



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

Table of Contents

Council Motion	2
Existing Oversight	2
Uniform Colour & Design	3
Patrol Officer Uniforms	3
Tactical and Canine Uniforms	5
Vehicle Livery and Design	6
Training	8
Hiring of Police Officers – Selection	9
Alberta Provincial Policing Standards – Training	9
Amount of Training	10
Types of Training	10
Training Advisory Committee – Needs Assessment	11
Enforcement Tactics	12
Police Legitimacy – Criminal Code & Reasonable Officer Response	12
Factors	12
Standards	13
Can use of force techniques be changed?	13
Dynamic situations	14
De-escalation	14
Tactical Response	15
Armored Vehicles	15
Has the EPS become too militaristic?	17
Conclusion	18



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

Council Motion

“An analysis on how things like uniform colour and design, and vehicle livery and design, can be adjusted to put forward a different face to the public, and how certain training and enforcement tactics can be adjusted to support greater professionalism in the service.”

Existing Oversight

1. The EPS has oversight of its actions by the Edmonton Police Commission (EPC), a non-political, diverse body appointed to represent the citizens of Edmonton. The EPC oversees the police service, responds to citizen concerns on policing matters, helps develop the annual policing plan and budget, and builds a positive relationship with community partners. As an oversight body, the EPC is involved in many essential decisions that govern the operations of the EPS. Its challenge is to strike a balance between public accountability and the independence of police from political interference.
2. The EPS provides regular updates to the EPC on several topics, including use of force occurrences, training, and actions taken to increase diversity and recruit selection. The EPC is directly involved in the oversight and accountability of all police officers, and in significant decisions regarding equipment procurement (e.g. helicopter, weapons, etc.)
3. The EPS is also regulated or monitored through several other sources and statutes, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Criminal Code of Canada, Alberta Police Act, provincial and federal case law, provincial standards, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Alberta Association of Police Governance. In addition, the EPS has established the Professional Standards Branch (PSB) as a stand-alone, internal evaluative body, to investigate internal and external complaints.



Uniform Colour & Design

Patrol Officer Uniforms

4. Police officers in uniforms are a highly recognizable symbols of community authority. Their presence sends an immediate signal to victims that help has arrived, and to criminals that they will be held accountable for their actions. It is essential that the public be able to immediately identify a police officer by the uniform they wear or the vehicle they drive, for several reasons. When a police officer arrives at a crime scene or event, they are looking to minimize harm to the offender, any bystanders, and themselves. They do this by immediately seeking to establish “compliance” – that is, where the people involved follow the officer’s direction. Compliance leads to a scene that is safe, under control, and moving towards resolution. “Non-compliance” can lead to an escalation in the amount of force (which includes verbal communication) necessary to achieve compliance. A standardized, recognizable uniform and vehicle are two key tools available to help achieve compliance.
5. There is a limited amount of Canadian research regarding the impact of uniform design and its effect on public perception. However, other research shows that police agency implementation of positive interaction programs such as community policing or problem-oriented policing contribute far more to a positive public perception than uniform design. From this, it can be concluded that a change in the colour or design of the uniform will have little or no impact on the behaviour of any officer.
6. A highly visible police presence can prevent unlawful behaviour. When a person wears an identifiable police uniform, citizens tend to be more cooperative, and willingly follow their direction. In addition, people also tend to curb their illegal or deviant behaviours when a police uniform is visible in the area.
7. The EPS changed from grey uniforms to dark blue uniform shirts in 1999 after years of quality concerns with the grey shirts. The dark blue uniform can be washed and worn with no ironing, are comfortable and breathable, and look professional. In Canada, 42 police agencies out of 44 reviewed wear the dark blue shirt as their patrol uniform. The RCMP wear grey shirts, but their externally worn body armour is dark blue.
8. On a global basis, police uniforms are usually dark blue, which assists with easy and immediate identification, as discussed earlier. In addition, police officers deal with many calls for service throughout their shift while wearing body armour and heavy equipment around their waist. On warmer days, lighter coloured uniforms show sweat, which is unprofessional and can decrease police legitimacy and professionalism.
9. The condition of the officer’s uniform can also have an impact on their safety. Interviews with prison inmates that have murdered police officers indicate that the inmate would assess the officer before deciding to use violence. A police officer’s competence is



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

assessed by how the officer is presented. A dirty, sweaty or wrinkled uniform may convey a message to a suspect that the officer has a complacent attitude about their job; a clean and crisp uniform conveys a more positive message.

