
NEW ZEALAND POLICE
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa

# *Tactical Options*

## 2023 Annual Report

NEW ZEALAND POLICE
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa

The Tactical Options Annual Reporting series provides NZ Police with essential insights about tactical options use by our people, examining tactical option use over the preceding calendar year. The use of force against a person is the highest level of intrusion against a person's rights that police might take, and as such, it is critical for NZ Police to have a comprehensive understanding and oversight about use of force by staff. The information provided in the report enables better understanding of: where, when, and how force is used; the factors associated with use of force; the potential risks to staff, members of the public, and the organisation; as well as identifying areas of interest or concern for further investigation. In addition, the report addresses the public interest in use of force, providing transparency and accountability to the New Zealand public about tactical options use by NZ Police.

This reporting series has evolved substantially over the last few years, moving away from simply reporting data to provide contextualised descriptions and explanations of what the data shows, and linking to NZ Police Strategic Objectives. In 2021 and 2022, information about NZ Police tactical options use was incorporated into a larger product—the *Environment and Response Operational Capability Annual Report*— which focused on examining risks in the operational environment, and the response to those risks, including tactical options use. In the interests of the timely production and publication of information about use of force, this year, information about NZ Police use of tactical options is provided as a standalone report which focuses specifically on use of force events.

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When citing information from this report, please provide this link to the full report:

https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/annual-tactical-options-research-report-2023-print.pdf

Previous *Environment and Response Annual Reports* can be found here:


2021


2022

Previous *Tactical Options Annual Reports* can be found here:


2012


2013


2014


2015


2016


2017


2018


2019


2020

*Or see http://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/tactical-options-research-reports for a list of links to all reports.*

# Our Business

## NZ Police's Strategic Intent


*Our Business* is a summary of NZ Police's strategic intent. It provides details of why we are here, what we stand for, and how we go about delivering our services.

*Our Business* directly relates to the work our people do every day and provides a clear understanding of their purpose and how they contribute through their role. It supports a high performance culture by providing all staff with a clear line of sight to our vision, mission and goals so we can all deliver outstanding results for New Zealanders.

This report contributes toward '*Our Business*' in several ways. First, reviewing NZ Police use of tactical options provides insight into the prevention of harm as well as the safety of the people involved when police officers use force. Secondly, to deliver on focused prevention through partnerships, there is also a need to understand where to focus this work to greatest effect. Finally, in sharing these insights publicly the aim is to increase transparency and, in turn, contribute to maintaining public trust and confidence in NZ Police.

# 2023 Key Findings

For every

**339**

events Police attended, only one involved the use of a tactical option (0.3%).
(p. 12)


There were

**7,719**

TOR events in 2023, a 9% increase from 2022.
(p. 12)

One TOR event for every

**29**

violence offences that Police attended, the highest rate of police officers using force for any event type.
(p. 14-15)

.


**40%**

of TOR events involved Empty Hand tactics, the most used tactical option.
(p. 20)

**80%**

of TOR events with TASER deployment involved only a TASER show.
(p. 23)

**98%**

of TOR events with Firearm deployment involved only a firearm presentation.
(p. 24)

Subjects were armed at

**1,316**

TOR events. In 126 of these TOR events the subject's weapon was a firearm.
(p. 39)


Gang members accounted for

**45**

times more TOR events (9%) than expected based on population numbers (0.2%).
(p. 41)


At

**5,179**

TOR events (67%), the legal justification for using force included self-defence and/or defence of another.
(p. 16-17)


**14%**

of TOR events (1077) resulted in an injury to the subject.
**42%** of subject injuries (478) were caused by Empty Hand tactics, with 1 injury sustained for every 7 uses.
(p.29)


**8%**

of TOR events (618) resulted in an injury to the staff member.
**80%** of staff injuries (492) occurred at TOR events involving Empty Hand tactics.
(p.33)

**75%**

of force complaints received related to Empty Hand tactics, with 1 complaint for every 8 uses.
(p. 35)

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# *Tactical Options Framework*

Police are trained to use the Tactical Options Framework (TOF) to inform their decision-making about use of force. The TOF guides police officers to only use force that is necessary and proportionate, given all the circumstances known at the time.

## Threat Assessment

NZ Police's threat assessment methodology 'TENR' (Threat Exposure Necessity Response) is a decision-making framework that supports the timely and accurate assessment of information directly relevant to the safety of police officers and members of the public. The response to any situation must be considered, timely, proportionate and appropriate. The overriding principle when applying TENR is that 'safety is success'. Victim, public, and police safety are paramount, and every effort must be made to minimise harm and maximise safety.

## Perceived Cumulative Assessment (PCA)

The PCA is represented by the inner grey/black ring of the TOF diagram, and refers to an officer's subjective assessment, and continuous reassessment, of an incident, based on information known about the situation and the subject's behaviour. The PCA may increase and/or decrease more than once during an incident. As such, police officers must continually reassess their PCA to ensure they choose the most reasonable response, including—if required—the most appropriate tactical option for the circumstances.

## *Communication*

*Ask-Why-Options-Confirm-Action* (AWOCA) is the five-step tactical communications process that underpins the TOF. Tactical communication is represented by the green 'officer presence and communication' ring in the TOF diagram. This ring encircles the entire range of PCA (inner grey circle), and all tactical options in the TOF (outer green–yellow–orange circle), emphasising the importance of using tactical communication throughout an incident, where possible.

Tactical communication is crucial to safely de-escalating an incident with uncooperative subjects, and should be attempted in every incident where police action is necessary in response to uncooperative subjects.

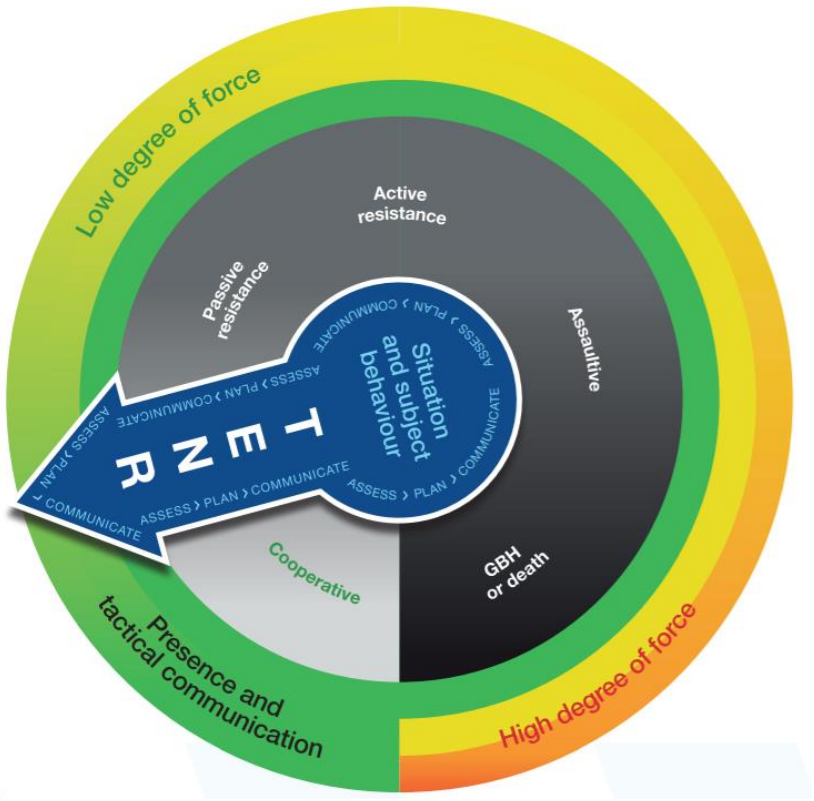



**Figure 1. The Tactical Options Framework**

# *Tactical Options Reporting*

NZ Police has established one of the most rigorous and robust processes in the world for reporting and review of use of force. Every use of force report undergoes at least two levels of scrutiny to ensure that the force used was necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances.

## The Tactical Options Reporting Database

Most data in this Annual Report is derived from Tactical Options Reports that are recorded in the Tactical Database (see p.60 for information about data sources). Police officers use Tactical Options Reports to report details about events where they have used force, capturing information about the broader context and sequence of the event, the people involved, the behaviours encountered and the tactical options used in response, as well as the officer's own thinking and decision-making leading up to and during the event. Every TOR report is reviewed first by the officer's immediate supervisor, and then by another District staff member at Inspector level or above.

## TOR Review Process

At each stage of the review process, the reviewer determines whether or not they support the officer's actions as being necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances, or whether they require further information. If the reviewer does not support the officer's actions, they must outline their view of the incident, and if relevant discuss with the officer and note any remedial training required. If there are concerns specifically about excessive force, deliberate misrepresentation of the incident or other perceived

inappropriate action, the Inspector-level reviewer must refer the incident to the Police Professional Conduct Manager, the relevant Human Resources Manager and the District Commander or National Manager for further investigation.

## TASER Discharges

After completing the two-stage review process, records from events involving TASER discharge are further reviewed by the TASER Assurance Forum, a panel of representatives from workgroups including Police Professional Conduct, Continuous Improvement, RNZPC Training, and Operational Capability. The panel considers available footage, and the TASER discharge and connectivity data in combination with the relevant TOR report/s and reviewers' comments. If any concerns are identified, the panel refers the report to the appropriate people/groups for follow-up.

The current TASER model (X2) is being decommissioned. NZ Police is transitioning to the TASER 10, which does not have built-in footage capture. As a result, the review of TASER footage will diminish commensurate with the rollout programme. TASER 10 rollout began in 2024, and is expected to take up to 5 years.

## Firearms Discharges

Any firearms discharges—intentional or unintentional—that result in an injury or fatality are classified as Critical Incidents, and involve a number of further internal and external investigations.

## IPCA Notifications

Events involving serious injury or fatality are notified to the IPCA to conduct an independent investigation of the event.

# *TOR Data Overview*

Analysis of tactical options use is conducted at the level of “TOR events.” A “TOR event” is the reportable use of one or more tactical options by one officer against one individual. Throughout this report, individuals who were subject to a use of force are referred to as "subjects." One individual person may be subject to use of force by more than one officer, and so may be the focus of more than one TOR event.

## Data Extraction

Data was extracted on 1st March 2024. The final dataset was made up of 7706 TOR events that had completed the two-stage review process, as well as 13 TOR events reported to the TOR Fatalities and Shooting Injuries database (FSI). FSI TORs are reported by a supervisor (rather than the officer/s involved), anonymised, and only contain high level data. These 7719 TOR events form the basis of the analyses reported here. Reports for a further 34 TOR events (0.4% of total) had not completed the two-stage review process at the time of data extraction and were excluded from further analysis.

## Increase in TOR Events

As shown in Figure 2, the total number of TOR events increased from 2022 (9%). The number of TOR events has increased every year since 2018, with previous increases falling within the typical range. However, the 7719 TOR events reported in 2023 is more than two standard deviations above the 13-year mean ($\overline{x}$ = 5395, $\sigma$ = 914) suggesting a genuine increase in TOR events, rather than random variation around the average. The pale blue zone in Figure 2 illustrates the 13-year mean $\mp$ 2 standard deviations (a 95% confidence interval around the mean).

This pattern of increasing use of force is also consistent globally: many of the international jurisdictions who make their use of force data available have reported continuing increases in use of force events over the last few years (see External Sources, p.60).

## Attended Events

Figure 2 also displays the number of events police attended each year.[1] Police attended 2,615,856 events in 2023, 11% more events than in 2022 (n = 2,351,862). This increase in police-public interactions provides some context for the 9% increase in TOR events. However note that in previous years, and as shown on Figure 2, the number of TOR events increased despite decreases in Attended Events, so this parallel increase does not provide a complete explanation of the observed increase in TOR events over time. In 2023, on average, one TOR event occurred for every 339 attended events; in 2022 the equivalent rate was almost the identical with one TOR event for every 333 attended events (both 0.3%).

## Violence Offences[2]

Of particular note, the increase in TOR events parallels the observed trend of violence offences. Figure 3 displays the number of violence offences against the number of TOR events over the same period.


[1] Based on Communication and Resource Deployment (CARD) data. Attended events data reported here and throughout this report includes Police response as well as officer-generated events where police-public interaction may have occurred.

[2] Based on TPOC 1000 charge codes for violence offences.

**Figure 2. TOR Events and Attended Events, 2011-2023**

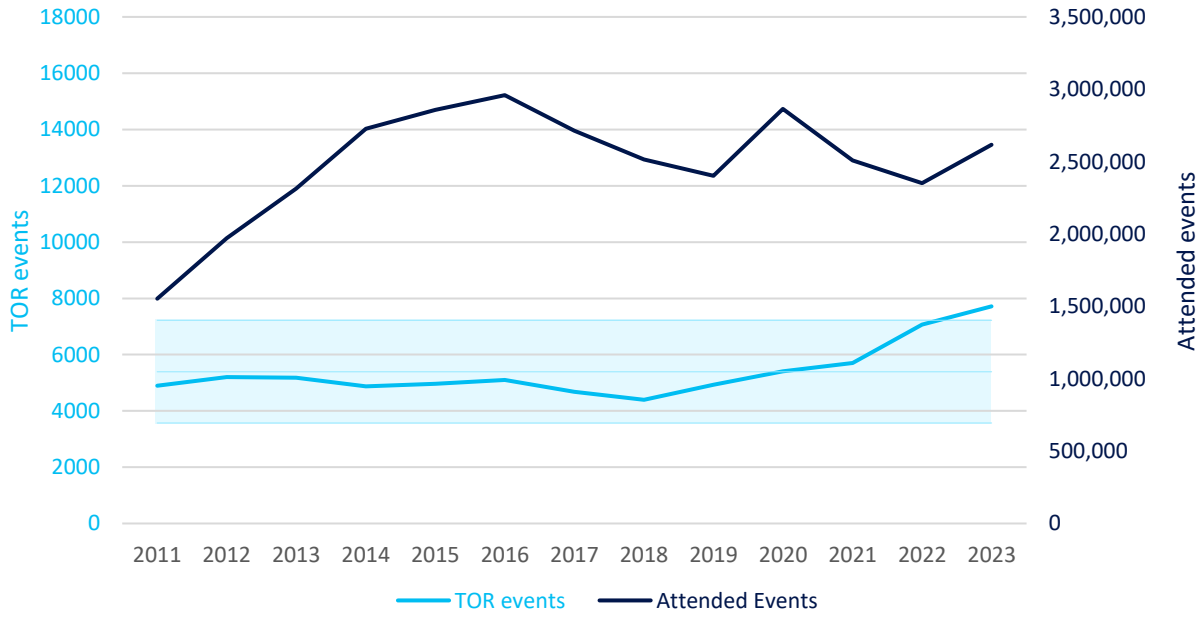
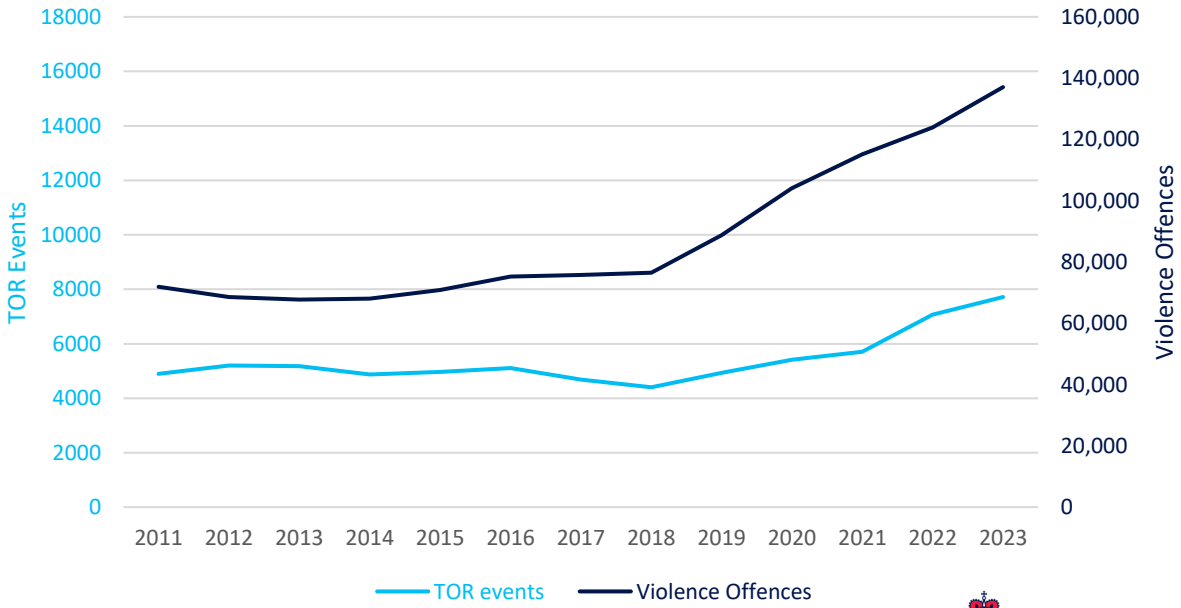



**Figure 3. TOR Events and Violence Offences, 2011-2023**



# *Our Business*

# *Prevent Crime and Harm*

In some situations, police officers must intervene directly to prevent crime and harm in the immediate circumstances. Whether Police involvement is initiated by a member of the public requesting help, or initiated by police officers identifying a dangerous situation, the officers must ensure that their actions prevent any further harm to victims and prevent any further crimes from being committed. On rare occasions, legal force is required to achieve these outcomes.

