



Conducted Energy Weapon Trends, 2007 – 2016

INTRODUCTION

Each year since 2007, Policing and Security Branch (PSB) has collected summary data from police agencies in BC regarding their use of intermediate weapons, with a focus on Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs). This data includes the number of CEW displays and discharges, as well as the type of discharge (e.g., Probe Mode vs. Contact Stun Mode). This report presents a 10-year summary and trend analysis of this data, as reported by the police agencies to PSB.

In 2012, PSB began collecting more detailed information from police agencies in BC about their use of CEWs, including information about the number of CEWs and certified CEW operators, subject characteristics, and injuries. Annual reports summarizing this data are available from 2013 onward on PSB's website under the heading [Police Use-of-Force Data](#).

These enhanced reporting requirements were part of a broader shift towards closer regulation of police use of CEWs by the Province, which began in 2009 with the release of the first report of the Braidwood Commission of Inquiry¹.

Commissioner Braidwood concluded that CEWs were a useful tool for police and law enforcement officers in BC, but that their use should be restricted and governed. Commissioner Braidwood made 19 recommendations covering a range of issues including training, testing, medical assistance, data collection, and—importantly—a common threshold for deploying a CEW. The Province accepted the findings, and began work to implement the recommendations without delay. A common threshold for police use of CEWs was immediately issued to police agencies in 2009, and later formalized in [BC Provincial Policing Standards](#) (BCPPS) in 2012.

The threshold prohibits officers from deploying a CEW unless the subject is causing bodily harm or the subject's behaviour will imminently cause bodily harm. Officers are also required to consider lesser force options and crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques (see [BCPPS 1.3.1 Threshold and Circumstances of Use](#)).

The introduction of this threshold, and other BCPPS governing CEW use, have had a significant impact on the use of CEWs by police in BC.

¹*Restoring Public Confidence - Restricting the Use of Conducted Energy Weapons in British Columbia*, available at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/about-bc-justice-system/inquiries/braidwoodphase1report.pdf>.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2016, the use of CEWs (discharges and displays) reported to PSB by police in BC was significantly lower than in 2007. From 2007 to 2011, there was a major and consistent decrease in CEW use by police officers in BC, followed by smaller but steady increases between 2012 and 2016 (see Table 1 and Figure 1).
- This overall decrease in CEW use has been driven by reductions in the number of CEW discharges. In 2007 there were 640 CEW discharges reported by police in BC to PSB, while in 2016 there were 223, a decrease of 65%. Significant decreases were reported by all police agencies (see Table 2).
- In contrast to changes in CEW discharges, the number of CEW displays between 2007 and 2016 increased from 239 to 397 (see Figure 2). This increase may be partially attributable to improved recordkeeping by police agencies in BC, subsequent to the implementation of the CEW BCPPS.
- The proportion of total CEW discharges involving Contact Stun (CS) Mode discharges also changed significantly between 2007 and 2016. CS Mode discharges are a pain compliance technique, and in 2007 over half (56%) of all CEW discharge incidents reported to PSB involved CS Mode. In 2016, this proportion was down to 17% (see Figure 3).
- The increase in CEW discharges between 2012 and 2016 was accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the use of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray, such that the total amount and rate of intermediate weapon use reported to PSB by police in 2012 and 2016 was relatively stable (see Figures 4 and 5).
- According to data collected under the CEW BCPPS, the rate of CEW discharges per CEW-certified officer for BC overall has also remained stable (see annual CEW BCPPS tables available on PSB's website under the heading [Police Use-of-Force Data](#)).

DEFINITIONS

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).

CEW Display: the act of pointing, aiming or showing the CEW at or to a person without discharge.

CEW Discharge: the act of firing a CEW in any mode against a person.

CEW Contact Stun (CS) Mode: the act of firing a CEW by directly applying the muzzle to a person.

CEW Probe Mode: the act of firing a CEW (fitted with a cartridge) at a person from a distance. The CEW transmits electrical pulses through the wires and into a person's body.

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.

