



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
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For immediate release

RCMP report suggests Taser use on nine non-combative subjects

Vancouver – In their latest report on Taser use in Canada released last week, the RCMP appear to have acknowledged that between January and March of 2008, officers used Tasers on one cooperative individual and eight “passive resistant” individuals. RCMP policy changed in December of 2007 to restrict the use of Tasers only in situations of active resistance.

Following the release of the report, the BCCLA attempted to confirm that the report shows policy breaches in Taser use by RCMP members. In an e-mail exchange that lasted from January 30 to today, the BCCLA’s RCMP contact was unable, or unwilling, to confirm or deny that the report numbers show that non-combative subjects were Tasered contrary to RCMP policy.

“Passive resistance means that a person is refusing to get up if they’re sitting or lying down, it’s like civil disobedience,” said David Eby, the acting Executive Director of the BCCLA. “The potentially deadly force of a Taser should not be used to force people to respond more quickly to RCMP commands.”

The report, which contains data that is more than a year old, also indicates that in the first three months of 2008, Prince Edward Island RCMP officers, of whom there are 131, did not use their Tasers once. RCMP “E” Division, which is the division that covers British Columbia, used their Tasers most frequently with 103 deployments in the period. “E” Division is the largest RCMP division in Canada.

“While we’re glad that the RCMP is moving to transparency on their Taser use, we’re underwhelmed that they won’t confirm whether they know their officers are using Tasers outside of policy restrictions, or what they’re doing about it,” noted Eby.

The Taser data was released on the same day that the RCMP announced that three officers accused of Taser-ing a man 30 times and destroying video evidence of the incident would not face an internal code of conduct investigation and would instead be given “guidance” from management. The full report is available at: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ccaps-spcca/cew-ai/report-rapport-q1-2008-eng.htm> the relevant data is at Chart 7 on page 14.

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