## TOR Event Types

The likelihood of police officers being required to use force depends on the type of event attended. Table 1 shows the most common event types in which a reportable use of force occurred, accounting for 88% of TOR events in total.

TOR events were most likely to occur at Violence Offences[3] with one TOR event occurring for every 29 events attended. In contrast, and in comparison to the other most common event types, TOR events were least likely to occur at Turnovers (vehicle stops) with one TOR event occurring for every 5578 Turnovers. Although Turnovers and Mental Health events each accounted for 2% of TOR events, the rate of TOR events occurring at these events was very different, with one TOR event occurring for every 95 Mental Health events attended. Turnovers occur much more frequently than Mental Health events in general, increasing the overall number of TORs that occur at Turnovers, despite the low likelihood of force being used at these events.

Similarly, Family Harm events accounted for the second highest proportion of TOR events (17%), but TOR events occurred on average at only one of every 103 Family Harm events attended, emphasising the large number of family harm events that police attend (381 per day in 2023; 139,204 total). The vast majority of these events—102 out of every 103 (99%)—were resolved without any use of force.


Table 1 also displays the percentage of TOR events that occurred while police attended a call for service, rather than as a result of police initiated activities. For seven of the most common TOR event types, more than 75% of TOR events arose from a call for service. For instance 96% of Family Harm events where a TOR event occurred were being attended in response to a call from a member of the public. In total, at 67% of TOR events, police attendance was initiated by a call for service.[4] Taken together, this data demonstrates that a substantial proportion of TOR events occur attendance has been requested by members of the public, highlighting the role that tactical options have in meeting public expectations for Police to prevent crime and harm.

Table 1 also illustrates that at some event types, police attendance was much less likely to occur in response to a call for service: TOR events that occurred at Warrant to Arrest, Traffic Incidents, Bail Checks, Enquiries and Turnovers were more likely to be initiated by police, which is as expected given the nature of these activities. These police-initiated activities are also key to public expectations of law enforcement in situations where harm has already occurred, or potential harm is identified by patrolling police, and tactical options are required to safely resolve the immediate situation.

[3] Based on TPOC 1000 charge codes for violence offences, excluding threats/intimidation offences (1700/1800) which are reportedseparately.
[4] 5148 out of 7706 TOR events. Call source information was not available for the 13 FSI TOR events and they are excluded from this analysis.

## Table 1. Where Do TOR Events Occur?

| Event Type | TOR events | Percent of TOR events | Attended Events per 1 TOR event (average) | Police Attendance in Response to a Call for Service |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Violence Offence/s | 723 | 9% | 29 to 1 | 78% |
| Disorder Offence/s | 1359 | 18% | 30 to 1 | 62% |
| Property Abuse Offence/s | 407 | 5% | 32 to 1 | 89% |
| Dishonesty Offence/s | 479 | 6% | 40 to 1 | 76% |
| Threats/Intimidation Offence/s | 228 | 3% | 56 to 1 | 87% |
| Threatens/Attempts Suicide | 219 | 3% | 81 to 1 | 89% |
| Warrant to Arrest | 280 | 4% | 83 to 1 | 23% |
| Mental Health | 175 | 2% | 95 to 1 | 89% |
| Family Harm | 1347 | 17% | 103 to 1 | 96% |
| Traffic Incident | 690 | 9% | 131 to 1 | 34% |
| Suspicious Car/Person | 284 | 4% | 180 to 1 | 68% |
| Bail Check/Breach | 257 | 3% | 899 to 1 | 48% |
| Enquiry/Investigation | 175 | 2% | 1389 to 1 | 7% |
| Turnover | 160 | 2% | 5578 to 1 | 6% |
| Other[5] | 936 | 12% | 860 to 1 | 57% |
| **Overall** | **7719** | **100%** | **339 to 1** | **67%** |

Note that proportions and rates are not comparable with previous years' data due to changes in the reporting system. Previously, the reporting officer selected an event type. From November 2021, the event type is automatically populated from CARD data (but can be changed by the reporting officer). CARD event types may comprise either an event type (as per previous reporting) or an offence code, broadening reporting options and shifting the way events are recorded.

[5] This category is made up of 52 different event types, each accounting for less than 2% of all TOR events.

# *Legal Authority for the use of force*

The use of force against a person is the highest level of intrusion against a person's rights that police might take. As such, the use of force is governed by statute. Constables' legal authority to use force in the lawful execution of their duties primarily derives from the *Crimes Act 1961*, but is also found in several other Acts which authorise the use of force in certain circumstances.

Officers must specify the legal authority for any use of force when completing their Tactical Options Report. The most common legal justifications are displayed in Table 2. Note that analysis of legal justifications for the use of force only relates to the 7706 TOR events reported to the Tactical Database; the 13 FSI TORs are not included. Officers may select multiple legal justifications for one use of force, so values do not sum to 100%.

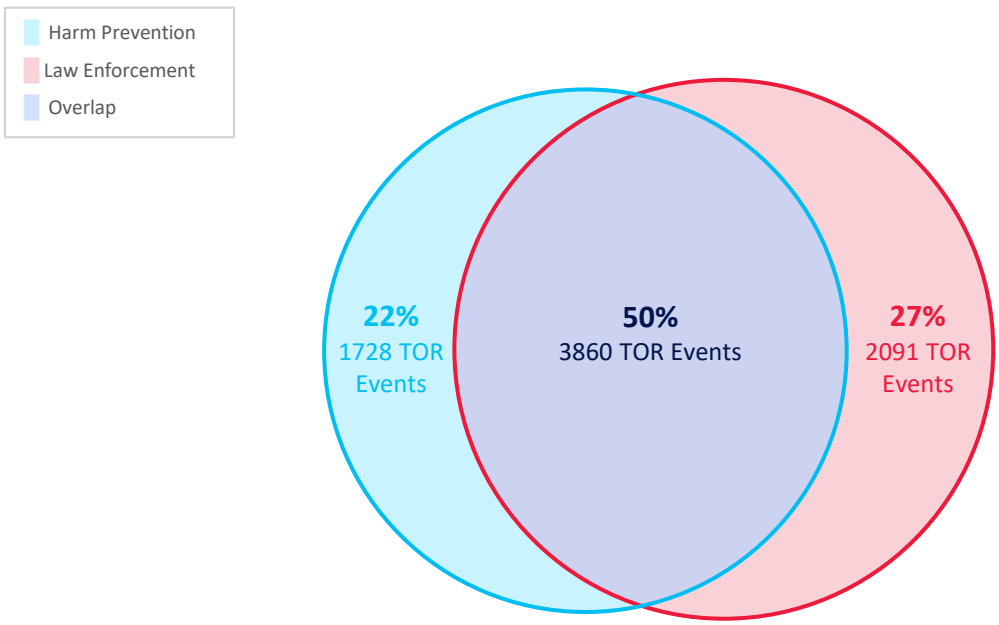
In two-thirds of TOR events (67%), officers acted to prevent harm by defending themselves and/or another person. Examining the role of the defended person/people (i.e. self, other police, public) illustrates that in many TOR events, the officer's actions applied to the defence of multiple people (Σ = 8351).

An officer's actions may also prevent harm in other ways. More specifically, actions taken to prevent suicide or self-harm, actions taken to prevent breach of the peace, and actions taken under the *Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992* are all intended to prevent harm. Taken together, this data demonstrates that police used force to prevent 9,763 potential types of harm.

Table 2 also illustrates the times that police used force for law enforcement purposes, either to effect an arrest, prevent escape, or obtain bodily samples (Σ = 7905).

Figure 4 displays the overlap between these underlying reasons for the use of force: harm prevention and law enforcement. As illustrated, there is substantial intersection between these two purposes with 50% of all TOR events having at least one legal justification in each category.

**Figure 4. Overlap in Legal Justifications for Use of Force: Harm Prevention vs. Law Enforcement**



## Table 2. Legal Justifications for Use of Force

| Legislation | TOR Events | Percent of all TOR Events |
|---|---|---|
| **Crimes Act 1961** (see link) | **7637** | **99%** |
| Execute process or arrest (s. 39) | 5441 | 71% |
| Prevent escape (s. 40) | 2438 | 32% |
| Prevent suicide/self-harm (s. 41) | 590 | 8% |
| Prevent breach of peace (s. 42) | 494 | 6% |
| Self-defence and defence of another (s. 48) | 5179 | 67% |
| *Self-defence* | 4083 | 53% |
| *Defence of another (Police officer)* | 2738 | 36% |
| *Defence of another (Public)* | 1530 | 20% |
| Other | 40 | 1% |
| **Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992** (see link) | **318** | **4%** |
| Detain person for mental health examination (s. 109) | 213 | 3% |
| Assist Duly Authorised Officer (DAO) (s. 122B) | 106 | 1% |
| Apprehend a special patient (s. 122B) | 9 | <1% |
| Apprehend a patient of concern (s. 122B) | 0 | 0% |
| **Criminal Investigations (Bodily Samples) Act 1995** (see link) | **26** | **<1%** |
| Taking bodily sample for compulsion order or notice (s. 54) (2) | 8 | <1% |
| Taking bodily samples under part 2B (s. 54A) | 18 | <1% |
| **Other Act** | **87** | **1%** |

# *Our Business*

# *Law Enforcement*

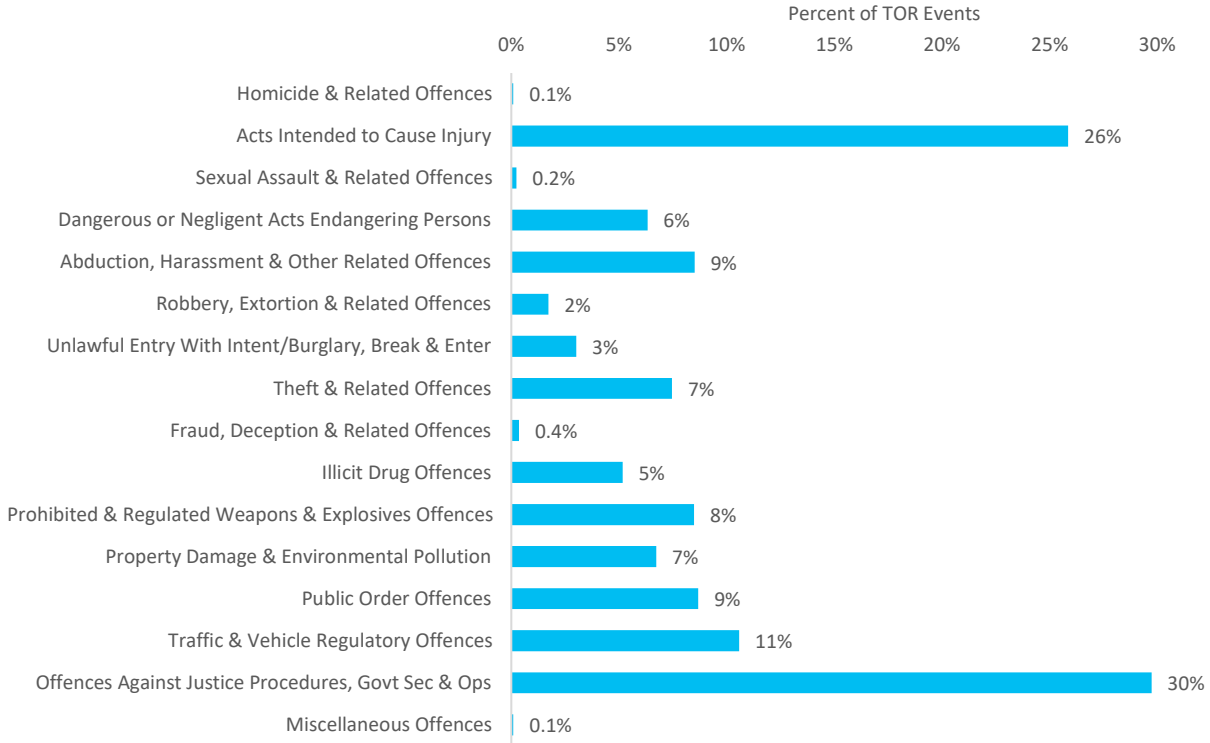
In the course of their duties, officers sometimes encounter resistant or assaultive behaviour that either prevents them from fulfilling their role in keeping the peace and maintaining public safety, or that puts themselves or others at risk of harm. In situations such as these where police officers are required to use force, offenders may subsequently be charged with one or more offences.

## Charges Filed

In 2023, 58% of TOR events resulted in the offender being charged with at least one offence (*n* = 4495), a slightly larger proportion than in 2022 (55%). In a further 9%, the subject received a formal warning or verbal warning (*n* = 905). Outcomes for the remaining TOR events (*n* = 2519) included situations where [1] a subject escaped before his or her identity was confirmed, [2] the decision to file a charge was still pending at the time the report was submitted, [3] a decision was made not to charge the subject, such as in a mental health event, [4] the subject died, or [5] the police intervention successfully prevented an offence from being committed and the TOR event was resolved without a chargeable offence occurring.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of TOR events that resulted in a charge (or multiple charges) in each ANZSOC Offence Division. As the figure illustrates, the most common charges filed were in divisions *Offences Against Justice Procedures*, and *Acts Intended to Cause Injury*, again highlighting Police's role in both law enforcement and harm prevention (see Table 2, p.17). Some subjects faced charges from multiple divisions, so the total percentage exceeds 100%.

**Figure 5. Percent of TOR Events with Charge/s Filed in each ANZSOC Offence Division**



# *Armed Offender Squad Deployments*

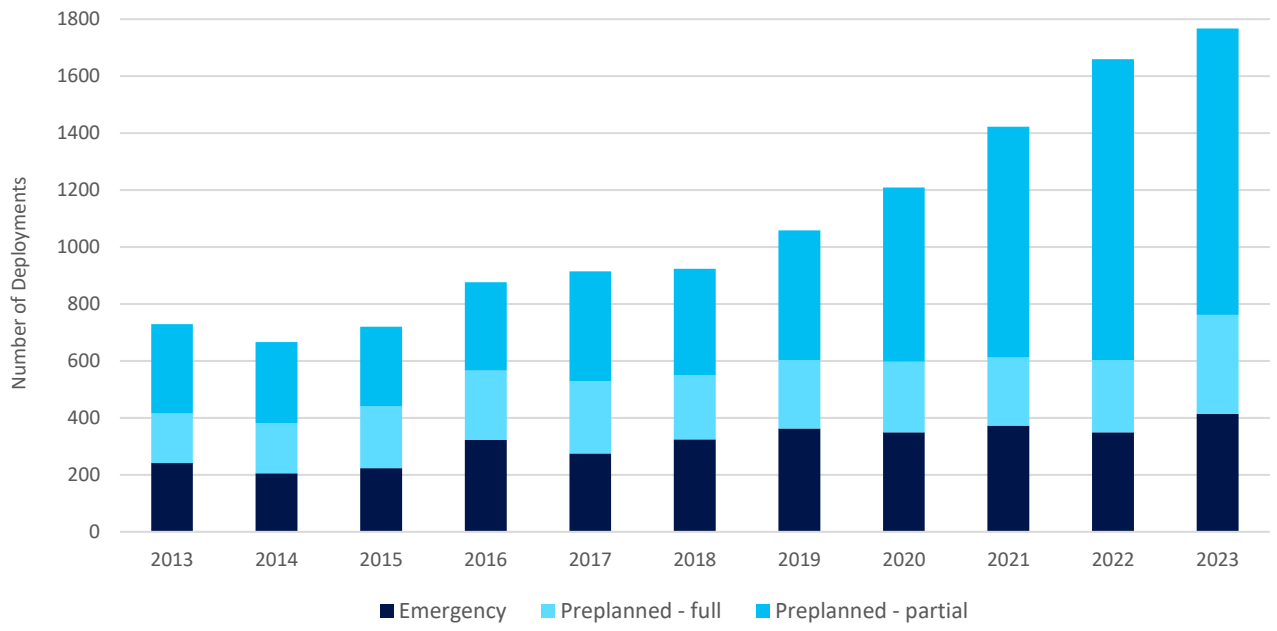
Armed Offender Squads (AOS) are maintained in each Police District to attend incidents where people are believed to be armed and to pose a danger either to themselves, the public, or police. AOS members receive specialist training for the express purpose of carrying out operations against armed offenders. AOS members also attend pre-planned high-risk operations such as assisting with search warrants and high-risk arrests.

Like many policing activities, Armed Offenders Squad (AOS) deployments have multiple goals. Emergency deployments are highly dependent on demand and activity, with staff intervening to prevent harm in an immediate critical situation. Pre-planned deployments typically involve searches to seize unlawfully held weapons or drugs and may be the culmination of many months or years of preliminary investigations.

Pre-planned deployments also include prevention patrols conducted to provide community reassurance and increase the availability of tactically trained staff to support the frontline following significant firearms related local events or heightened periods of gang tensions.

Figure 6 displays the number of AOS deployments over the past 11 years. As the figure illustrates, the number of emergency deployments has remained relatively stable over time. In comparison, the number of pre-planned deployments has increased consistently for several years, though may have stabilised in 2023. The increases in pre-planned deployments are the result of a higher number of proactive operations as well as an increase in utilising preventative measures during higher-risk policing activities.