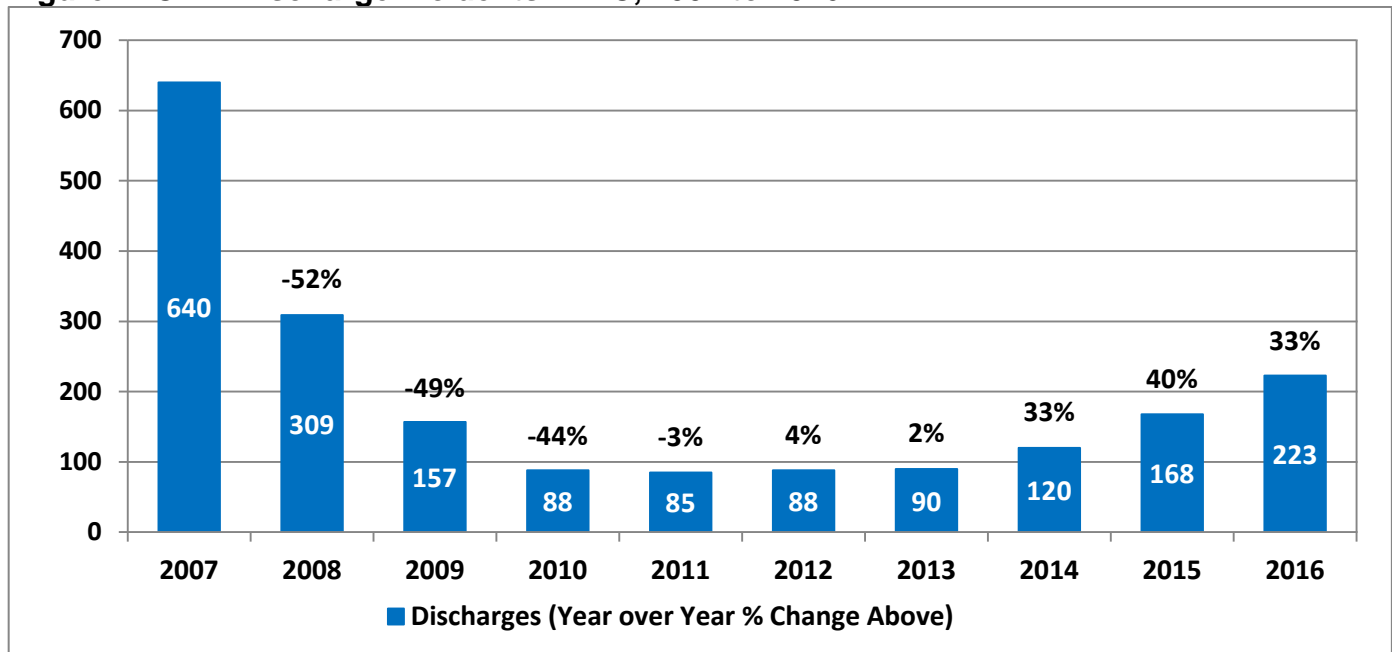
Extended Range Impact Weapon (ERIW): A type of intermediate weapon that fires less-lethal rounds from an extended range (e.g. a beanbag shotgun).

Conducted Energy Weapon Trends, 2007 – 2016

Table 1: CEW Use Incidents in BC, 2007 to 2016

BC	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	10yr % Cng
Display	239	315	206	178	152	222	248	278	359	397	66%
Discharge	640	309	157	88	85	88	90	120	168	223	-65%
Probes	283	137	77	51	62	67	68	94	147	185	-35%
Contact Stuns (CS)	293	135	60	34	18	16	19	22	15	28	-90%
CS+Probes	64	37	20	3	5	5	3	4	6	10	-84%
TOTAL USE INCIDENTS	879	624	363	266	237	310	338	398	527	620	-29%