10. If a lighter uniform was to be adopted, more uniforms would be required (possibly more than one per shift) to accommodate working in sweaty, often dirty, and, unfortunately, bloody conditions. Note that Edmonton paramedics and firefighters also have dark uniforms, for similar reasons.
11. Subtle differences in uniform esthetics can impact perceptions of police officers, and this has been carefully considered in the way that EPS officers are equipped. For example, equipment like pepper spray and handcuffs are kept at waist level and, with the exception of police radios, no equipment is allowed on the upper part of the body. This is to minimize any intimidation a citizen might feel while interacting with a police officer. In fact, there are some Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) advantages to allowing officers to carry their equipment on their upper body armour. However, in order to improve approachability, equipment carry above the waist is not permitted for a patrol officer. Research shows that other uniform changes (hat or tie) have no effect on public perception, either positive or negative. Tactical, Canine and plain clothes officers are exceptions to many of our uniform rules, for operational reasons.
12. In the 2018 EPS Citizen Survey respondents indicated that a more visible police presence was desirable. Changing the uniform could have the opposite effect, as the current uniforms have been in place for over 20 years and are very well known. We do not believe that a change in uniform would have any impact in improving officers' relationship with the public, and that funds would be better spent on specific relationship-based training.
13. Again, from an OH&S perspective, the presence of a distinguishable and consistent uniform can also prevent injury or death for a police officer. At an active crime scene, if the uniform is not immediately recognizable to other police officers, there is a heightened risk of one officer being shot by another. The uniform helps fellow officers identify the wearer as having a legitimate reason for carrying a weapon and decreases the chances of a "blue on blue" shooting.
14. If there was any consideration to having officers respond to calls for service in an alternate uniform, an analysis of the risks of such a decision would be required. For example, if a School Resource Officer (SRO) was to be wearing an alternate or more casual uniform and there was an active shooter situation, the SRO could be observed by students and other police officers as a possible threat.
15. Given the 24-hour nature of police work, there are events where the cover of darkness provides concealment from a threat. Darker uniforms absorb more light than lighter uniforms, which tend to reflect light and identify the location of concealed police officers. The Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act has provisions that command an employer to provide the necessary equipment to protect their members from work-place threats



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

regardless of the frequency they occur. A darker coloured uniform is, at times, part of the officer's safety equipment.

16. The estimated cost for the EPS to change dark pants, shirts, and patrol jackets to a different colour for all officers is \$2.5 million. To justify this investment, we believe that Canadian research would be necessary to show that a uniform change would have a measurable impact on citizen perception of professionalism. OH&S research and consultation would also be required.
17. The impression of colours in a uniform are subjective and many people have a variety of opinions based on their lived experiences and general preferences. We believe that efforts to improve the professionalism of the officer wearing the uniform would be more productive than changing the uniform itself.

Tactical and Canine Uniforms

18. Tactical and Canine officers have different uniform requirements than a patrol officer. They frequently work in high risk situations and have a need for interoperability with other agencies. In 2017, EPS Tactical members were prevented from participating in a joint training exercise with the RCMP because their uniforms did not carry the appropriate fire-resistant (FR) ratings. Because new FR clothing was required, EPS also considered new styles and colors for its tactical uniform.
19. The new EPS uniforms for Tactical and Canine Unit officers were ordered in ranger green, to coincide with the uniform colours of other Canadian tactical teams. The EPS members train with RCMP officers and Calgary Police Service officers on a regular basis and are occasionally deployed with the RCMP. Consistent uniform colours for all tactical members is considered to be a necessary safety precaution for interoperability.
20. The mandate for Tactical Section is the safe and professional resolution of high-risk events. Sometimes concealment is part of their function to ensure safety of all involved. The choice of ranger green uniforms was based on a study conducted by the RCMP in 2014 which showed them to be best suited for both rural and urban settings. Because of this suitability, Tactical members no longer have to change clothes depending on the environment they are deployed in. This keeps response times as short as possible.
21. Patrol officers and tactical officers have different responsibilities when responding to a high-risk situation. Tactical officers are expected to get as close to the crisis point as possible without being seen or compromising officer safety. That function can be more easily completed by blending into any background. In addition, the lighter ranger green colour allows other officers or paramedics to quickly see any loss of blood if a tactical officer is injured. This allows for more immediate medical assistance.
22. As noted earlier, the EPS Tactical Section and the RCMP Emergency Response Teams in Alberta have a close working relationship. The green uniforms allow for seamless interoperability when at tactical operations or training. Both teams can now fully