**Figure 6. AOS Deployments by Type, 2013 – 2023**

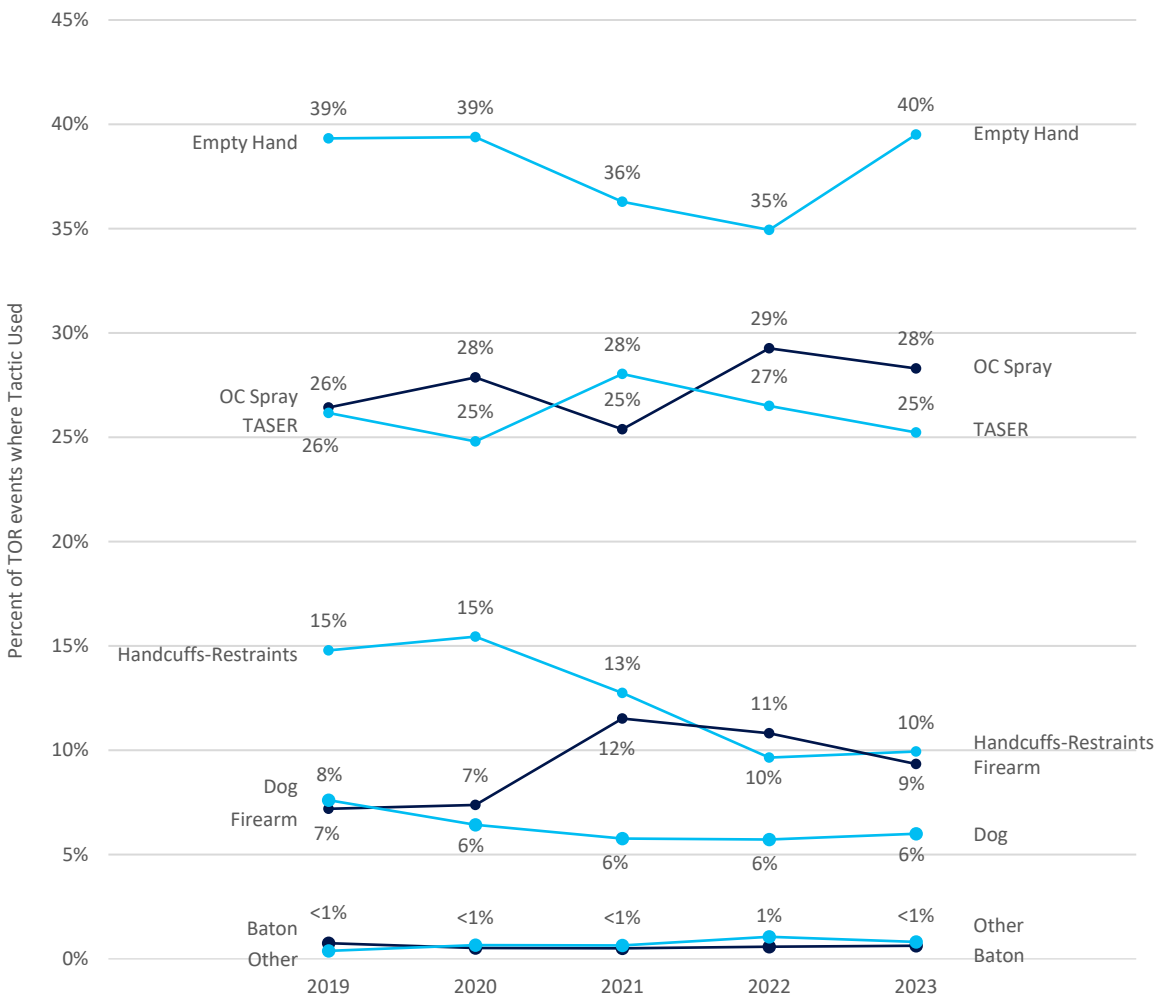


## *Our Business*

# *People are Safe Wherever They Live, Work, and Visit*

In fulfilling their duties, frontline police encounter a wide range of behaviours, ranging through cooperative, resistant, assaultive, up to behaviour that could cause grievous bodily harm or death. Staff are equipped and enabled through training in decision making-models and in suite of tactical options and through the tactical appointments made available to them. As such, staff are prepared to respond appropriately to keep themselves and the communities they serve safe—wherever they live, work and visit.

**Figure 7. Tactical Option Use**[6]




[6] Officers may use more than one tactical option (e.g. Handcuffs and OC Spray) at a TOR event, so the total percentage exceeds 100%.


## Changes to Tactical Options

Police periodically review the Tactical Options available to officers to ensure these are fit for purpose, and can continue to support officer capability into the future. In 2023, MK 9 OC Spray was introduced in NZ Police. MK 9 is a larger volume OC Spray intended for use in crowd management situations. It may be carried at a Public Order Policing event with authorisation of a District Commander, and may only be deployed with the authorisation of a qualified Sergeant or above.

The year also saw further rollout of two tactical response teams as part of the Frontline Safety Improvement Programme – Tactical Dog Teams (TDTs), and Offender Prevention Teams (OPTs). These teams include AOS-qualified tactical operators who have the capability to deploy sponge rounds. Although AOS operators are exempt from reporting tactical option shows that occur during an AOS deployment, AOS operators working as TDTs and OPTs must complete a Tactical Options Report for any tactical option shows, including sponge rounds. Additional reporting on Sponge Round tactics is included from this year (p.26).

Finally, in November 2023, the TASERcam was removed from X2 TASER models in Southern District. TASERcam is an integrated camera component of the X2, and is no longer being manufactured. The removal of TASERcam heralded the introduction of the newest TASER model, the TASER10, in Southern district from January 2024. Reallocation of TASERCam components as TASER10 becomes available in Districts enables Police to maintain the remaining X2 fleet while the transition to TASER10 is completed over the coming years.

## Tactical Option Use

Police used 9,818 tactical options[7] at 7719 TOR events, an average of 1.3 tactics per TOR event. In comparison, in 2022 police used 8927 tactical options at 7066 TOR events, also an average of 1.3 tactics per TOR event.

NZ Police have a range of tactical appointments and techniques to use. The decision to use force, and the specific technique or equipment used can be influenced by a number of factors. For example, different tactical options are better suited to different physical locations and depending on the number of people present/involved. In addition, an officer's decision to use a tactical option may include factors such as the behaviour encountered (p.38), the subject's alcohol or drug intoxication (p.40), and whether the subject is armed (p.39).

## Empty Hand Tactics

As Figure 7 shows, Empty Hand tactics are consistently the most used tactical option, used at between 35% and 40% of TOR events over the last five years (see also Table 5, p.27). The proportion of TOR events where Empty Hand tactics were used was slightly higher in 2023 than in previous years; in total, Empty Hand tactics were used 3050 times in 2023, up from 2469 in 2022.

## Baton

Baton use has been consistently low over the last five years and remained low in 2023—used at 48 TOR events (<1%). However, tactical options reporting may underestimate baton usage, as it only captures reportable uses of force – when a baton is used against a person's body. Police staff may use batons in other ways in the course of their duties that do not constitute reportable uses of force (e.g. to break a window), meaning that tactical options reporting may underestimate overall baton usage and usefulness.

[7] Tactic counts exclude tactical communication.

Regardless, the consistently low tactical option usage stresses the need to consider the potential opportunity-cost associated with training time focused on using batons as a tactical option. In addition, baton training can result in injuries which may preclude recruits from full participation in other aspects of training, further exacerbating the costs. As shown on Table 8 (p.29), Baton also has a high subject injury rate, with 1 injury for every 10 uses.

## Handcuffs-Restraints

This category refers to handcuff use only when combined with pain compliance[8] (see 2019 Tactical Options Report for further information), as well as use of other restraints such as a Restraint Chair or Spitting Hood. Overall, Handcuffs-Restraints were used at 10% of TOR events, identical to 2022 (see also Table 19, p.51 for information about Handcuffs-Restraints usage).

**Metal Handcuffs** with pain compliance made up 44% of Handcuffs-Restraints uses, with 364 uses in total, at 359 TOR events (5% of all TOR events).

**Spitting Hoods** reduce the risk to staff when subjects are spitting blood/saliva at them, or threatening to do so. The top of the hood is made of mesh and the lower part holds fluids, preventing them from being spread around. Spitting Hoods made up 32% of Handcuffs-Restraints uses, with 267 uses in 2023 (at 265 TOR events; 3% of all TOR events). In 252 of these TOR events, the subject had spat blood/saliva at police. In another two TOR events, the subject spat at staff from other agencies (e.g. DAOs). In a further ten TOR events the subject was spitting but not directly at a person; most often these TOR events involved subjects spitting saliva/blood/phlegm throughout patrol cars during transportation. In the final TOR event, the subject specifically threatened to spit at police.

In contrast, at 388 TOR events, subjects were reported to spit blood/saliva at police, but were not fitted with a Spitting Hood. Put another way, of the 640 TOR events (8% of all TOR events) where subjects spat blood/saliva at police, only 39% resulted in the subject being fitted with a Spitting Hood, an identical rate to 2022. The rate of spitting at police during TOR events was consistent with 2022 (9%), but is much higher than observed elsewhere. Data from 10,000 use of force events in the US showed that spitting occurred at 3.6% (see Strote, Warner, Scales, & Hickman, 2021). However the US events occurred over a longer timeframe, and reporting practices may differ from New Zealand.

Five subjects who were fitted with a Spitting Hood had been exposed to OC Spray.

**Restraint Chairs** were used 151 times (at 148 TOR events), accounting for 18% of all Handcuffs-Restraints uses, (2% of all TOR events).

**Other Restraints.** Remaining restraint uses included vehicle leg restraints (a fabric belt placed around the ankles to prevent kicking during transportation; 4%), waist restraint belts (which link to wrist restraints at the waist to reduce arm movement; 1%), rear wrist and leg restraints (<1%), and plastic ties with pain compliance (used in place of metal handcuffs to secure the wrists or ankles; <1%).


[8] For example, in the bottle-top technique, manual pressure is applied to the top and bottom of a handcuff against a (non-compliant) subject's wrist. The pressure causes pain, and enables staff to maintain compliance and control of the subject.

## TASER

As shown on Figure 7 (p.20), the proportion of TOR events with TASER use has been relatively stable over the last five years. There were 1947 TASER TOR events in 2023 (see also Table 5, p.27; 25% of all TOR events), compared to 1873 TOR events in 2022 (27% of all TOR events).

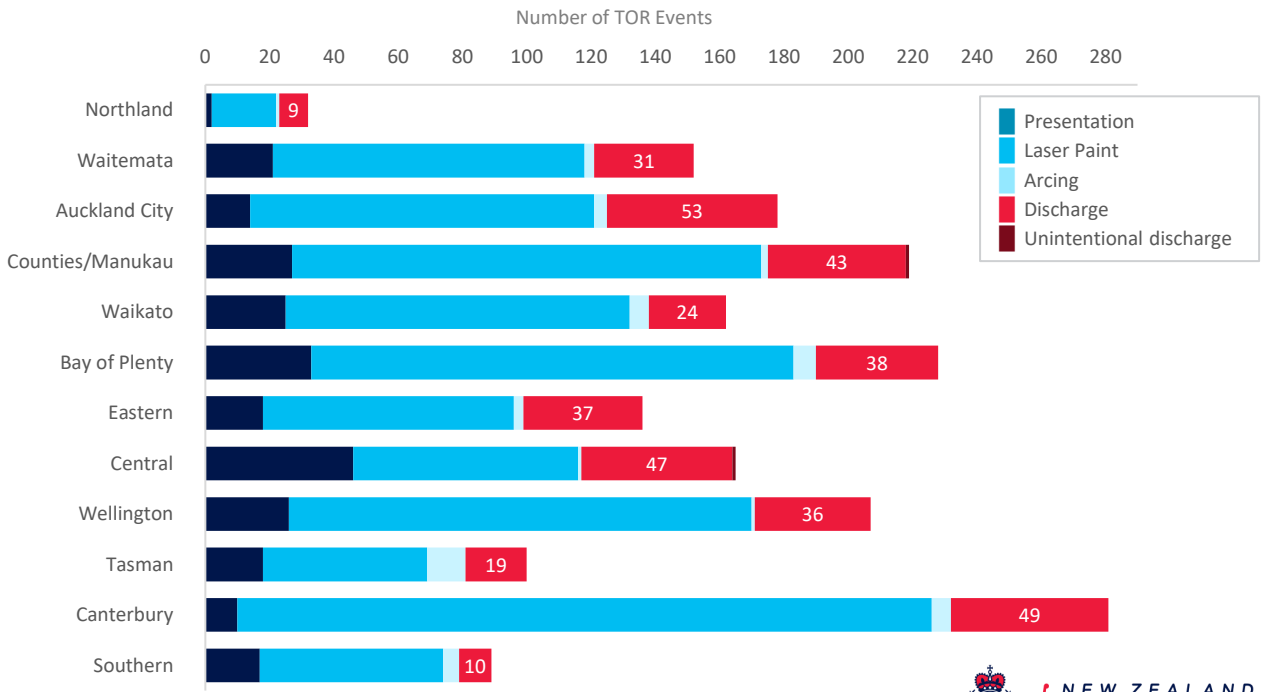
Figure 8 illustrates TASER use at TOR events by the highest mode of deployment only (see also Table A2, Appendix). Blue-toned segments represent TASER shows and red-toned segments represent TASER discharges. The legend displays TASER deployment types in order of increasing intensity from Presentation only (lowest) to Discharge (highest).

Consistent with previous years, laser painting was the highest mode of deployment at 64% of all TASER TOR events (n = 1243). Other TASER shows were made up of presentations (n = 257; 13%) and arcing (n = 51; 3%). TASER discharge occurred at 396 TOR events (20%). This proportion is are almost identical to proportions observed in previous years.

The TASER show-to-discharge ratio was 4:1. In other words, on average, for every TOR event that involved a TASER discharge there were four that involved only a TASER show, suggesting that TASER show is a very effective tactical option to deescalate or prevent violent offending. The show-to-discharge ratio held steady at 4:1 between 2018 and 2021, and temporarily increased to 5:1 in 2022; the return to a ratio of 4:1 may suggest that the rate has stabilised, after earlier regular decreases.

There were two operational unintentional discharges. In one case, an officer was attempting to administer a contact stun when the TASER was unintentionally discharged; one probe hit the subject's jacket and bounced off. The other probe did not hit anyone. In the other case, no probes hit anyone. No one was hurt and no property was damaged by either unintentional discharge.

### Figure 8. TASER Use at TOR Events by Highest Mode of Deployment



## Table 3. Firearm Use at TOR Events by Highest Mode of Deployment

| District | Presentation | Discharge (incidents) | Unintentional Discharge |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northland | 18 | | |
| Waitematā | 94 | 5 (2) | |
| Auckland City | 78 | 1 (1) | |
| Counties Manukau | 88 | | |
| Waikato | 67 | | |
| Bay of Plenty | 91 | | |
| Eastern | 34 | | |
| Central | 67 | 4 (3) | |
| Wellington | 66 | 1 (1) | 1 |
| Tasman | 40 | | |
| Canterbury | 44 | | |
| Southern | 23 | | |
| **National** | **710** | **11 (7)** | 1 |


### Firearms Deployment

Table 3 shows the number of TOR events where police used firearms by the highest mode of deployment.[9] The vast majority of times that police officers used firearms, the highest mode of deployment was presentation only (98%).

Police discharged firearms during eleven TOR events, which related to seven separate incidents. In one TOR event, the firearm discharge missed the subject (Central). In two TOR events, the subjects sustained non-fatal gunshot wounds (Waitematā, Central). In three incidents (7 TOR events), the subject sustained a fatal gunshot wound (Waitematā; Central; Wellington). In the final incident, the subject sustained non-fatal gunshot wounds, but died as a result of other injuries, not caused by NZ Police tactical option use (Auckland City).

To provide some context to firearms uses by police, firearms were used against police in 22 incidents during 2023; 12 of these incidents involved a discharge (55%).

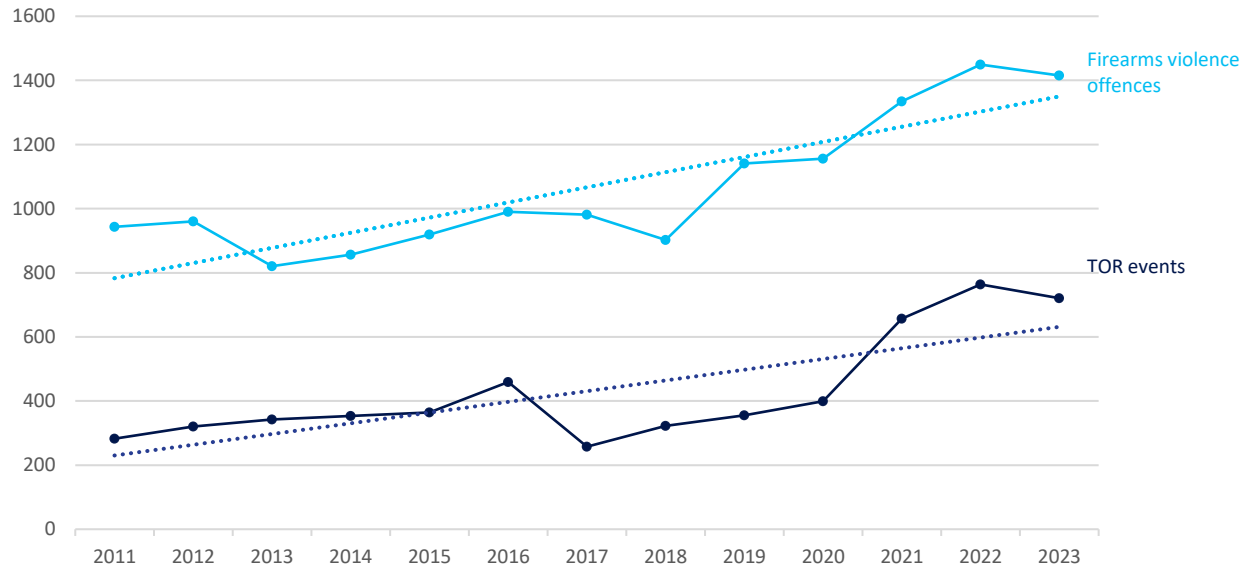
There was one unintentional firearm discharge in the operational environment; a staff member sustained a non-fatal injury, but no members of the public were affected by the discharge and no property was damaged.