Figure 1: CEW Discharge Incidents in BC, 2007 to 2016



Conducted Energy Weapon Trends, 2007 – 2016

Table 2: CEW Discharge Incidents in BC by Police Agency, 2007 to 2016

Police Agency	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	10-year % Change
Abbotsford Police Department	17	12	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	-100%
Central Saanich Police Service	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-100%
Delta Police Department	6	3	3	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	-83%
Nelson Police Department	2	2	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	-100%
New Westminster Police Department	36	13	12	4	3	2	7	2	3	3	-92%
Oak Bay Police Department	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	-100%
Port Moody Police Department	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
Saanich Police Department	21	2	0	4	0	2	2	0	3	3	-86%
Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Transit Police (Metro Vancouver)	6	5	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	-100%
Vancouver Police Department	74	33	16	6	8	7	6	9	25	36	-51%
Victoria Police Department	76	30	7	4	5	3	6	4	5	6	-92%
West Vancouver Police Department	6	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	-83%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	390	205	111	64	65	70	64	103	127	173	-56%
Total CEW Discharges	640	309	157	88	85	88	90	120	168	223	-65%

Conducted Energy Weapon Trends, 2007 – 2016

Figure 2: Police CEW Usage Incidents by Type

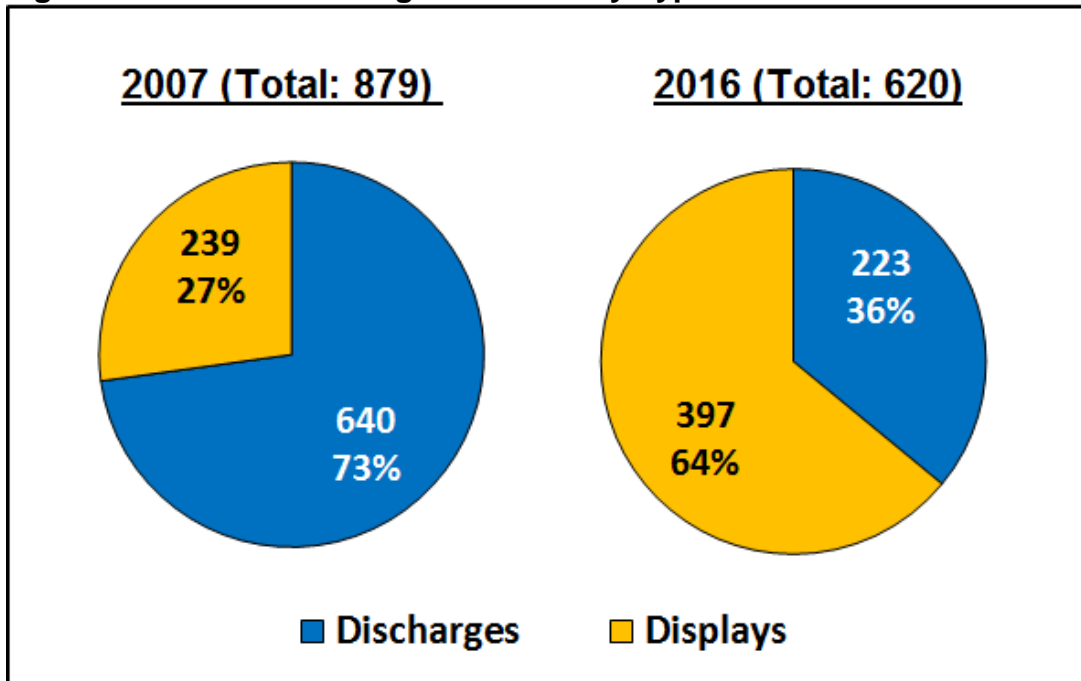
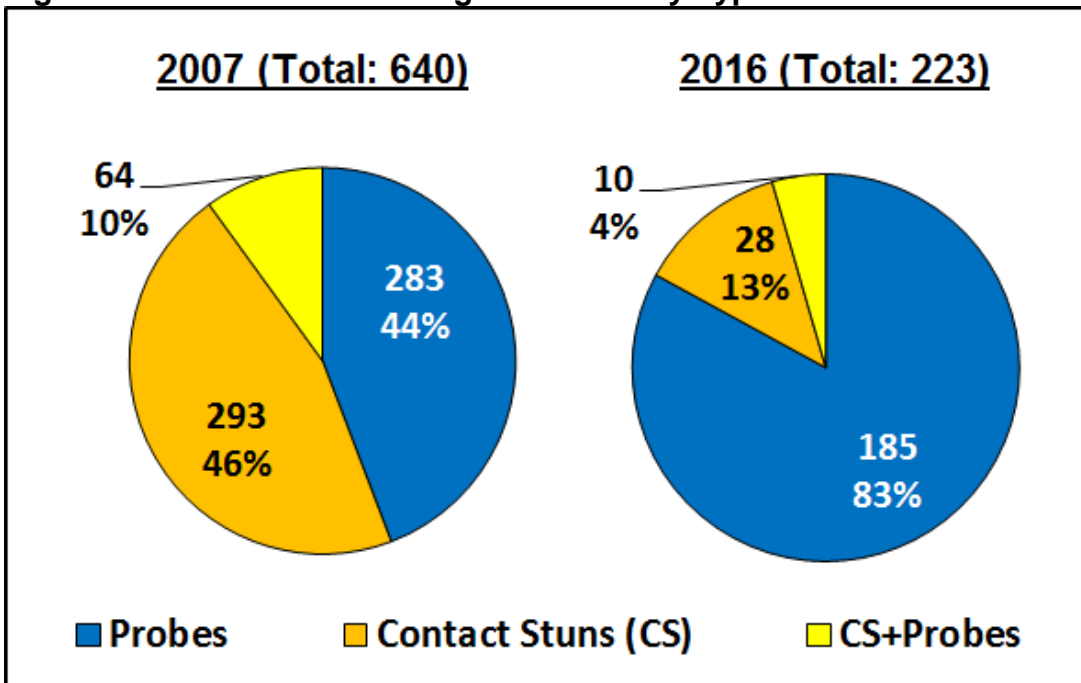