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

integrate without any particular officer standing out – a significant safety precaution. Interoperability is essential to safely deal with any large-scale event that may occur with their similar uniforms. EPS and RCMP Tactical teams can safely provide mutual support to each other.

Vehicle Livery and Design

23. In 2011, the EPS changed their patrol vehicle colour to black and white from an all white vehicle. There were several reasons for this. At that time, EPS was experiencing difficulty with white Ford Crown Victoria vehicles that looked similar to EPS patrol vehicles. They were operated by several different organizations, including NAIT Security, CN Police, and City of Edmonton Peace Officers. Complaints had been received about police officers ignoring traffic violations taking place “right in front of their cars” when, in fact, the violations were taking place in front of the lookalike vehicles. Because Ford had also announced that they were planning to discontinue their Crown Victoria police vehicles, the decision was made to explore other vehicles and, at the same time, address the “look-alike” police car issue.

Below is an example of why the EPS vehicles (top left only) were being confused for other agencies that could not enforce the same laws:



24. EPS recognized that there was an instant and universal recognition of black and white cars as police vehicles, likely from years of seeing them on movies and television. Several other



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

Canadian police agencies had already moved to similar designs. Multiple concepts were prepared by a local firm and the successful design is still in use today.

25. Based on a US study, black and white patrol car designs elicit more positive perceptions than a white patrol car with blue designs or stripes, such as the old EPS patrol car design.
26. Citizen satisfaction studies had repeatedly indicated a desire from citizens to have a greater police presence on the streets. It was becoming evident that police cars were on the streets, but citizens were not immediately recognizing them. A higher visibility police car was the obvious solution.
27. When the new vehicle started to be used in Edmonton the public response was almost universally positive. The new colour scheme (which remains in existence today) made the EPS vehicles immediately recognizable to the public as a police vehicle. There is no mistaking when an EPS marked vehicle is present, which is a benefit to public safety.
28. Research tells us that uniformed officers are held in higher public esteem in a marked patrol vehicle than an unmarked police vehicle. More specifically, a uniformed officer in an unmarked vehicle result in increased public perceptions of officer deceptiveness and aggression.
29. Police vehicles in the United Kingdom use a bold, colorful checkerboard-style design, referred to as the Battenburg design. Alberta Health Services now uses a variation of this design on some of their ambulance vehicles. There are no North American studies that validate or refute the effectiveness of this design but, in UK studies, these high visibility patrol cars have been associated to increased professionalism and more positive public perception.
30. Below is an example of what a Battenburg design could look like on an EPS vehicle.





Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

31. The financial impact of changing the colours of the police patrol vehicles and motorcycles to the Battenburg design (or similar) is estimated at just over one million dollars, as more than 400 existing vehicles would need to be re-wrapped. Community engagement and an analysis of the value and impact of this change would be necessary to determine if there was value in spending these funds in a time of fiscal restraint, and whether the change would introduce confusion with other emergency vehicles (such as ambulance and fire), which currently use markings which are similar to the UK vehicles as below:



32. Finally, as with the uniforms, a change in vehicle design does little to change the attitude and professionalism of the driver behind the wheel.

Training

33. In 2019, there were 170,000 calls for service, and just over 2200 investigative complaints, which works out to 13 complaints per 10,000 calls for service, or 1.3 %. Professionalism and customer service issues made up 49% of all complaints.
34. Training and education are essential to providing equitable and efficient policing to the citizens of Edmonton. Effective supervision, training and education set the culture of the organization by introducing and reinforcing expected behaviour, aiding in risk management, and enhancing organization, and individual flexibility and adaptability. Training must be agile and flexible, and must occur throughout an officer's career, not just in recruit training.
35. On average, patrol officers are provided with four training days per year to cover a multitude of topics, including changes in legislation, tactics and operating procedures. In addition to these training days the Service continually trains its officers through Law Letters, Service Directives, training videos, intranet, etc. That being said, there is always more that can be done to support greater professionalism within the Service from a training and use of force perspective. The EPS is actively striving to ensure that training continues to improve the professionalism of its members.