[9] Fatalities and Shooting Injuries TORs contain only high level data, so it is not possible to describe the circumstances of these events. Please see Tactical Options Supplement: Shootings by Police 1916 – 2023 for further details.

Firearms use by police broadly reflects changes in firearms violence offences over time. As Figure 9 shows, firearms violence offences and police firearms use increased in parallel in both 2021 and 2022, and dropped in parallel in 2023. This pattern speaks to the use of force by police as responsive to the volume and nature of threats to safety in the wider community. Just as most offending does not involve firearms violence offences, most TOR events do not involve any firearm use by police (91%), or firearm discharges by police (99.9%).

In the broader context, police firearm discharge incidents comprised 0.0003% of all events attended by police (*n* = 7).This rate is consistent with previous years, ranging between 0.0002% and 0.0004% of attended events since 2018 (the first full year of data captured in the *Fatalities and Shooting Injuries database*). However, while rare, the potential for serious injury or death for those involved warrants continuous efforts to minimise the occurrence of these events.

**Figure 9. TOR Events with Police Firearm Use, and Firearms Violence Offences[10], 2011-2023**




[10] Based on TPOC 1000 charge codes for violence offences.


**Table 4. Sponge Round Use at TOR Events by Highest Mode of Deployment**

| District | Presentation | Discharge |
|---|---|---|
| Northland | | 2 |
| Waitematā | | 1 |
| Auckland City | 1 | 1 |
| Counties Manukau | 4 | 1 |
| Waikato | | |
| Bay of Plenty | 4 | |
| Eastern | | 5 |
| Central | | 13 |
| Wellington | 1 | |
| Tasman | | 1 |
| Canterbury | 6 | 2 |
| Southern | | 1 |
| **National** | **16** | **27** |

## Sponge Round Deployment

Sponge rounds are typically used in situations where it is too dangerous for police to get close to a violent offender. The sponge round is a less-lethal tactical option than can be deployed over a much longer distance than other less-lethal tactical options (e.g. TASER, OC Spray). The projectile is made of a high density sponge that is aerodynamic in flight, and typically causes bruising rather than significant or long-lasting injury. The sponge round is deployed via a 40mm launcher. Only members of specialist groups are trained to use and routinely deploy with 40mm launchers (p. 21).

Table 4 shows the number of TOR events where police used sponge rounds by the highest mode of deployment in each District.

## Table 5. Tactical Option Use by District

| District | Empty Hand Tactics | OC Spray | TASER | Handcuffs-Restraints | Firearm | Dog | Baton | Sponge Round | Other Tactic | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northland | 110 | 127 | 33 | 18 | 18 | 30 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 342 |
| Waitematā | 269 | 123 | 154 | 78 | 100 | 24 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 763 |
| Auckland City | 248 | 227 | 183 | 56 | 80 | 45 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 851 |
| Counties Manukau | 424 | 194 | 218 | 141 | 89 | 53 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1129 |
| Waikato | 242 | 190 | 165 | 55 | 67 | 57 | 5 | | 7 | 788 |
| Bay of Plenty | 314 | 249 | 228 | 64 | 92 | 69 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 1032 |
| Eastern | 317 | 241 | 138 | 67 | 35 | 35 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 845 |
| Central | 276 | 179 | 165 | 35 | 71 | 26 | 8 | 13 | 4 | 777 |
| Wellington | 331 | 257 | 211 | 95 | 70 | 47 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 1022 |
| Tasman | 179 | 94 | 102 | 48 | 40 | 17 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 486 |
| Canterbury | 486 | 228 | 289 | 121 | 44 | 57 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 1249 |
| Southern | 236 | 107 | 95 | 57 | 23 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 534 |
| **Total Uses** | **3432** | **2216** | **1981** | **835** | **729** | **469** | **48** | **45** | **63** | **9818** |
| **TOR Events** | 3050 | 2184 | 1947 | 767 | 721 | 463 | 48 | 43 | 63 | 7719 |

Table 5 shows the total number of uses of each tactical option in each District (see Table A1 in Appendix for a summary of the number of TOR events where each tactic was used by District). Because an officer may use a given tactical option multiple times at the same TOR event, total use of each tactical option is higher than the total number of TOR events where a given tactical option was used. Because multiple tactics may be used at the same TOR event, the total number of TOR events where each tactic was used is greater than the total number of TOR events.

## Tactical Options used in the Custody Environment

In total, 620 TOR events had at least one tactic that occurred in a custody environment (8% of all TOR events), equivalent to 1 TOR event for every 170 custodies.

The dynamics of working in a custody suite impose additional challenges in managing and responding to resistant or assaultive behaviour. As such, the tactical options used in custody settings vary from other TOR events. Table 6 displays the tactics used in custody and non-custody environments in 2023. As expected, there were no uses of Firearms, Dogs or Sponge Rounds in custody. OC Spray and TASER were also much less likely to be used in custody than non-custody environments.

In contrast, Handcuffs-Restraints and Empty Hand tactics made up a larger proportion of tactic uses in custody compared to non-custody environments. The difference in Handcuffs-Restraints was in large part due to restraint chair use, which always occurs in custody, and accounted for 61% of all custody Handcuffs-Restraints uses.

As well as differences inherent to the environment, staff are also likely to encounter different behaviour during TOR events in custody settings.[11] Table 7 displays observed subject behaviours during TOR events in custody and non-custody environments. Many of the negative behaviours which are common to TOR events occurred at a higher rate in the custody environment; this difference is most notable in subjects' self-harming behaviour and subjects threatening self-harm. The behaviours of most risk to police staff also occurred at a higher rate in custody than non-custody TOR events (e.g. Threaten Police, Assault Police, Aggressive, Spit blood/saliva at Police).

### Table 6. Tactics used in Custody TOR events

| Tactic | Custody | Custody Percent | Non-Custody | Non-Custody Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Empty Hand | 470 | 58% | 2962 | 33% |
| OC Spray | 56 | 7% | 2160 | 24% |
| TASER | 15 | 2% | 1966 | 22% |
| Handcuffs-Restraints | 246 | 30% | 589 | 7% |
| Firearm | - | - | 729 | 8% |
| Dog | - | - | 469 | 5% |
| Baton | 2 | <1% | 46 | <1% |
| Sponge Round | - | - | 45 | <1% |
| Other Tactic | 26 | 3% | 37 | <1% |
| **Total tactics** | **815** | 100% | **9003** | 100% |

### Table 7. Subject Behaviours in Custody TOR events

| Observed Behaviour | Custody | Non-Custody |
|---|---|---|
| Aggressive | 78% | 70% |
| Verbally abusive | 68% | 55% |
| Obstructive | 76% | 69% |
| Evading Police | 12% | 40% |
| Threaten non-Police | 16% | 20% |
| Threaten Police | 52% | 34% |
| Threatening self-harm | 24% | 5% |
| Assault non-Police | 14% | 18% |
| Assault Police | 39% | 27% |
| Spit blood/saliva at Police | 18% | 7% |
| Self-harming | 31% | 4% |

[11] Subject behaviours are recorded at TOR event/Subject level, not Tactic level. To avoid double-counting subjects, TOR events with any tactic use in a custody environment were counted as custody TOR events for this subject-level behaviour analysis. However, note that some of these behaviours may have occurred prior to the custody setting.

*Our Business*

# *Taking Every Opportunity to Prevent Harm*

Tactical options support frontline police to prevent harm by enabling them to intervene effectively when someone's behaviour puts either themselves or other people at risk of harm. Staff also have the opportunity to minimise harm by selecting the safest and most effective tactical option for the circumstances, to reduce the risk of injuries to both members of the public and themselves.

**Table 8. Subject Injury Frequency and Injury Rates for Each Tactical Option**

| Tactic | Total Injuries | Percent of all TOR Injuries | Tactic Uses per 1 Injury (on average) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Empty Hand | 478 | 42% | 7 to 1 |
| OC Spray | 97 | 9% | 23 to 1 |
| TASER | 30 | 3% | 66 to 1 |
| Handcuffs-Restraints | 39 | 3% | 21 to 1 |
| *Handcuffs without pain compliance*[12,13] | *20* | *2%* | *92 to 1* |
| Firearm | 10 | 1% | 73 to 1 |
| Dog | 427 | 38% | 1 to 1 |
| Baton | 5 | <1% | 10 to 1 |
| Sponge Round | 22 | 2% | 2 to 1 |
| Other tactic | 9 | 1% | 7 to 1 |
| **Overall** | **1137** | **100%** | **9 to 1** |
| *Other cause—not tactic* | *129* | | |

## Tactical Option Injury Frequency: Subjects

Overall, subjects sustained 1137 injuries at 1077 TOR events. At 1024 TOR events (13%), the subject sustained one injury, at 47 TOR events (<1%) the subject sustained two injuries, at five TOR events, the subject sustained three injuries, and at one TOR event the subject sustained four injuries.

As Table 8 shows, most injuries were caused by Empty Hand tactics and Dog deployment, a finding that is consistent with previous years (see Table 9, p.31, for a summary of injuries in each District).

[12] For example, if a subject struggling on the ground while being handcuffed sustained grazes.
[13] Not all uses of Handcuffs without pain compliance are recorded, the number of usages per injury is likely to be much higher than what is reported here. See 2019 TOR Annual Report for further details.

Table 8 also shows the injury rate for each tactical option. Dog deployment had the highest injury rate, with an average of one injury resulting from every use. Dog deployment is only required to be reported as a tactical option if the dog bites or injures someone (dogs are often used for tracking, which is not a use of force). Put another way—on average—for every dog bite (or injury), subjects sustained one injury. Note that not every dog bite causes an injury: there were 38 TOR events with Dog as a tactical option but no associated injury. In four of these TOR events, other tactical options were also used, but for the remaining 34 TOR events, Dog deployment was the only tactical option used. Dogs expand Police capability when other tactical options would be ineffective, especially over distance (e.g. due to the subject running away).

Empty Hand tactics had the next highest injury rate, with one injury for every seven uses, the same rate seen in 2022. Consistent with previous years, Empty Hand tactics were also the most used tactical option (used at 40% of TOR events), and account for nearly half (42%) of all injuries. Taken together, these findings highlight a potential opportunity to reduce harm through reduced use of Empty Hand tactics. Empty Hand tactics are very often the most appropriate tactical option for the situation, but there may be an opportunity for further improvement to ensure that staff are enabled with the most appropriate tactics available that also minimise harm.

TASER and OC Spray were associated with fewer injuries than Empty Hand tactics, with one injury occurring for an average of 66 and 23 uses respectively (superficial TASER probe injuries are not included).

Both of these tactical options are subject to usage restrictions that do not apply to Empty Hand tactics. OC Spray may only be used if the officer's Perceived Cumulative Assessment is within or beyond active resistant, and it is not advisable to use in confined spaces due to the risk of cross-contamination. TASER may only be used if the officer's Perceived Cumulative Assessment has the potential to escalate within or beyond assaultive. In short, these tactical options are less available than Empty Hand tactics. Typically Empty Hand tactics are perceived to be a less extreme use of force than TASER or OC Spray, but the injury data raises questions around this assumption.[14] Reconsideration of the appropriate situations for the different tactics may be warranted.

## Subject Injuries in Custody

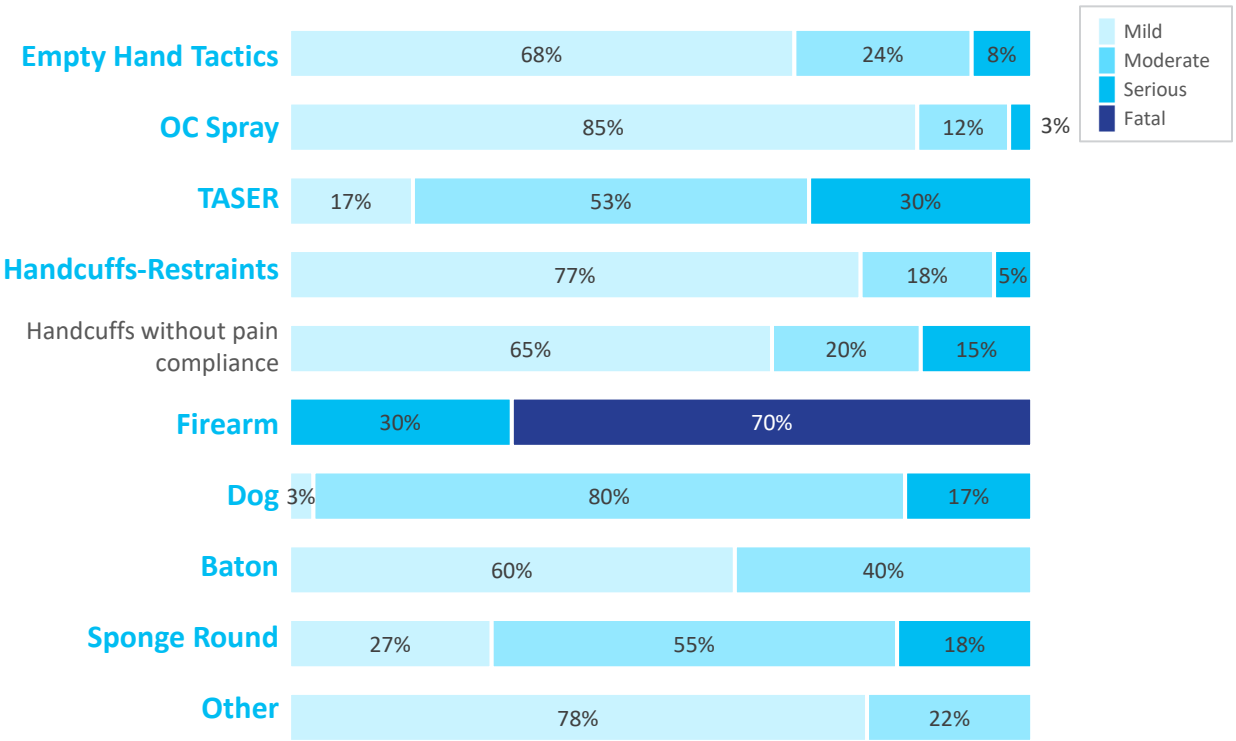
Subjects sustained 60 injuries at 59 TOR events in custody settings. Put another way, one out of every 11 TOR events that occurred in the custody environment resulted in the subject sustaining an injury. One custody subject sustained two injuries, all others sustained one injury. The vast majority of these injuries (n = 54; 90%) were caused by Empty Hand tactics, which is as expected given the overall higher rate of Empty Hand tactic usage in custody TOR events (and lower use of other tactical options), as well as the high injury rate associated with Empty Hand tactics in general.


[14] Note that this data cannot quantify the psychological impact to a person who has a tactical option used against them, whether or not it involves physical contact.

## Table 9. Subject Injury Frequency and Causes by District

| District | Empty Hand Tactics | OC Spray | TASER | Handcuffs-Restraints | Handcuffs without pain compliance | Firearm | Dog | Baton | Sponge Round | Other Tactic | Total | Other cause: Not tactic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northland | 19 | 7 | 1 | | 1 | | 28 | | 1 | | 57 | 8 |
| Waitematā | 52 | 12 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 23 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 117 | 14 |
| Auckland City | 26 | 15 | 4 | | | 1 | 41 | 1 | 1 | | 89 | 16 |
| Counties Manukau | 58 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 45 | | 1 | 2 | 129 | 21 |
| Waikato | 31 | 3 | | 2 | | | 56 | 1 | | 3 | 96 | 6 |
| Bay of Plenty | 47 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 | | 66 | | | | 130 | 6 |
| Eastern | 45 | 8 | 3 | 1 | | | 31 | | 7 | | 95 | 10 |
| Central | 22 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 21 | | 7 | 1 | 70 | 9 |
| Wellington | 52 | 11 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 39 | | | | 114 | 15 |
| Tasman | 32 | 3 | | 2 | | | 14 | | 1 | | 52 | 7 |
| Canterbury | 65 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 5 | | 54 | 1 | 2 | | 141 | 12 |
| Southern | 29 | 2 | 3 | 2 | | | 9 | | 1 | 1 | 47 | 5 |
| **Total** | **478** | **97** | **30** | **39** | **20** | **10** | **427** | **5** | **22** | **9** | **1137** | **129** |

**Figure 10. Injury Severity for Each Tactical Option: Subjects**




## Tactical Option Injury Severity: Subjects

Figure 10 illustrates the severity of injuries caused by each tactical option. Minor injuries required no treatment or self treatment only; moderate injuries required medical treatment but not hospitalisation, and serious injuries required hospitalisation. Everyone who is subject to TASER discharge undergoes a medical check.

TASER had one of the lowest injury rates, but when injuries did occur they were more likely to be moderate or severe, rather than minor (these injuries often result from a fall following TASER use, rather than being directly caused by the TASER). In contrast, Empty Hand tactics caused the most injuries, but injuries were more likely to be minor. OC Spray balanced the best of both outcomes: OC Spray had a low injury rate, and when injuries occurred, they were most likely to be minor. These findings are consistent with previous years.