Figure 3: Police CEW Discharge Incidents by Type



Conducted Energy Weapon Trends, 2007 – 2016

Figure 4: Intermediate Weapon Use by BC Police, 2012 to 2016

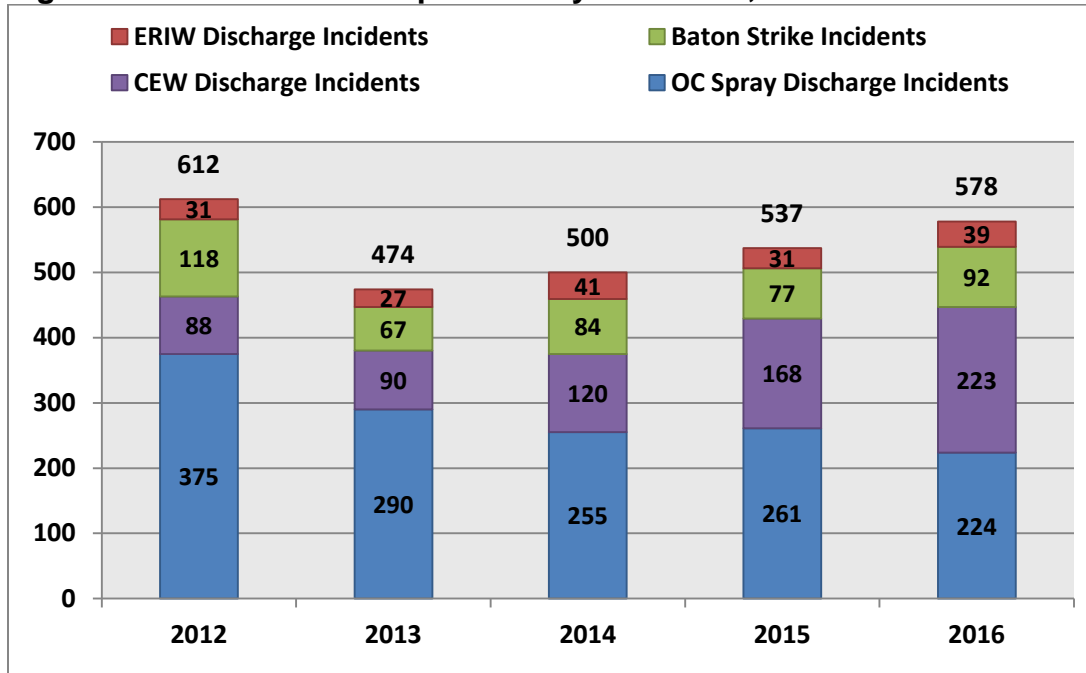


Figure 5: Rates of Intermediate Weapon Use by BC Police, 2012 to 2016