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

36. The amount of training needs to be increased for those employees at the supervisors (sergeants) and managers (staff sergeants) level to ensure they have what they need to oversee the tactics being utilized by those under their command. Additional training is also needed for those in investigative roles who transfer to a supervisory role without the accompanying training.
37. In order to accomplish this, we recognize that the amount of training time needs to increase. The EPS is currently identifying gaps where it would be most beneficial to reinforce formalized training. In September of 2020, the EPS began to provide firearms, tactics, and use of force training to its non-patrol police officers – something that has been lacking since 2008. Any reduction of funding or re-appropriation of funding to uniform or vehicle purchases would hinder the necessary training and development of the membership even more.

Hiring of Police Officers – Selection

38. Professionalism starts at the onset of reviewing a police officer's suitability for the career. Training an officer to appreciate the EPS's Reasonable Officer Response model and how to respond to a call for service objectively begins when officers are first hired. There is an extensive interview, with a polygraph examination, and background process examining the applicant's integrity, communication ability and critical decision-making skills.
39. The EPS is actively pursuing the hiring of a more diverse police service to ensure appropriate responses and understanding of the diverse community it serves. Over the past two years EPS has hired 140 new police officers with a broad range of educational qualifications, from certificates to doctorates. Of these new officers, 46 were women (33%) and 40 identified as visible minorities (29%) with 15 languages other than English spoken between them. Currently, the national average for female police officers in a police organization is approximately 20%.
40. Since 2017, the diversity of the police officers hired has increased substantially, with the number of recruits self-identifying as belonging to a diverse population increasing from 12% in 2016 to 57% in 2019. This is not by accident – the EPS has deliberately sought to build a more diverse front-line workforce. For example, in the Recruit Mentoring Academy for underrepresented applicants, prospective applicants are hosted at an academy to mentor them regarding ethics in policing, public speaking, and physical fitness, while building relationships with the EPS recruiting staff. Of the 139 participants at the academy, 79 have been hired, most of whom would not have been hired through the traditional recruitment process.

Alberta Provincial Policing Standards – Training

41. Training standards, as set by Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, establish the minimum requirement for promoting predictable and consistent skill development in police services. The standards provide for regular education and training about developments such as



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

changes in social expectations. The standards stipulate that police services need to keep up to date on the trends and requirements of the community they serve.

Amount of Training

42. A recruit takes part in 27 weeks of training of classroom and experiential learning before an additional 15 weeks of on-patrol training with a Police Training Officer for an approximate total of 42 weeks (10 ½ months) of training. The average recruit training program in the United States, to which Canadian policing is often compare, is 19 weeks of classroom training. As such, any direct comparison of EPS training standards to the US model is not appropriate. Further, there is ongoing training throughout an EPS officer's career; however, a significant portion of this training is dedicated to recertification training of weapons, as required by provincial standards. We acknowledge that police officers across the organization would benefit from the kind of interpersonal training that we are currently delivering to the recruit classes. We also acknowledge that we do not have the resources to do this.

Types of Training

43. Police recruits are taught far more than physical fitness and policing tactics while on training. A significant amount of the curriculum is devoted to understanding and interacting with the diverse communities that make up Edmonton. Topics include the following:
- a. Providing Quality Customer Service
 - b. Professionalism, Ethics & Integrity
 - c. Bias Awareness
 - d. Indigenous Historical Trauma & Smudge
 - e. LGBTQ2S+ Community
 - f. Historical Trauma & Cultural Safety
 - g. Power and Privilege
 - h. Victim Offender Overlap
 - i. Trauma Informed Policing & Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)
 - j. Community Conversations
 - k. Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy
 - l. Mental Health
44. The objective of the above training is to ensure that recruits will make appropriate decisions and be considerate of the people in their community by understanding implicit and complicit biases and how it impacts their approaches towards people. Recruit trainees are assessed on appropriate communication during scenarios, managing and recovering their emotions, and peer intervention.
45. In addition to the above training, each bureau provides more specialized training to their employees. For example, the Community Safety and Well-being Bureau provides additional training in the areas of Risk Need Responsivity, which assesses the receptiveness of a subject to making changes in their life based on a risk assessment. The



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

Bureau also trains employees to conduct specialized interview techniques, to encourage subjects to consider a change in their lifestyle.