Police firearms caused injuries at ten TOR events (<1% of all injuries), but these injuries were by far the most severe, with three serious injuries requiring hospital treatment and seven fatal injuries. Note that because a TOR event is about the tactical options used by one officer against one individual—rather than the incident as a whole—in some cases a subject injury is recorded multiple times across multiple TOR events: although there were seven fatal injuries, these fatalities relate to three subjects. For instance, four TOR events relate to one subject at one incident. Four police officers used a tactical option at the incident, meaning there were multiple TOR events, but in reality there was one fatality not four.

This data gives a deeper understanding of the risk from the different tactical options, emphasising that we cannot rely on injury frequency alone to inform decisions intended to reduce harm.

## Staff Injury Frequency

In total, staff sustained 712 injuries, at 618 TOR events (8% of TOR events). On average, in one out of every 12 TOR events, a staff member was injured, identical to the 2022 rate. In the custody environment, the rate was even higher, with a staff member injured in one out of every 10 TOR events.

Injured staff sustained between one and six injuries, with most staff reporting one injury (*n* = 484), two injuries (*n* = 76), or three injuries (*n* = 15). As with subject injuries, staff injuries are counted more than once when the officer's Tactical Options Report relates to more than one TOR event (i.e. multiple TOR subjects).

Most staff injuries were caused by actions of the subject (71%). The remaining injuries were attributed either to the officer's own actions (19%), actions of other police staff (3%) or other causes (7%).

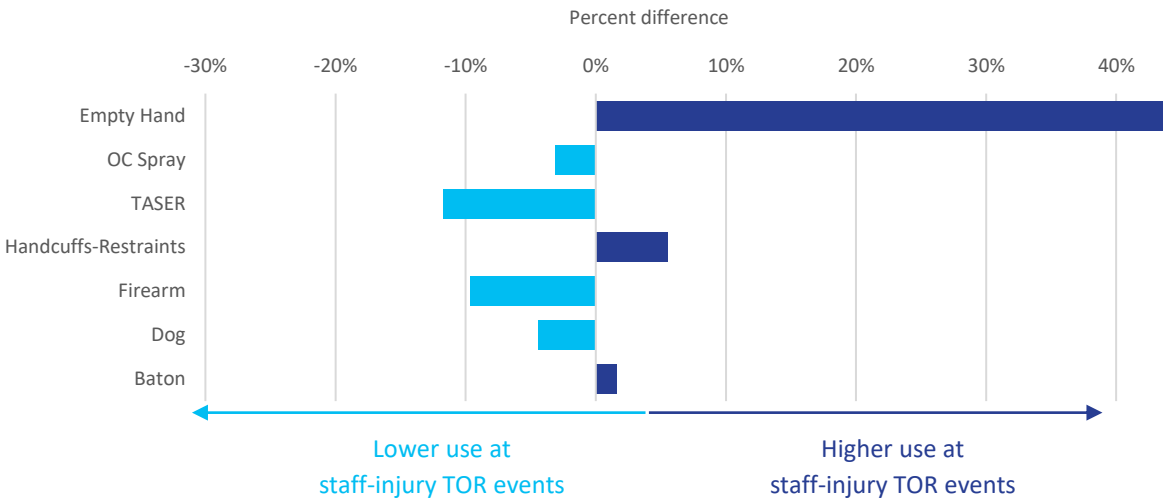
Records of staff injuries are not directly attributed to specific tactical options. However, by comparing the tactical options used during TOR events where staff were injured (staff-injury TOR events) against those where staff were not injured (non-injury TOR events), we can get an idea about the possible risks to staff. To make this comparison, the usage rate[15] of each tactical option was calculated for both staff-injury and non-injury TOR events. Next the usage rate for non-injury TOR events was subtracted from the usage rate for staff-injury TOR events. Figure 11 illustrates the resulting difference for each tactical option. A difference of zero indicates that the tactic was used equally often during staff-injury and non-injury TOR events. **More positive differences** indicate that the tactic was used more during staff-injury TOR events than non-injury TOR events, and **more negative differences** show the opposite.

In the vast majority of staff-injury TOR events, the staff member had used Empty Hand tactics (n = 492, 80%), and this was over double the rate of Empty Hand tactics in TOR events where no staff injury occurred (36%). This finding is consistent with previous years. Although we do not know whether Empty Hand tactics directly caused these injuries, these figures suggest that TOR events where Empty Hand tactics are used are a higher risk for staff injuries—either because of the tactic itself, or because of other features that are also likely to occur in these events (for example, staff being in close proximity to the subject). Handcuffs-Restraints were also used more often in staff-injury TOR events (15%) compared to non-injury TOR events (9%). In contrast, TASER, Firearm, and Dogs—which can all be deployed from a distance—were used less often in staff-injury TOR events compared to non-injury TOR events. OC Spray was used slightly less often in staff injury TOR events, although the difference was only small (25% vs 29%). There were no differences observed in use of Sponge Round or Other tactics at staff-injury and non-injury TOR events (both <1%).



[15] The percentage of TOR events where a given tactic was used.

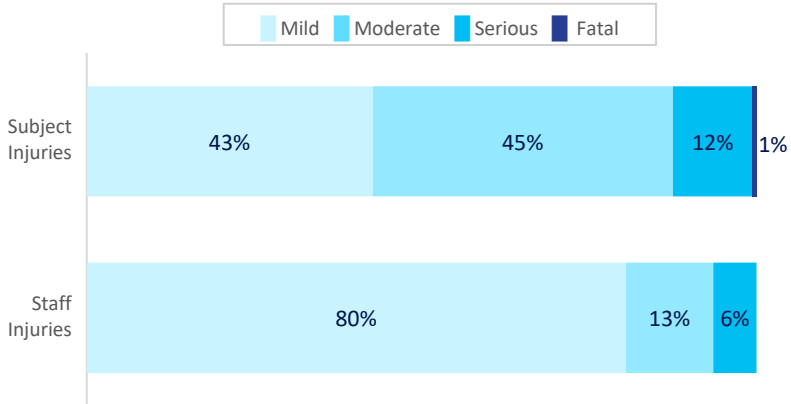
**Figure 11. Differences in Tactical Option Usage Rates in TOR Events where Staff Were and Were Not Injured**




## Injury Severity: Staff and Subjects

Figure 12 displays the proportion of injuries that occurred at each of four levels of severity. Minor injuries required no treatment or self treatment only; moderate injuries required medical treatment but not hospitalisation, and serious injuries required hospitalisation. Most injuries occurred at lower levels of severity, with proportionally fewer injuries occurring as injury severity increased. This pattern was most apparent for staff, with only a small proportion of staff injuries at the higher levels of injury severity. Subjects had an almost equivalent rate of moderate as mild injuries. These patterns are consistent with previous years.

**Figure 12. Severity of Staff and Subject Injuries**



*Our Business*

# *Policing by Consent - To Have the Trust and Confidence of All*

Complaints about NZ Police provide an indicator of public trust and confidence, and of whether NZ Police is delivering the services that New Zealanders expect and deserve. The more that the public trust Police to treat them and others with fairness and respect, and the more that the service received meets people's expectations, the less they should feel the need to complain about their interactions with NZ Police. Conversely, a breakdown in trust or disparities between people's expectations and experiences should lead to complaints.[16]

**Table 10. Complaint Frequency and Rate for Each Tactical Option**

| Tactic | Total Complaints | Percent of all Force Complaints | Tactic Uses per 1 Complaint (on average) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Empty Hand | 404 | 75% | 8 to 1 |
| OC Spray | 38 | 7% | 58 to 1 |
| TASER | 21 | 4% | 94 to 1 |
| Handcuffs-Restraints | 42 | 8% | 20 to 1 |
| Firearm | 12 | 2% | 61 to 1 |
| Dog | 16 | 3% | 29 to 1 |
| Baton | 1 | <1% | 48 to 1 |
| Sponge Round | 1 | <1% | 45 to 1 |
| Other tactic | 2 | <1% | 32 to 1 |
| **Overall** | **537** | **100%** | **18 to 1** |

## Tactical Option Complaint Rates

In total, there were 537 complaints made about tactical option use, down from 599 in 2022 (Table 10). The rate of complaints also decreased from 1 for every 15 TOR events in 2022, to 1 for every 18 TOR events in 2023.

Consistent with previous years, Empty Hand tactics accounted for the vast majority of force complaints (75%). Empty Hand tactics also had the highest complaint rate, with one complaint received for every 8 usages (on average). At the other end of the scale, TASER had the lowest complaint rate, with only one complaint for every 94 uses; OC Spray fell partway between these two extremes.

The IPCA is notified of all firearms discharges that cause an injury or fatality, regardless of whether there is a complaint.

Table 11 displays the number of force complaints received in each Policing District. As shown on the table, on average, one complaint was received for every 14 TOR events that occurred.

[16] Note that having a robust complaints process where people trust that their complaints will be taken seriously and addressed may also encourage a higher level of complaint reporting.

## Table 11. Complaint Distribution by District

| District | Complaints | Percentage of All Complaints | TOR events per complaint (average) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northland | 18 | 3% | 15 to 1 |
| Waitematā | 44 | 8% | 13 to 1 |
| Auckland City | 47 | 9% | 15 to 1 |
| Counties Manukau | 63 | 12% | 14 to 1 |
| Waikato | 41 | 8% | 15 to 1 |
| Bay of Plenty | 46 | 9% | 18 to 1 |
| Eastern | 53 | 10% | 13 to 1 |
| Central | 36 | 7% | 17 to 1 |
| Wellington | 57 | 11% | 14 to 1 |
| Tasman | 15 | 3% | 25 to 1 |
| Canterbury | 74 | 14% | 13 to 1 |
| Southern | 36 | 7% | 11 to 1 |
| **National** | **537** | **100%** | **14 to 1** |

Complaints upheld provide a clear indicator of whether NZ Police are doing all they can to earn the trust and confidence of all, and to deliver the services that New Zealanders expect and deserve. To the extent that complaints are upheld, NZ Police is falling short.

**Table 12. Complaint Outcomes for each Tactical Option**

| Tactic | Upheld | Ongoing | Not Upheld | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Empty Hand | 2 | 64 | 338 | 404 |
| OC Spray | 2 | 4 | 32 | 38 |
| TASER | | 2 | 19 | 21 |
| Handcuffs-Restraints | 1 | 3 | 38 | 42 |
| Firearm | | | 12 | 12 |
| Dog | | 3 | 13 | 16 |
| Baton | | | 1 | 1 |
| Sponge Round | | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Other | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| **Overall** | **5** | **78** | **454** | **537** |


## Complaint Outcomes

Table 12 shows the outcomes of complaint investigations for each tactical option. At the time of data extraction, 85% of complaints investigations were complete, with 1% of these complaints upheld. Investigations for the remaining 15% were still ongoing. Upheld refers to any finding that has some form of disciplinary or corrective action taken, or a change to NZ Police policy and procedure. Not Upheld refers to all other findings such as complaints that were not upheld, conciliated, or withdrawn.

# *Focus on Subject Behaviour*

Police use of force is primarily a response to a person's behaviour in an immediate situation, and whether their behaviour puts themself or anyone else at risk of harm. In addition, some behavioural choices—such as being armed with a weapon, or affiliated with a gang—are of particular interest in understanding Police use of force, as well as risks to staff and members of the public.

## Perceived Cumulative Assessment (PCA)

The PCA (see Figure 1, p.10) refers to an officer's subjective assessment, and continuous reassessment, of an incident, based on information known about the situation and the subject's behaviour. The PCA may increase and/or decrease more than once during an incident. As such, police officers must continually reassess their PCA to ensure they choose the most reasonable response, including—if required—the most appropriate tactical option for the circumstances.

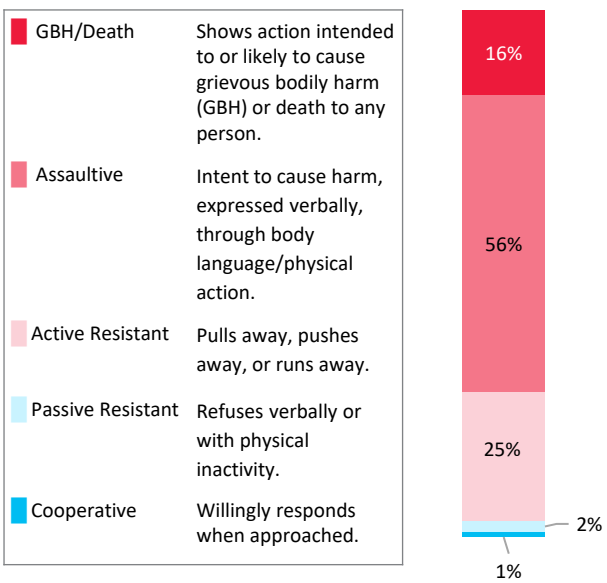
Figure 13 displays the proportion of TOR events at each level of PCA.[17] As the figure illustrates, most use of force occurs when officer's PCA reaches Assaultive. In total, 97% of TOR events involved a PCA of Active Resistant or higher.

The small proportion of TOR events that occurred at lower levels of PCA were typically due to police approaching high risk and/or armed offenders. For example, following reports of someone pointing a firearm out of a vehicle, officers may conduct an armed vehicle stop; the officers in this case may present firearms at the subjects as they exit the vehicle, but the subjects may be cooperative in doing so. It appears that in these TOR events, staff may have reported their PCA at the time of the subject's response, rather than at the time of their decision to use a tactical option. The use of a tactical option in these circumstances may also prevent a subject's behaviour from escalating to a higher level of PCA.

## Observed Behaviours

Table 13 displays the subject behaviours that staff observed. As the data illustrates, in most TOR events, subjects were aggressive, obstructive and verbally abusive. In many TOR events, subjects were threatening and/or assaultive towards police and/or non-police.

### Figure 13. Percent of TOR Events by Officer's Perceived Cumulative Assessment[18]




### Table 13. Subject Behaviours at TOR Events

| Observed Behaviour | TOR events | Percent TOR events |
|---|---|---|
| Aggressive | 5456 | 71% |
| Verbally abusive | 4298 | 56% |
| Obstructive | 5343 | 69% |
| Evading police | 2934 | 38% |
| Threaten non-police | 1521 | 20% |
| Threaten police | 2704 | 35% |
| Threatening self-harm | 501 | 6% |
| Assault non-police | 1395 | 18% |
| Assault police | 2178 | 28% |
| Spit blood/saliva at police | 640 | 8% |
| Self-harming | 499 | 6% |

[17] FSI TORs are completed by a supervisor and do not capture information about the officer's PCA at the time of the event; these 13 TOR events are excluded from this analysis.

[18] Officers report their PCA for each tactic use; Figure 13 shows the highest PCA reported per TOR Event

# *Subject Behaviour: Weapons*

**Table 14. TOR Events with Armed Subjects by Weapon Type**[19]

| Weapon Type | TOR Events | Percent of Subject-Armed TOR Events | Percent of All TOR Events |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cutting/stabbing weapon | 644 | 49% | 8% |
| Bludgeoning/hitting weapon | 390 | 30% | 5% |
| Firearm | 126 | 10% | 2% |
| Vehicle as weapon | 81 | 6% | 1% |
| Throwing weapon | 71 | 5% | 1% |
| Other shooting weapon | 67 | 5% | 1% |
| Flammable weapon | 18 | 1% | <1% |
| Animal as weapon | 16 | 1% | <1% |
| Restraint/constriction weapon | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| **TOTAL** | **1316** | **100%** | **17%** |


## Subject Weapon Types

Whether a TOR event results in injuries or other harm depends in part on the unique characteristics of the situation and people involved. One important factor is whether a subject is armed and the type of weapon. Officers must respond appropriately to this elevated risk, minimising harm by selecting the safest and most effective tactical option for the circumstances, and reducing the risk of injuries to both members of the public and themselves.

Table 14 shows that subjects were most likely to be armed with cutting/stabbing weapons, followed by bludgeoning/hitting weapons.

[19] Some subjects were armed with more than one type of weapon, so percentages sum to more than 100%.

# *Subject Behaviour: Alcohol and Drug Intoxication*

## Alcohol and Drug Intoxication

One very common feature of TOR events is that subjects are often under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Alcohol and/or drug intoxication can affect people's thinking, decision-making and behaviour, comprising an additional risk to police staff, as well as a vulnerability for the people involved.

Alcohol intoxication was recorded as a relevant factor at 36% of TOR events, and drug intoxication at 17% (Table 15). In 522 TOR events (7%) both of factors were identified as relevant. In total, there were 3,528 TOR events (46%) where either one or both factors were recorded as relevant. These proportions are very similar to 2022.


**Table 15. TOR Subjects Exhibiting Alcohol and Drug Intoxication by District**

| District | Alcohol intoxication | Percent Alcohol Intoxication | Drug intoxication | Percent Drug Intoxication | Total TOR events |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northland | 109 | 40% | 56 | 21% | 270 |
| Waitematā | 169 | 29% | 91 | 16% | 586 |
| Auckland City | 247 | 36% | 144 | 21% | 683 |
| Counties Manukau | 266 | 29% | 126 | 14% | 909 |
| Waikato | 193 | 31% | 109 | 18% | 613 |
| Bay of Plenty | 264 | 31% | 132 | 16% | 844 |
| Eastern | 239 | 36% | 90 | 13% | 669 |
| Central | 213 | 34% | 122 | 19% | 628 |
| Wellington | 306 | 39% | 98 | 12% | 789 |
| Tasman | 150 | 40% | 61 | 16% | 372 |
| Canterbury | 418 | 43% | 200 | 21% | 969 |
| Southern | 175 | 45% | 72 | 19% | 387 |
| **National** | **2749** | **36%** | **1301** | **17%** | **7719** |

# *Subject Behaviour: Gang Membership*

Gang members make up a very small proportion of the national population (0.2%), but accounted for 9% of TOR events in 2023. In total, 696 TOR events involved a subject who was either a patched gang member or a gang prospect, meaning gang members/prospects accounted for more than 45 times more TOR events than expected based on population numbers. Despite the much higher rate of TOR events, the features of the TOR events were largely similar for gang and non-gang members.

