to ensure consistency, including guidelines for trainers