46. Often a barrier exists between a person in crisis and their ability to appreciate any communication toward them, due to their emotions, alcohol, drugs or mental health conditions. Training prepares an officer to be able to effectively communicate with subjects through out the encounter. Communication is a significant tool used to safely de-escalate a situation.
47. Currently, Bias Awareness training is being developed to be delivered online to the entire EPS. It will discuss topics such as types of unconscious biases, stereotypes, consequences of bias, prejudice, systemic discrimination, and discrimination. This course does not just teach the theory, but ways to reduce the effects of implicit biases, how to replace stereotypes and the importance of engaging with stigmatized groups to help alter cognitive processes and associations of a group's representation.
48. In order to deliver online learning more effectively to a large number of officers in a timely and appropriate manner, the EPS is working with the City of Edmonton on a new learning management system that is to be introduced within the next two years. This system will increase the ability to provide timely training quickly and efficiently to respond to current trends or training needs.
49. The EPS is not solely relying on training to improve their professionalism and address concerns that some citizens are intimidated by their presence. Community engagement activities are occurring across the whole organization that provide opportunities for officers to learn from the community, such as the Police and Community Engagement (PACE) Team. Accessible training and education initiatives include informative videos and articles relating to systemic racism and other social issues.

Training Advisory Committee – Needs Assessment

50. To ensure that EPS training opportunities are as relevant as possible, the Training Advisory Committee (TAC) has been re-enacted. Its goal is to provide strategic guidance for training and development, and to prioritize the development of future training based on EPS needs. This committee ensures that all training opportunities are required, prioritized, relevant, current, resource efficient, evidence-based and inclusive.
51. To ensure that the TAC remains informed about EPS developments which impact organizational and community needs, the TAC reviews, evaluates and recommends training updates on new and existing training programs, Professional Standards Branch reports, fatality inquiries, and operational reviews.
52. TAC actively monitors national and international police trends, to ensure the training programs remain relevant and innovative. The approval of training will be based on strategic alignment, impact and influence, and value for money.



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

53. The TAC will be comprised of representatives from all EPS bureaus and at least one community member. Collectively, they will review potential training opportunities to determine organizational appropriateness.

Enforcement Tactics

Police Legitimacy – Criminal Code & Reasonable Officer Response

54. The use of force is an unpleasant but necessary reality in the world of policing. If a subject refuses to comply with the commands of a police officer, an officer has the authority to use as much reasonable force as necessary to gain control of the situation.
55. A police officer's use of force is governed by the Criminal Code of Canada. The law is clear - police can use as much force as is reasonably necessary to effect the lawful arrest. To guide the actions of its officers, EPS subscribes to the Reasonable Officer Response model which holds as its cornerstone the "objectively reasonable test":
- a. Was the officer lawfully placed?
 - b. Did the officer subjectively believe that the amount of force used was reasonable?
 - c. Would an objective reasonable person (standing in the officer's shoes) believe that the level of force used was reasonable?
56. Reasonable Officer Response training provides guidance to officers regarding what type of response is reasonable, how to use force, and when to use it. Officers do not respond with options that may result in serious injury or death unless there is a perception that a police officer or member of the public might be seriously injured or killed themselves. Throughout the use of force incidents, de-escalation techniques (communication skills, tactical considerations and lawful and professional presence) must be considered.

Factors

57. At first glance, seeing a video clip of a police officer using force can be alarming. However, supervisors, police executives, ASIRT and the courts take a much deeper look at every significant incident to determine if it was reasonable and necessary. In their assessment they look at multiple officer, subject and environmental factors. Although the below lists are not exhaustive these are just some of the considerations that need to be made when determining if the use of force used by an officer is appropriate or not. Use of force relies entirely on the subject's behaviour, physical stature, and other factors.
- a. Officer Factors: age, experience, number of police officers present, gender, physical stature, fatigue, injuries, training force options, other equipment available, knowledge of the subject and distance from the subject



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

- b. Subject Factors: age, gender, physical stature, fatigue, injuries, training, experience, fitness, nature and severity of crime, history, mental state, intoxication (alcohol and drugs), proximity to weapons, verbal and nonverbal threat cues, flight risk, presence of audience / peers, immediate / imminent threat to police, public or themselves
- c. Environmental Factors: location of incident (confined space, isolation), light levels, weather, footing, height above ground, ability to reduce or eliminate physical threats using cover and / or distance, physical presence of other potential victims or the public at large.