Gang members were slightly more likely than non-gang members to be armed at TOR events (Table 16A). For the most part, the distribution of weapon types was similar for the two groups, however gang subjects were much more likely to be armed with firearms than non-gang subjects.

The pattern of tactical option use was broadly similar for gang and non-gang subjects, however there were some noticeable differences with specific tactical options. As shown in Table 16B, police were less likely to use Empty Hand tactics, but more likely to use Firearm and TASER in TOR events with gang subjects compared to TOR events with non-gang subjects. These findings are consistent with 2022.

Behaviours observed were also similar across the two groups (Table 16C). Gang members had slightly lower rates of several behaviours including threatening non-police, assaulting police and non-police, and verbal abuse. The only behaviour reported at a higher rate for gang members was evading police. However, gang members were no more likely to actually escape from police than non-gang members (2% vs. 3% respectively).

## Tables 16A–16C . TOR Event Details for Gang and Non-Gang Subjects

***Table 16A. Armed Subjects' Weapon types***

| Weapon type | Gang | Non-Gang |
|---|---|---|
| Cutting/stabbing weapon | 48% | 49% |
| Bludgeoning weapon | 32% | 29% |
| Firearm | 25% | 8% |
| Throwing weapon | 7% | 6% |
| Vehicle | 0% | 6% |
| Other shooting weapon | 4% | 5% |
| **Total Subjects Armed** | **20%** | **17%** |

***Table 16B. Tactics used***

| Tactic | Gang | Non-Gang |
|---|---|---|
| Empty Hand | 30% | 40% |
| OC Spray | 24% | 29% |
| TASER | 32% | 25% |
| Handcuffs-Restraints | 8% | 10% |
| Firearm | 17% | 9% |
| Dog | 9% | 6% |

***Table 16C. Subject Behaviours***

| Observed Behaviour | Gang | Non-Gang |
|---|---|---|
| Aggressive | 71% | 71% |
| Verbally abusive | 49% | 56% |
| Obstructive | 64% | 70% |
| Evading police | 48% | 37% |
| Threaten non-police | 15% | 20% |
| Threaten police | 34% | 35% |
| Threatening self-harm | 4% | 7% |
| Assault non-police | 14% | 18% |
| Assault police | 23% | 29% |
| Spit blood/saliva at police | 5% | 9% |
| Self-harming | 4% | 7% |

# *Focus on Personal Factors*

Complex interactions between systemic, social, cultural, and behavioural factors drive the overrepresentation of particular groups in the criminal justice system and the associated overrepresentation of these groups in use of force events. This section examines some of the specific subject factors associated with higher rates of use of force, and where possible identifies opportunities for further consideration and potential improvements.

When taking the Constables' Oath, police officers pledge:

> *"I, [name], swear that I will faithfully and diligently serve His Majesty Charles III King of New Zealand, his heirs and successors, without favour or affection, malice or ill-will. While a constable I will, to the best of my power, keep the peace and prevent offences against the peace, and will, to the best of my skill and knowledge, perform all the duties of the office of constable according to law. So help me God."*

Committing to "*…faithfully and diligently serve… without favour or affection…*," is a commitment to treat all people fairly, without prejudice or discrimination.

The primary determining factor in an officer's decision to use force should always be the subject's behaviour: force should only be used only in response to behaviour that is resistant, assaultive, or that is intended or likely to cause serious harm. There is no place for any police use of force in any other circumstances in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Yet, some groups have a disproportionately high level of contact with the criminal justice system, and are involved in a disproportionately high proportion of TOR events. Recent international discourse highlights that some groups experience disproportionately more interactions with police (see for example Minhas & Walsh, 2021); as a result, these people also have more opportunities for an interaction to result in a use of force. If people believe they are being unfairly targeted by Police, the associated frustration may inflame any interactions they have with police officers, potentially increasing the chance of behaviour that will lead to use of force. To fully understand any biases in use of force, we must consider not only the specific interaction where force has occurred, but also what happened before that interaction and what led to the interaction occurring.

There has also been growing recognition that some people may be especially vulnerable, and this vulnerability may exacerbate the risks of using force against them. Police policy requires that—when safe and practical to do so— staff must attempt to seek information to ascertain whether a person may be especially vulnerable to the use of force, including consideration of factors such as their age, size, and mental health, among other factors.

The following section includes consideration of various personal factors that are associated with use of force.

# *Personal Factors: Mental Health*

Police are often first responders to events involving mental distress including when someone is threatening or attempting suicide. These events present unique challenges and—as with any other type of event—police officers must tailor their response to the specific personal and situational factors to keep people safe.

## 1M and 1X Events [20]

The proportion of TOR events that occurred at Mental Health (1M) and Threaten/Attempt Suicide (1X) events was identical to 2022 (5%). Most 1M and 1X events that police attended were resolved without any use of force: on average for every 87 1M or 1X events attended, only one involved the use of a tactical option.

## Relevant Factors

Regardless of the overall event type, the reporting officer also makes a subjective assessment of factors relevant to the subject's state, including whether they were experiencing mental health distress, or were suicidal.

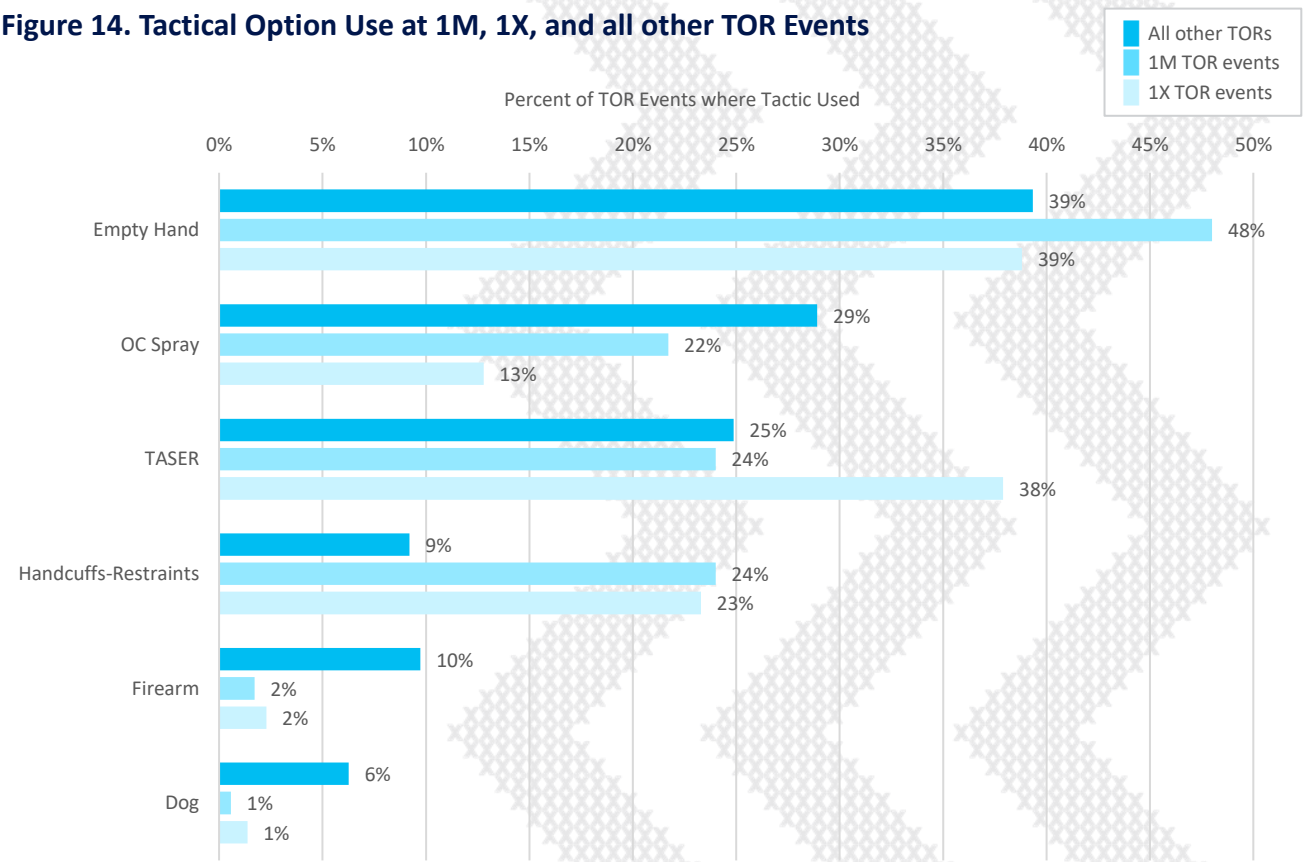
Mental health was reported as a relevant factor in 14% of TOR events, and the subject being suicidal was reported in 7%; these rates are identical to 2022. In 306 TOR events, both factors were identified as relevant. In total, there were 1,320 TOR events where either one or both factors were recorded, equivalent to 17% of TOR events, or approximately one TOR event out of every six.

### Table 17. 1M and 1X Event Types and Mental State at TOR Events

| | Event Type | | Relevant Factors | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | Mental health (1M) | Threaten/ attempt suicide (1X) | Mental health | Suicidal |
| Northland | 2 | 7 | 27 | 11 |
| Waitematā | 20 | 13 | 102 | 37 |
| Auckland City | 14 | 10 | 82 | 26 |
| Counties Manukau | 21 | 32 | 113 | 63 |
| Waikato | 16 | 13 | 70 | 34 |
| Bay of Plenty | 9 | 18 | 125 | 43 |
| Eastern | 26 | 15 | 98 | 39 |
| Central | 15 | 16 | 94 | 43 |
| Wellington | 18 | 28 | 119 | 58 |
| Tasman | 10 | 16 | 70 | 36 |
| Canterbury | 13 | 36 | 123 | 95 |
| Southern | 11 | 15 | 76 | 42 |
| **National** | **175** | **219** | **1099** | **527** |

[20] The selection of 1M Mental Health and 1X Threaten/attempt suicide event types, or Mental Health or Suicidal relevant factors, does not constitute a formal diagnosis.

## Figure 14. Tactical Option Use at 1M, 1X, and all other TOR Events




### Tactical Option Use at 1M and 1X TOR Events

Figure 14 shows the rate of tactical option use at 1M, 1X and all other TOR events. Although usage rates were broadly similar for each tactical option across the groups, some key differences are apparent. Empty Hand tactics were used more frequently at 1M TOR events. OC Spray, Dogs, and Firearms were used less frequently at both 1M and 1X events compared to other TOR events.

TASER was more likely to be used at 1X events than either 1M or other TOR events. This difference is likely to be due to the high proportion of subjects who were armed with cutting/stabbing weapons at 1X TOR events: subjects were armed with cutting/stabbing weapons at 37% of 1X TOR events, compared to 15% of 1M TOR events and 7% of other TOR events. The rate of TASER use was very high in these situations, with TASER used in 71% of 1X TOR events where the subject was armed with a cutting/stabbing weapon, illustrating that police use of tactical options occurs in response to subject behaviour.

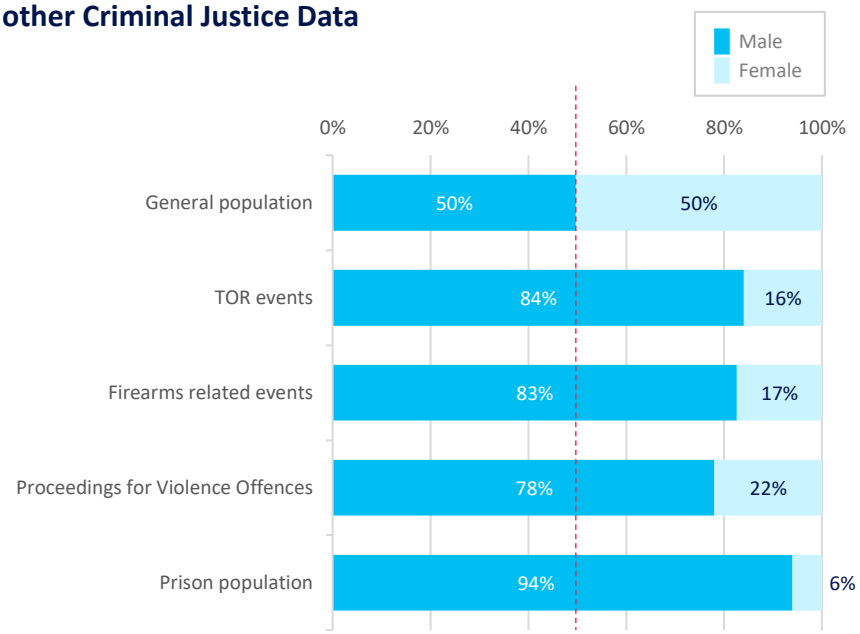
Another clear point of difference was in the use of Handcuffs-Restraints, which were used more frequently at 1M and 1X TOR events compared to other TOR events, a finding that is consistent over time. Many of the restraint options available are specifically intended to prevent self-harm (e.g. restraint chairs), explaining the high usage rate in 1M and especially 1X TOR events.

Baton, Sponge Round and Other tactic usage rates were consistently low across groups (2% or less) so are not included in the figure.

# *Focus on Personal Factors: Gender*


Males were the most highly represented group in TOR events: males accounted for 84% of TOR events in 2023, yet made up only 50% of the general population[21] (see Figure 15). In other words, males were subjects of TOR events 34% more often than we would expect based only on population numbers. The number of male TOR subjects in 2023 is equivalent to 0.25% of the male population, compared with female subjects equivalent to 0.05% of the female population, meaning that TOR subjects are approximately 5 times more likely to be male than female. This overrepresentation is consistent with other crime statistics. For instance, data from NZ Police's *Gun Safe* database shows that males are overrepresented at firearms events, making up 83% of subjects at firearms events, an overrepresentation of 33% compared to population numbers. Males also accounted for 77% of all offender proceedings in 2023, including 78% of proceedings for violence offences[22], consistent with the point that police use of force is primarily a response to violent behaviour. Finally, according to the Department of Corrections[23], on 31 December 2023, 94% of the prison population were male—a 44% higher representation of males than in the general population. Although the rates vary across these measures, taken together the measures consistently show that males are over-represented in the criminal justice system.

**Figure 15. TOR Subject Gender compared to NZ Population and other Criminal Justice Data**




[21] From *Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa*; see p.60 for full reference.
[22] Based on ANZSOC Divisions: *Acts Intended to Cause Injury*, and *Homicide and Related Offences*.
[23] From *Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections*; see p.60 for full reference.

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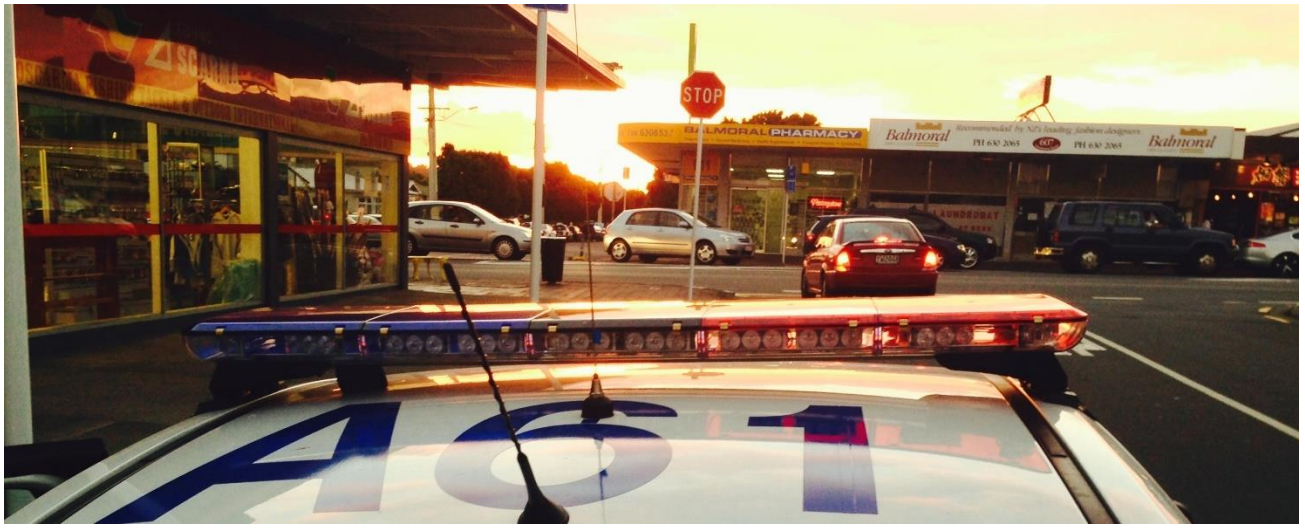
# *Focus on Personal Factors: Age*

As shown in Figure 16, subjects aged 26 – 35 years accounted for the largest proportion of TOR events (33%). In total, 75% of TOR events involved subjects aged 18 – 45 years old. This number is consistent with offender proceedings; people aged 18 – 45 years accounted for 72% of all offender proceedings in 2023.

