



**IN THE MATTER OF SERIOUS HARM TO A PERSON
IN AN INCIDENT INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT IN
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON OCTOBER 19, 2023**

**DECISION OF THE CHIEF CIVILIAN DIRECTOR
OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE**

Chief Civilian Director: Jessica Berglund

IIO File Number: 2023-312

Date of Release: August 5, 2025

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The release of this public report was delayed pending the conclusion of concurrent court proceedings. The decision in this matter was initially reported on [January 9, 2025](#).

INTRODUCTION

On the evening of October 19, 2023 officers from the Vancouver Police Department (“VPD”) were called to an incident at New Brighton Park where a person had been stabbed with a pair of scissors. Officers attended the location and found the Affected Person (“AP”), who matched the description of the suspect involved in the stabbing. During their arrest, the AP was struck with bean bag shotgun rounds and bit by a police dog. The AP suffered a broken wrist that required surgery as a result of their interaction with officers.

The Independent Investigations Office (“IIO”) was notified and commenced an investigation. The narrative that follows is based on evidence collected and analyzed during the investigation, including the following:

- statements of seven witness police officers;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records;
- BC Emergency Health Service records;
- police radio transmissions and 911 recordings; and
- the AP’s medical records.

The IIO does not compel officers whose actions are subject to an IIO investigation to provide evidence in the course of the investigation. In this case, both Subject Officers declined to provide any account to the IIO.

NARRATIVE

On October 19, 2023 at 5:47 p.m., Civilian Witness 1 (“CW1”) called 911 to report that Civilian Witness 2 (“CW2”) had recently been stabbed with scissors by an unknown person in New Brighton Park in Vancouver. [The unknown person was later identified to be the Affected Person (“AP”)]

CW2 did not speak English, so CW1 acted as a translator for CW2 during the 911 phone call. CW1 reported that CW2 had a small puncture wound to his arm as a result of being stabbed with a pair of scissors. CW2 did not know the AP and told the 911 operator that the AP had fled following the incident.

Officers were dispatched to the park and were updated over the radio that a person had been stabbed with a pair of scissors. They were provided with a description of the AP and told that CW2 did not know who attacked him. Officers were also told that the AP was carrying a bag that contained the scissors the AP used in the stabbing.

Witness Officer 1 ("WO1") conducted a patrol in the area to try to find the AP. As a result of the description received over the radio, WO1 located the AP with the bag on a street nearby the park.

WO1 relayed over the radio that he had located the AP and instructed other officers to "slow things down." WO1 described his risk assessment of the situation as very high, because he was responding to a random stranger assault and the AP had an edged weapon. WO1 waited for more officers to arrive to the location where the AP was. Other officers were nearby and immediately went to the location.

WO1 broadcasted over the radio "I think we are going to have to challenge him here." The other officers approached the AP and said that the AP was under arrest. Witness Officer 2 ("WO2") was present for the arrest and said that he heard other officers yell "police, get your hands up." WO1 and WO2 said that the AP did not comply and retreated from the officers. WO1 was a short distance away and broadcasted the arrest over the radio as it was taking place in real time. WO1 said: "it looks like he is uncooperative, he is not getting on the ground."

At 6:18 p.m., Subject Officer 1 ("SO1") deployed four beanbag rounds at the AP, who continued to not comply with police commands. Witness Officer 3 (WO3) described that SO1 kept issuing commands to the AP to get on the ground as he was firing the beanbag shotgun. One beanbag round struck the AP in the buttocks and three other rounds struck the AP in the front of their abdomen.

WO1 saw Subject Officer 2 ("SO2") deploy his police dog, which grabbed the AP's arm and took the AP to the ground. According to WO1, there was a struggle, and the police dog was taken off of the AP's arm after a few seconds. The officers handcuffed the AP and took the AP into custody.

A short time later, the AP was taken to the hospital. The AP suffered a fracture to a bone in their arm which required surgery. Several attempts were made by IIO investigators to interview the AP, but the AP did not respond to those requests.

ANALYSIS

The Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia is mandated to investigate any incident that occurs in the province in which an Affected Person (“AP”) has died or suffered serious physical harm and there appears to be a connection to the actions (or sometimes inaction) of police. The aim is to provide assurance to the public that when the investigation is complete, they can trust the IIO’s conclusions, because the investigation was conducted by an independent, unbiased, civilian-led agency.

In the majority of cases, those conclusions are presented in a public report such as this one, which completes the IIO’s mandate by explaining to the public what happened in the incident and how the Affected Person came to suffer harm. Such reports are generally intended to enhance public confidence in the police and in the justice system as a whole through a transparent and impartial evaluation of the incident and the police role in it.

In a smaller number of cases, the evidence gathered may give the Chief Civilian Director (“CCD”) reasonable grounds to believe that an officer has committed an offence in connection with the incident. In such a case, the Police Act gives the CCD authority to refer the file to Crown counsel for consideration of charges.

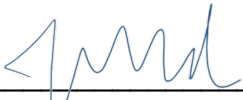
In these circumstances, all officers were acting lawfully, in execution of their duties when they responded to a complaint that the AP had stabbed a person with a pair of scissors. There was a danger to the public because the AP had seemingly attacked a member of the public at random. It was important for the police to respond quickly to try to find the AP and arrest them before they could attack anyone else.

Officers engaged with the AP and gave commands for the AP to put their hands up, but the AP did not follow their directions. The fact that the AP was carrying a bag, and the officers’ belief that the AP was armed with a pair of scissors that they had used to stab someone, elevated the threat that they presented to the officers at that moment.

It could be dangerous for officers to approach the AP and attempt to simply lay hands on them when a weapon was close at hand, and the AP had recently used it. The AP was not cooperating with police instructions and was backing away as if to leave, further elevating officers’ concern. It was both necessary and reasonable, in those circumstances, for the AP’s compliance to be obtained initially by the use of the bean bag gun and then by a police dog to bring them to the ground to arrest them. This reduced the risk of bodily harm that would otherwise have been faced by the arresting officers and the public if the AP decided to attack again with the scissors. The officers could not take

that chance, and the use of force options used had a low likelihood of causing undue harm to the AP relative to the potential risk that the AP posed in that moment. The force used was necessary and reasonable in the circumstances.

Accordingly, as the Chief Civilian Director of the IIO, I do not consider that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an officer may have committed an offence under any enactment and therefore the matter will not be referred to Crown counsel for consideration of charges.



Jessica Berglund
Chief Civilian Director

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