Standards

- 58. In Alberta, use of force is highly regulated. Provincial Standards are set out by the province, and police service policies and officer behaviours must also be consistent with the Criminal Code of Canada. In approving use of force techniques and applications, the Ministry receives advice from both the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police (AACP) and the RCMP. Note that “force” refers to **all** control tactics, ranging from verbal communication to lethal weapons.
- 59. As required in the provincial guidelines for use of force, police agencies shall have a position responsible for managing the agency’s use of force reporting. Use of force reports are reviewed, and annual use of force reports are conducted.
- 60. EPS reports all uses of force other than cooperative handcuffing and escort techniques, including any use of force ending in injury that requires medical intervention or any display of a firearm, Conducted Energy Weapon or Extended Range Intermediate Weapon to gain compliance. The EPS has policies and procedures to ensure that this occurs. The provincial guidelines confirm that reporting is a tool necessary for effective and efficient oversight of the function of the organization.
- 61. The provincial guidelines mandate that the duties of the supervisor include monitoring the use of force-related training status of the members they supervise. Supervisors review use of force each time there is a reportable incident. Additionally, there are measures in place to correct issues relating to the inappropriate use of force.
- 62. Police agencies also shall ensure that trainers and instructors receive documented certification and recertification in accordance with the applicable Provincial Standards. The EPS is compliant with these provincial standards. The EPS reviews aspect of the use of force and training to ensure that it is current, relevant and consistent with legislation, policy and provincial standard guidelines.

Can use of force techniques be changed?

- 63. The EPS cannot simply add or change use of force techniques. Police must subject any changes of use of force options to a provincial standard review. The review must:



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

- a. assess the severity of and probability of injury (including death) related to the effects of the force option being considered;
- b. determine if the identified risk of injury (including death) is acceptable within the Canadian legal framework;
- c. evaluate the performance of the option, including reliability, accuracy and effectiveness;
- d. determine how and when the force option will be used;
- e. develop policies and procedures to manage identified risks related to deployment of the option
- f. Develop and provide training to police including basic user and recertification training and training for technology maintainers as required;

Dynamic situations

64. No police officer sets out to use force in a given situation, as they run the risk of injuring themselves or others. However, there are occasions that an individual will use physical violence as a way of escaping from or harming the police officer or public. The ultimate authority in assessing if a technique was reasonable and necessary is through the Criminal Code of Canada. While certain techniques are trained and practiced, when a police officer is in the midst of a serious physical altercation they are permitted to do whatever is reasonable and necessary to keep themselves and others unharmed. These incidents are usually initiated by the suspects, are terrifying to the police officer involved, and distressing for all those who observe.
65. Using the Reasonable Officer Response model, EPS training teaches officers to administer a use of force response based on the actions of the subject and the overall situation while continually assessing the subject's behaviour.
66. The EPS does not target the subject's neck with a knee to hold them in place. Rather, if there was a resistant subject that an officer may want to keep control of in a prone position, they can place a knee across their back and shoulder blade area. This is a potential when a subject ends up on their front in a prone position and they must handcuffed behind their back.
67. Part of the use of force training also includes a constant monitoring of the subject for any distress. If force has been applied, officers are required to monitor the subject for any distress and readjust any mis-applied techniques when practicable, which is often once the situation is controlled. This may include providing medical attention to the subject and / or potentially contacting other resources for assistance.

De-escalation

68. De-escalation includes the use of specific tactics or procedures that keep the subject contained, and the public and officers safe while attempts are made to communicate with the subject and work through their crisis. This is where other specialists (mental health) who assist the police can possibly be consulted.