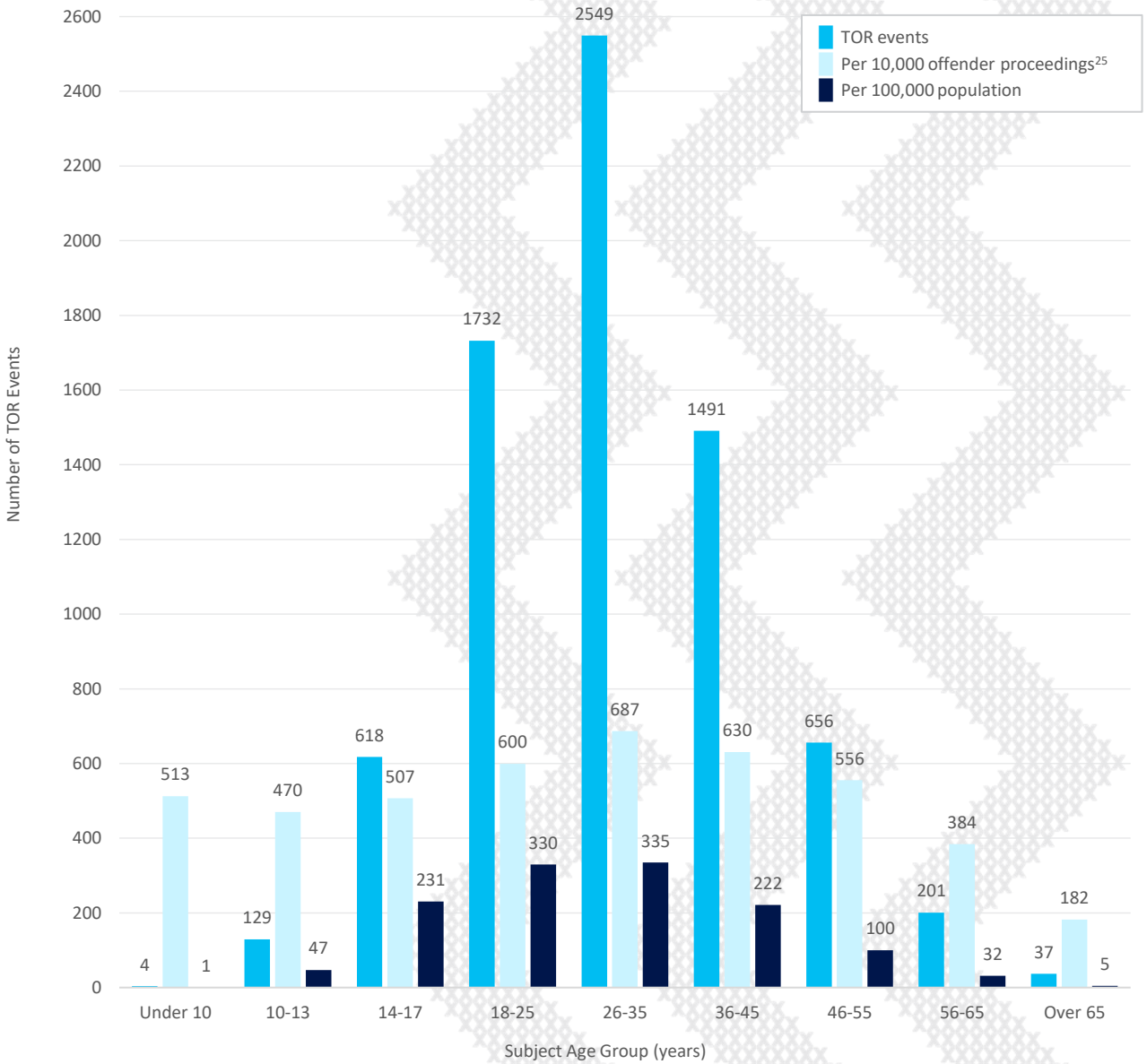
Figure 16 illustrates the distribution of TOR events across subject age groups. Note that in order to differentiate adult and youth populations, the age groups on the left of the figure capture smaller population groups, which obscures the asymmetric pattern of the data. The distribution shows a sharp increase from adolescence and early twenties, peaking in the late twenties to early thirties, before gradually declining across the older age groups. The pattern is more symmetrical when examining TOR events relative to offender proceedings and relative to population numbers, which peak in the 26-35 year age group, and decrease gradually on either side towards the youngest and oldest groups.

Of interest, the asymmetric pattern of TOR events also parallels the age-crime curve—a widely observed criminological phenomenon in which crime prevalence typically increases sharply during adolescence and the early 20s, and then gradually declines during older ages (see De Apodaca, Csik, Odell, O'Brien, Morris & Thorne, 2014; Loeber & Farrington, 2014). The broad pattern of the age-crime curve is widely consistent, although the specific peak and shape of the curve vary based on offender and offence characteristics. The increase and subsequent decrease in crime are likely to be driven by both biological factors (e.g. brain maturation, physical capability) and social factors, such as the weakening and the re-emergence of social bonds as people progress though adolescence to adulthood and form meaningful social connections to work and family (for a detailed review, see Ulmer & Steffensmeier, 2014).

Why would TOR events be distributed in the same pattern as the age-crime curve? There are at least two reasons. First, the same factors associated with increases and decreases in deviant behaviour over the life-span may also be associated with increases and decreases in the types of behaviour that leads to police using force (e.g. resistant or assaultive behaviour). Second, police work focuses on preventing crime and apprehending offenders; given that crime is more concentrated in younger age groups (as illustrated by the age-crime curve), these people may be involved in more interactions with police, increasing the opportunities to be involved in a TOR event.



## Figure 16. TOR Events by Subject Age Group[24]




[24] Based only on the 7417 TOR events where the subject's age was known.
[25] There were 78 offender proceedings in the Under 10 age group; as such, the calculation 513 per 10,000 offender proceedings overrepresents the reality of how many there actually were in this group.

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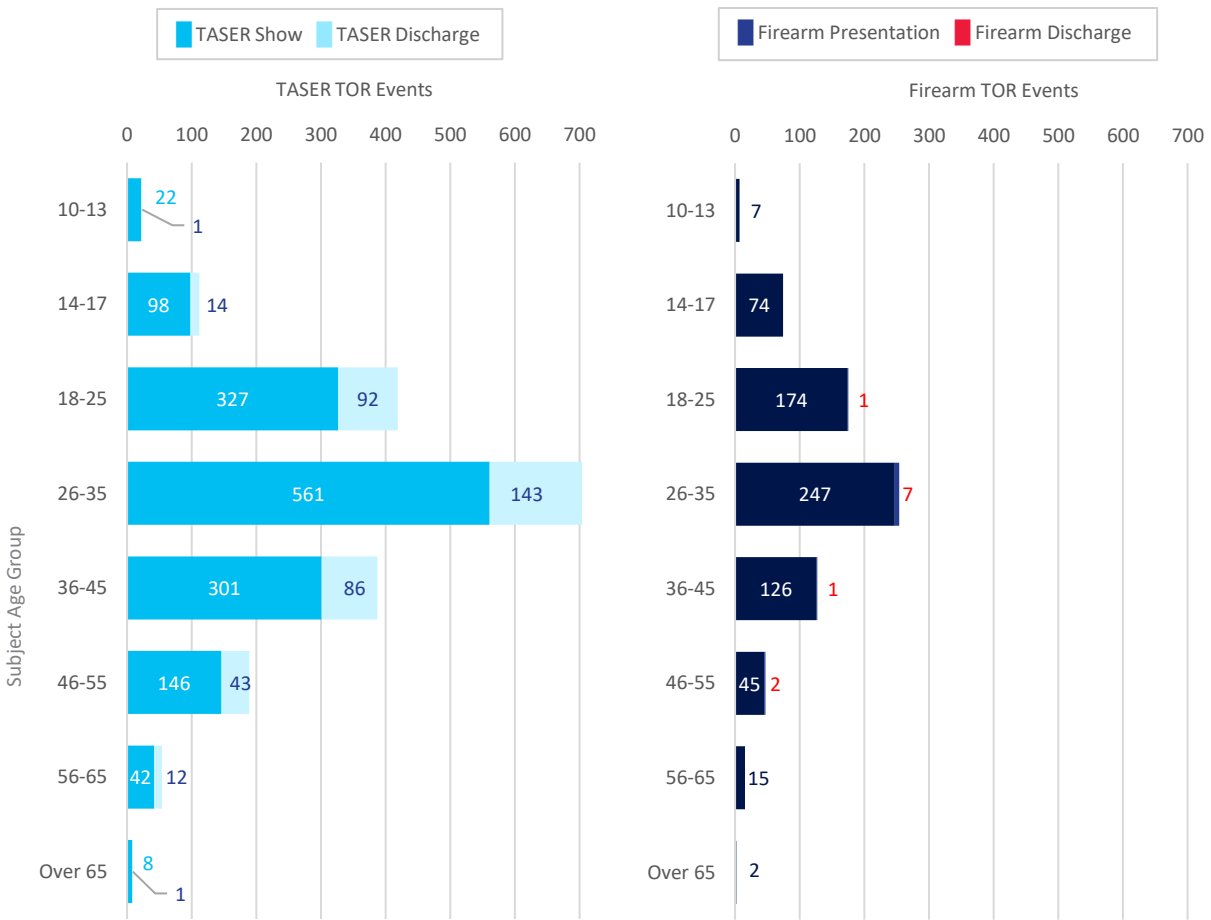
## TASER and Firearm Use by Subject Age Group

Examination of TASER shows and discharges, and firearm presentations and discharges by subject age-group shows the same asymmetric pattern as TOR events, peaking during the late- twenties to early thirties, then declining in older age groups. As illustrated in Figure 17, the largest proportion of TASER and firearm use was against subjects aged 26 – 35 years, and this rate gradually declined in older age groups.

The Appendix provides a short summary of each of the TOR events with the youngest and oldest people who were subject to a TASER show or TASER discharge, or a firearm presentation. These TOR events shared some common features despite the age differences: subjects were typically armed with weapons, including firearms and cutting/stabbing weapons. In addition, many of these subjects either physically assaulted police staff or threatened to do so.

### Figure 17. Highest Mode of TASER and Firearm Deployment by Subject Age Group



# *Focus on Personal Factors: Ethnicity*

Māori were overrepresented in use of force events, especially in relation to population numbers, with Māori subjects accounting for half of all TOR events. NZ Police needs to continue working with Māori communities—through strategies such as *Te Huringa o Te Tai*—to improve criminal justice outcomes for Māori. The following pages examine ethnicity in isolation—separate from other relevant personal factors. However later pages show that the observed differences in ethnicity are closely associated with differences in age and gender; explanations and solutions that focus on only ethnicity may not be effective in accounting for the observed disparities or in changing outcomes for Māori or other overrepresented groups.

**Table 18. TOR Events by Subject Ethnicity**

| Ethnicity[26] | TOR Events | Per 10, 000 Offender Proceedings | Per 100, 000 Population |
|---|---|---|---|
| Māori | 3881 | 704 | 428 |
| Pacific peoples | 788 | 793 | 172 |
| Asian | 105 | 270 | 11 |
| MELAA | 76 | 547 | 77 |
| European | 2221 | 575 | 62 |
| Other/Unknown | 648 | 439 | - |
| **TOTAL** | **7719** | **624** | **148** |

## TOR Events

TOR subjects were more likely to be Māori than any other ethnicity (Table 18). Māori subjects accounted for half of all TOR events (50%). Of note, nearly two-thirds of these TOR events (65%; 2539 of 3881) involved males aged 18 – 45.

Offender proceedings give some context to the high proportion of TOR events: Māori accounted for a high proportion of all offender proceedings in 2023 (45%), including 51% of violence offences.[27] However, TOR events with Māori subjects were still disproportionately high in relation to offender proceedings. Only 17% of the general population identify as Māori, meaning TOR events are especially disproportionate relative to population numbers.

TOR events with Pacific peoples were also disproportionately high in relation to offender proceedings and population, although the latter was less extreme than for Māori.

People who identified as Asian showed the lowest rate of TOR events relative to both offender proceedings and population. Further investigation to better understand why this rate is so much lower may be beneficial. Of note, this group makes up 18% of the general population, a similar proportion to Māori. This group may provide the best ideal and baseline for comparisons across ethnicity groups, especially as the Asian population grows in the future: Stats NZ projects that by 2043, over a quarter of NZ's population will identify as Asian. Any learnings from this group might also be generalised to other groups.

[26] Ethnicity terms and classifications are based on the Statistics New Zealand Statistical Standard for ethnicity (ETHNIC05 v2). To avoid double-counting, each person is represented in only one ethnicity group as per the ethnicity prioritisation order. MELAA refers to Middle Eastern, Latin American and African.
[27] Based on ANZSOC Divisions: *Acts Intended to Cause Injury*, and *Homicide and Related Offences.*

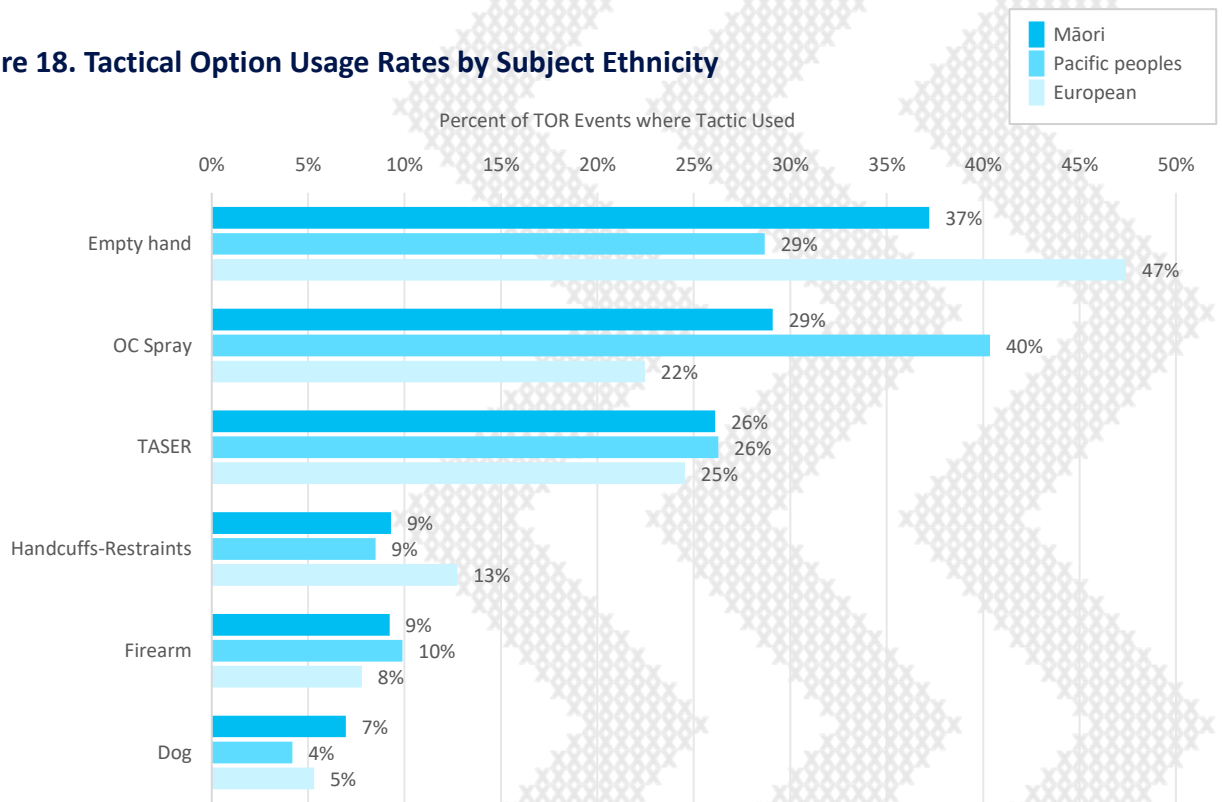
## Tactic Usage Rates

Although tactic usage rates were broadly similar across the three largest ethnic groups—Māori, Pacific peoples, and European—there were several clear differences (Figure 18). Consistent with previous years, TOR events with Māori and Pacific subjects had a lower rate of Empty Hand tactics, and a slightly lower rate of Handcuffs-Restraints use than TOR events with European subjects. In contrast, there was a much higher rate of OC Spray use at TOR events Pacific subjects. It is not readily apparent what might be driving these differences. Factors such as the subjects' build and behaviour, apparent alcohol and drug intoxication, as well as the environmental conditions may contribute. Data from 2021 suggests that TOR events with Māori and Pacific subjects may be more likely to occur in open spaces, which are more appropriate for OC Spray use. In 2021, 67% of TOR events with Māori subjects and 67% of TOR events with Pacific subjects occurred in an outdoors area, compared with 61% of TOR events with European subjects (see 2021 Environment and Response Report).[28]

Consistent with previous years, injury rates were slightly lower for Māori and Pacific subjects compared to European: European subjects sustained injuries at 16% of TOR events, Māori at 14%, and Pacific people at 12%, perhaps as a result of lower use of Empty Hand tactics. Further examination of these differences may help to identify underlying causes and contributing factors, including any factors that may be affecting tactical option deployment decisions.

Baton, Sponge Round and Other tactic usage rates were consistently low across groups (1% or less) so are not included in the figure.

