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OPS report on proposed CEW deployment to be discussed Monday

(Ottawa)— An Ottawa Police Service (OPS) [report](#) outlining a proposed two-year plan to improve ready access to Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs) to front line patrol was released this morning. The Ottawa Police Services Board (Board) will consider the recommendations in the report Monday night.

The report is the result of a review initiated by the OPS into current CEW deployment practices, following the release of revised Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services guidelines that allow Boards to authorize additional officer classes to be issued the devices.

“This report is the culmination of several months of consultation, research, and study on CEWs,” said Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau. “It takes into account ideas and input received during the public consultation and stakeholder meetings, as well as internal feedback, and details a measured approach to improving ready access to CEWs for front line patrol.”

The highlights of the report are:

- Currently, the devices are not readily accessible to front line first class constables in violent or life threatening situations. There can be as many as 15, and as few as five, CEWs on the road for the entire City of Ottawa.
- The OPS has issued CEWs since 2000 and the use of CEW devices has proven to be safe and effective in resolving dangerous encounters. On average, the OPS deploys CEWs 19 times a year.
- The OPS has increased communication and de-escalation training for all officers, as well as suicide intervention training, and will continue to work with stakeholders to improve its overall response to people with mental health issues and vulnerable populations.
- The report includes a recommendation to amend the Board’s policy to allow first class constables, who meet certain Board approved criteria, to carry the devices.
- The recommended two-year plan would optimize CEW deployment by reprioritizing current distribution in 2014 and includes the purchase of up to 100 CEWs in 2015. This would improve ready access to CEWs by increasing the number of CEWs on the road to a range between 39 and 29 devices by the end of the plan.
- There is no 2014 budget impact.
- Stakeholder feedback gathered during the consultation is being used to improve training, data collection, and accountability measures. Some of the input (for example, the increased suicide intervention training) has already been put in place.

If the proposed plan is approved, the OPS would report back to the Board on the effectiveness of the plan at the end of the two-year period.

The OPS received a total of 1200 public responses to its online CEW questionnaire, and 645 from its members. Face to face meetings were also held with a variety of stakeholders including the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, the Ontario Civil Liberties

Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, the Canadian Mental Health Association, COMPAC, the Elizabeth Fry Society and the John Howard Society.

The Board meeting will be held in the Champlain Room of Ottawa City Hall at 5 p.m. on April 28.

The OPS welcomes comments and questions on the proposed deployment plan. Those interested in submitting feedback can email cew@ottawapolice.ca.

CONTACT:

Media Relations Section

Tel: 613-236-1222, ext. 5366

@OttawaPolice

facebook.com/OttawaPoliceService