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

69. De-escalation involves establishing rapport with the goal of achieving compliance without force. If a subject is cooperative, then verbal communication is enough to have them comply with direction and take them into custody.
70. Use of force may be used to bring about a safe resolution if the subject does not comply with the officer's de-escalation and voice commands, or if the situation puts the officer and / or the public in danger. Conversely, compliance at any time during the use of force event will yield a reduction or cessation of the use of force.
71. When there is police interaction, compliance of verbal and / or physical commands are necessary to keep all involved safe. Situations are dynamic and take seconds to take place. Life and death decisions need to be made in split seconds by a police officer, which is why the training on use of force option is so critical and heavily emphasized.
72. It is essential to remember that every situation is different and viewed on its own merit. EPS officers are trained to not respond to a situation with the intention of using force, but to respond with the goal of obtaining compliance to ensure a safe resolve for all involved.

Tactical Response

73. In Edmonton, criminal activity is a reality. Firearms are being seized in routine investigation, including vehicle stops, mental health related calls or "check on welfare". The rates, complexity and severity of crime in Edmonton have been trending upwards since 2014. Edmonton's Violent Crime Severity Index is significantly higher than both the national and provincial averages. Last year, Edmonton was the third most dangerous major city in Canada.
74. To address the most serious and high-risk incidents, the EPS maintains 3 tactical teams. Their mandate is to provide specialized support for all high-risk incidents within the City of Edmonton and, as necessary, in the surrounding areas. They are not typically used for general police response and do not respond to general calls for service. Tactical members have specialized equipment, unique training and are fully prepared to engage in very dangerous situations.
75. Alberta Justice and Solicitor General mandates that EPS must have the necessary resource to respond to the high-risk incidents or demonstrate when and how they would access the necessary resources through another police service.

Armored Vehicles

76. The EPS has two operational armoured vehicles, and both serve multiple purposes. First and foremost, they are a rescue vehicle, used in the event that an injured police officer or citizen needs to be safely removed from a dangerous scene. Secondly, their presence also serves as a de-escalation tool to dissuade an individual from either attacking the public or



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

police or attempting to escape and potentially cause public fatalities. It is also used to create a barrier between a threat and a member of the public or police, which results in the police officer being less likely to use lethal force. Finally, the vehicle allows Tactical members the opportunity to safely put themselves closer to the subject, to identify threats and make appropriate responses. Note that the word “armoured” refers to the reinforced steel panels attached to the outside. The vehicles themselves carry no weapons.

77. As with any other profession, there is a requirement to keep Tactical officers safe. The armoured vehicles are the primary form of defence available to police officers in certain high-risk situations.
78. The vehicles are necessary to offer the public and officers protection during mass public shootings, hostage takings, retrieve injured citizens or officers down, and / or other high risk to the public scenarios. For example, the EPS used an armoured vehicle to retrieve Cst. Dan Woodall after he was shot. Another example involves Tactical Section response to a suicidal male who blew his house up using natural gas. If the officer were on foot rather than in the armoured vehicle, the results would have been devastating and likely fatal.
79. It is not unrealistic that an active shooter incident could occur in Edmonton and that casualties could occur. The public will expect the police to recover these casualties, whatever their location, even if they are in locations that have not been determined safe or are still in the direct line of fire from the threat. In 2017, a male driving a U-Haul truck deliberately struck four pedestrians after purposely driving into and stabbing and EPS officer in the head.
80. While some believe that the EPS Tactical vehicles are “tanks”, in fact the vehicle most closely resembles a large SUV. A more modern version, the Cambli Armoured Vehicle (ARV2), was delivered to EPS in September 2020. The Ballistic Armored Tactical Transport (BATT) is pictured below.



81. The necessity for this type of equipment was reinforced during the fatality inquiry of RCMP Cpl. Jim Galloway and Martin Ostopovich. The judge in this inquiry stated that a vehicle such as an armored vehicle may have prevented the two deaths.
82. Essentially, the EPS utilizes this equipment for the safety of the public, police and the suspects; this tool can minimize the casualties from all perspectives. The public also



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

expects this of the police. The EPS is mitigating risk to the citizens and applying risk effective decision-making principles.

Has the EPS become too militaristic?

83. Citizens sometime perceive that the EPS has become a “militaristic” organization, with too much of an emphasis on weapons and heavy equipment. This perception could come from seeing video coverage from police officers across North America involved in scenes that do require significant use of force. In fact, everyday, there are thousands of interactions between police officers and citizens that involve nothing more than a simple conversation. None of these interactions are reported in the media. The items that are usually covered are high visibility incidents that involve video footage of multiple police officers, firearms, and other overt presentations of force. It is possible militaristic perceptions of the public stems directly from this media coverage however there is nothing that the EPS can do to control that. What we can do is illustrate, at every opportunity, the human side of police officers, the excellent investigative work that they do, and the very broad support they enjoy from Edmontonians.
84. As of mid September, there have been 101 shooting incidents reported to the police. More than half of those incidents resulted in an injury to a citizen, and nearly half of them occurred in residential areas. So far this year, police have recovered 756 firearms, a number that has been steadily rising over the past four years. It is imperative that police officers have the equipment necessary to respond to these shooting incidences while safely protecting themselves and the surrounding public. While some might feel that this is “militarization”, our practices and equipment contribute significantly to citizen safety.
85. We have already discussed the importance of specific uniforms for tactical members and the value of their armoured vehicles. As noted above, this equipment is intended to keep the public, the subject and the officer safe. The final element that prompts citizens to compare police to the military is the use of carbines, which are high powered rifles with short barrels. The tragedy in Moncton, N.B. in 2014 where an active shooter with a high-powered rifle murdered 3 RCMP officers illustrates the importance of having weapons that are comparable to those in use by criminals. The detachment did not have the appropriate weapons to respond and were out “outgunned”, to the extent that a member had to bring his personal rifle to the scene. One of the recommendations from the Independent Review was for the RCMP to deploy carbines to patrol officers. The EPS has carbines to be prepared to respond appropriately and safely in these types of situations.
86. During the public hearings, there was a concern regarding the construction of the Edmonton Joint Law Enforcement and Public Safety Training Centre. The facility was seen to be another step in the militarization of the EPS. Here are the facts relating to this new facility:
- a. The majority of sworn members have not received on-going firearm training, as required by the new AACP policing standards.



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

- b. As noted above, the EPS has 300 carbine rifles; training and qualification for these rifles require a 100m range. The EPS relies on private ranges to accommodate most of this training, which are becoming less accessible.
- c. The current firearms ranges do not allow us to provide live fire dynamic judgemental training to members. This type of training greatly improves officer and citizen safety.
- d. EPS conducts driver training at CFB Edmonton's old airport facility and the Blatchford track, which is also utilized by the RCMP and the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. The EPS is unable to provide the multiple training components to all members who require it in a meaningful timeframe, due to a shortage of training staff.
- e. EPS currently use a facility made of surplus shipping containers for scenario/tactics training; however, parts of this facility are closed for safety and maintenance issues. Funding has not been available for the required maintenance. Scenario-based training improves a multitude of skills including Risk Effective Decision Making, communication, de-escalation, and various levels of use of force.

Conclusion

- 87. As noted earlier, there are several areas where EPS training could be enhanced. A long-term organizational training strategy, prepared with the involvement of the community, would be of value. Additionally, expanding on training opportunities to address areas such as bias awareness, mental health and historical trauma are being considered. Alternate forms of training for mandatory topics could be explored along with the use of contemporary adult learning strategies. Some of the training currently provided to new recruits could be enhanced and available to all police officers in EPS.
- 88. In the "use of force" area, the amount of peer intervention training could be expanded. This training places a responsibility on each officer to monitor the action of other police officers and intervene when actions become excessive.
- 89. As time and resources allow, these topics and others will be considered by the Training Advisory Committee.



Analysis of EPS Uniforms, Vehicle Livery, Training & Tactics

Analysis Completed By:

Acting Staff Sergeant Michelle Greening - Office of the Chief, EPS

EPS Contributors:

- Deputy Chief Darren Derko – Corporate Services Bureau
- Inspector Trevor Hermanutz – Professional Development Branch
- Acting Executive Director Jason Halayko – Supply Services Section
- Director Stacey York – Materials Management
- Staff Sergeant Terry Langley – Training Section
- Acting Staff Sergeant Michelle Greening – Office of the Chief
- Acting Staff Sergeant Scott Innes – Tactical Section
- Acting Staff Sergeant David Jones – Research & Innovation Section
- Sergeant Travis Eltom – Continuing Education Unit