### Figure 18. Tactical Option Usage Rates by Subject Ethnicity




[28] Equivalent analysis is not possible for 2023 TOR data due to a change in the information that is captured. From November 2021, location type data is only recorded for OC Spray and TASER tactics.

## Handcuffs-Restraints: Pain Compliance

Pain compliance techniques are used in association with handcuffs or other restraints to gain compliance of an actively resisting subject to effect an arrest or in situations such as where the person's behaviour puts their own or others' safety at risk. One situation in which pain compliance might be used is when police encounter assaultive behaviour partway through applying handcuffs; it would be unsafe to let go to use another tactical option (e.g. OC Spray, Empty Hand tactics) leaving the subject with one loose cuff that could then be used as a weapon. Instead, police can use pain compliance to gain control of the subject and ensure the handcuffs are fully secured, preventing harm.

As with all tactical options, police use of pain compliance occurs in response to the subject's behaviour, and requires staff to evaluate the situation and behaviour using the Threat-Exposure-Necessity-Response (TENR) model, to ensure that any force used is necessary, proportionate and justified.

As displayed in Table 19, the use of pain compliance is rare, with pain compliance used at only 5% of TOR events in 2023, equivalent to only 0.01% of events that police attended (2,615,856 attended events total).

As Table 19 illustrates, the rate of pain compliance at TOR events with Māori, Pacific and European subjects is very similar with 5% of Māori subjects, 4% of Pacific subjects and 6% of European subjects having pain compliance used against them in 2023. Examining the rate of pain compliance as a proportion of all Handcuffs-Restraints uses shows similar rates across the two largest ethnicity groups, with pain compliance used for 47% of Handcuffs-Restraints uses for both European and Māori TOR subjects. Pacific peoples had pain compliance used in 45% of Handcuffs-Restraints uses at TOR events, but given the relatively lower Handcuffs-Restraints usage for Pacific people, this percentage is not necessarily comparable with the other groups.

**Table 19. Handcuff-Restraints with Pain Compliance by Subject Ethnicity**

| Ethnicity | Handcuff-Restraint Tactic Uses with Pain Compliance (TOR events) | Total Handcuffs-Restraints Tactic Uses | Percent of Handcuffs-Restraints Tactic Uses | Total TOR Events | Percent of TOR Events |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Māori | 183 (175) | 386 | 47% | 3881 | 5% |
| Pacific peoples | 31 (31) | 69 | 45% | 788 | 4% |
| Asian | 5 (5) | 8 | 63% | 105 | 5% |
| MELAA | 4 (4) | 8 | 50% | 76 | 5% |
| European | 151 (142) | 318 | 47% | 2221 | 6% |
| Other/Unknown | 24 (24) | 46 | 52% | 648 | 4% |
| **TOTAL** | **398** (381) | **835** | **48%** | **7719** | **5%** |

**Table 20. TOR Events with TASER Use by Highest Mode of Deployment and Subject Ethnicity**

| Ethnicity | Show | Discharge | Total TASER TOR events | Per 10 000 Offender Proceedings | Per 100 000 Population | Shows per Discharge |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Māori | 831 | 182 | 1013 | 184 | 112 | 5 to 1 |
| Pacific peoples | 155 | 52 | 207 | 208 | 45 | 3 to 1 |
| Asian | 19 | 6 | 25 | 64 | 3 | 3 to 1 |
| MELAA | 23 | 4 | 27 | 194 | 27 | 6 to 1 |
| European | 423 | 122 | 545 | 141 | 15 | 3 to 1 |
| Other/Unknown | 100 | 30 | 130 | 88 | - | 3 to 1 |
| **TOTAL** | **1551** | **396** | **1947** | **157** | **37** | **4 to 1** |

**TASER Deployment**

Over half of all TASER deployments were directed at Māori subjects (Table 20): the vast majority of these subjects (74%) were males aged between 18 and 45 years. Māori subjects had a disproportionately high number of TASER TOR events in relation to offender proceedings and especially in relation to population.

Pacific peoples were also overrepresented in TASER TORs relative to both offender proceedings and to a lesser extent, population numbers. These patterns closely parallel patterns observed for TOR events overall (see page Table 18, p.49). However, the rate of TASER usage was very similar for Māori, Pacific, and European TOR subjects (25% - 26% of TOR events; see Figure 18, p.50). Taken together, these results suggest that the disproportionally high number of TASER TOR events for Māori and Pacific subjects is likely to be due to the overall high numbers of TOR events for these subjects.

Of interest, the TASER show-to-discharge ratio—the number of TASER shows for every TASER discharge— was slightly higher for Māori than European and Pacific subjects (Table 20). In other words, when police used a TASER, they were less likely to discharge it when the TOR subject was Māori.

## Firearm Deployment

As shown in Table 21, firearm use at TOR events shows a similar pattern to all TOR events, and TASER TOR events. Relative to population numbers, both Māori and Pacific people had higher rates of police firearm use than European subjects. Of note, the differences in firearms use by subject ethnicity were less evident when examining Firearms TOR events relative to offender proceedings. In other words, Firearms TOR events were more likely to have subjects who were from ethnicity groups with higher rates of offending. As shown on Figure 18 (p.50), the proportion of TOR events where police used firearms was very similar for Māori and European subjects (9% vs. 8% respectively), highlighting that the observed differences (in Table 21) are likely to be due to overall higher numbers of TOR events for Māori subjects, rather than higher use of firearms by police.

One striking similarity across these three different ethnicity groups was the gender and age of subjects: In 69% of TOR Firearms events with Māori subjects, 74% of TOR Firearms events with Pacific subjects, and 70% of TORs Firearms events with European subjects, the subjects were males aged 18 – 45 years old.

As noted earlier, the eleven TOR events with a firearm discharge relate to seven incidents. Two of these incidents involved multiple officers discharging firearms, resulting in multiple TOR events at each incident. Because firearm discharge numbers were so small, calculations of the presentation to discharge ratio would not be a fair representation of the data, so this comparison has not been included.

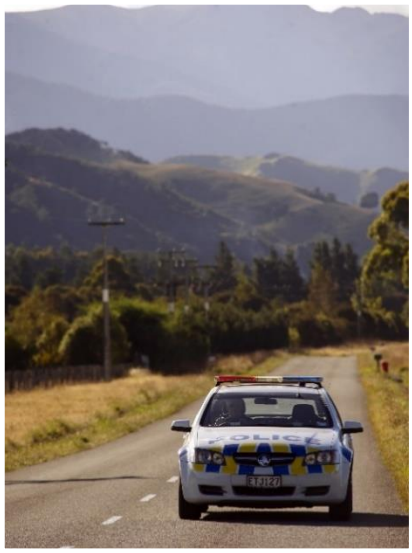
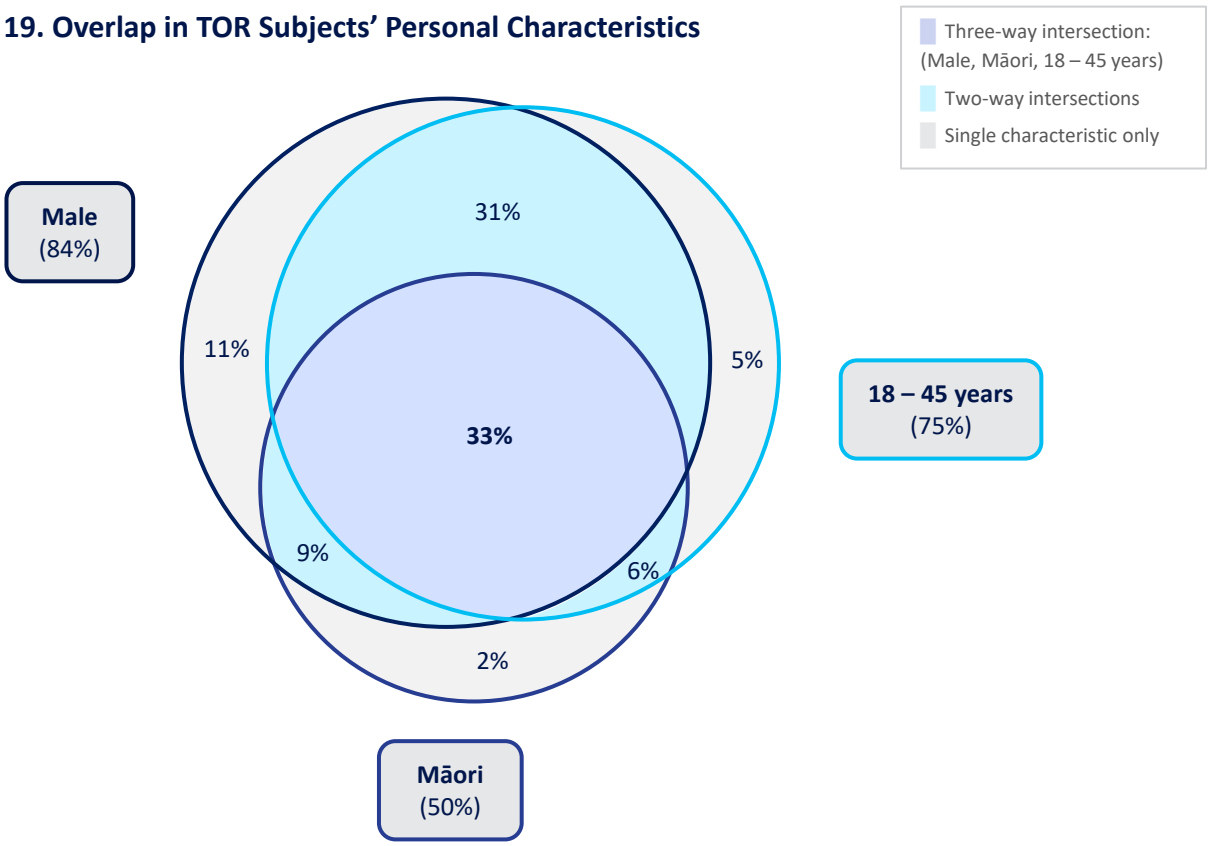


**Table 21. TOR Events with Firearm Use by Highest Mode of Deployment and Subject Ethnicity**

| Ethnicity | Presentation | Discharge | Total Firearm TOR events | Per 10 000 Offender Proceedings | Per 100 000 Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Māori | 354 | 4 | 358 | 65 | 39 |
| Pacific peoples | 74 | 4 | 78 | 78 | 17 |
| Asian | 9 | - | 9 | 23 | 1 |
| MELAA | 9 | - | 9 | 65 | 9 |
| European | 170 | 3 | 173 | 45 | 5 |
| Other/Unknown | 94 | - | 94 | 64 | - |
| **TOTAL** | **710** | **11** | **721** | **58** | **14** |

# *Personal Factors: Common Characteristics*

**Figure 19. Overlap in TOR Subjects' Personal Characteristics**




## Common Personal Characteristics

As detailed in the previous pages, people who are male, who are aged 18 – 45 years, or who are Māori, are over-represented in TOR events. In fact, these three characteristics are not independent. Figure 19 displays the overlap between these three characteristics, showing how often they co-occur in subjects of TOR events.

In Figure 19, each of the three circles represents one of the three characteristics. The circle sizes represent the percentage of TOR subjects with that characteristic; these percentages are also shown in the box for each characteristic around the edge of the figure. Each circle is separated into four sections. The overlap between all three circles illustrates the percentage of TOR subjects with all three characteristics, and the overlap between each pair of circles shows the percentage of subjects who have both characteristics (but not the third characteristic). Finally, the non-overlapping segments show the percentage of subjects who have that single characteristic, but neither of the other two.

As shown by the three–way intersection in the centre of the overlapping circles, 33% (2539) of all TOR subjects were male, aged between 18 – 45 years, and Māori. These 2539 TOR subjects are equivalent to 1.4% of the male, Māori, 18-45 year old population. In total, 79% of TOR events had subjects with at least two of these three characteristics, as shown by the four blue-toned segments. In 97% of TOR events, subjects had at least one of these three characteristics.



Of interest, being male and being aged 18 – 45 years accounted for the largest proportion of TOR subjects, 64%. Yet these two characteristics have been largely overlooked in public discourse about Police use of force.

The single-characteristic segments in Figure 19 are not to scale (a downside of using this graphical approach) but the percentages themselves are informative. When examining each characteristic independently (excluding the others) none accounted for a high proportion of TOR subjects, emphasising that these characteristics tend to co-occur in subjects of TOR events. Of note, although 50% of TOR subjects were Māori, only 2% of TOR subjects were Māori but neither male nor aged 18 – 45 years. Interventions to help address Māori overrepresentation might do well to also incorporate age and gender given the high level of co-occurrence of these characteristics. Likewise, prevention work focused on males and people aged between 18 – 45 years may have spill over effects contributing to a reduction in Māori overrepresentation.

Further investigation of this overlap using more sophisticated statistical techniques is likely to be informative.

This initial analysis suggests that overrepresentation of Māori in TOR events is linked with the overrepresentation of males and people aged between 18 – 45 years. As such, it is unlikely that the observed disproportionality can be fully understood or remedied without consideration of these factors alongside ethnicity.

Consistent with the large proportion of TOR events involving Māori males aged 18 – 45 years, this cohort is also responsible for a large proportion of offending relative to population numbers: Māori males aged 18 – 45 years make up only 3% of the general population, but account for 24% of all offender proceedings, and 30% of offender proceedings for violence offences.[29]

It is likely there are a multitude of factors that contribute to the overrepresentation of this cohort in use of force events, and it will take substantial research and investigation to disentangle the underlying causes and fully understand the interactions between them.

The current analysis suggests that any research, policies, or strategies, which focus on ethnicity as a standalone factor, independent of other influences, may oversimplify the factors at play and miss crucial information, explanations, and importantly opportunities to remedy the disproportionate representation of this group in TOR events as well as in the broader criminal justice system. These results suggest that ethnicity should not be assumed to be the sole factor driving disproportionate outcomes; deeper thinking is required. Examining ethnicity in isolation, and especially attributing outcomes solely to ethnicity misses the complexity of the underlying causes. In addition, focusing on ethnicity to the exclusion of other relevant factors is a disservice to the cohort most likely to be on the receiving end of a police use of force. Resolving disproportionate representation of Māori in TOR events is unlikely to be achieved without also addressing and resolving the disproportionate representation of males aged 18 – 45. The challenge for NZ Police and the public is to expand and deepen current debate and investigations to ensure that strategies and resolutions are comprehensive and will help improve the future for the people they are intended to help.

[29] Based on ANZSOC Divisions: *Acts Intended to Cause Injury*, and *Homicide and Related Offences.*

# *Focus on Personal Factors: Improving Outcomes*

Police use force to keep people safe and prevent harm, yet every use of force also comes with a risk of harm, both to the subjects and the officers involved. The ideal future would see a reduction in the need for police to use force. At many of the incidents where force is used, Police are called to help (see Table 1, p.15); New Zealanders rightly expect that in these circumstances Police will respond and intervene if required. Reducing the frequency of use of force is at least partly dependent on changing the way people respond to police in these intense and often complex interactions.

At the most basic level, police use force in response to a subject's behaviour. However, NZ Police can also look for opportunities to help change the behaviour that leads to use of force, such as through promoting continuous improvement in officers' interactions with members of the public, and in strategies for successfully de-escalating volatile situations to reduce or avoid the need to use force. It may be that NZ Police tactical communication strategies are less successful in de-escalation for Māori males aged 18 – 45 years old. If so, de-escalation strategies could be adapted and more effectively targeted to better avoid officers needing to use force. There is increasing widespread belief that some groups experience disproportionately more interactions with police (see p.42). NZ Police should examine whether this belief is accurate, and if so, whether the underlying drivers are within NZ Police control. More specifically, can any biases be addressed by changing the way police initiate activities and interactions, or are the drivers due to differences in demand and calls for service? Regardless, if people believe they are being unfairly targeted by Police, the associated frustration may inflame any interactions they have with police, potentially decreasing the chance of successful de-escalation and increasing the chance of behaviour that will lead to use of force.

To fully understand any biases in use of force, we must consider not only the specific interaction where force has occurred, but also what happened before that interaction and what led to the interaction

occurring. It is crucial for NZ Police to continue to build strong community relationships. Doing so should lead to improvements in the way members of the public respond to police, contributing to improved interactions between police and members of the public.

The most striking differences in TOR events appear to be associated with general overrepresentation of some groups in the criminal justice system. This overrepresentation is especially apparent for one specific cohort: Māori males aged between 18 – 45 years old. However, the dominant focus on ethnicity as a driving factor of disproportionate outcomes may be masking the underlying causes that lead to the disproportionate representation of Māori in use of force events. To address and remedy the disproportional representation of Māori in TOR events, it is essential to also acknowledge and address the disproportional representation of males and people aged 18 – 45 years, as these three factors are more likely to occur in combination than in isolation. A broader focus that encompasses all these—and potentially other—factors is likely to contribute to improved outcomes for Māori as well as for non-Māori. The overrepresentation of males and 18 – 45 year olds in both TOR events and offender proceedings highlights a key opportunity for change.

NZ Police must continue to invest in strategies—such as *Te Huringa o Te Tai*—to reduce the overrepresentation of this cohort especially, and of all overrepresented groups.

Another potential opportunity is to examine groups with disproportionately lower uses of force (e.g. Asian ethnicity) to understand how these interactions may be different and whether any of the factors are within NZ Police control and generalisable to other populations.

As we work towards improved police-public interactions, we should see reductions in the overrepresentation of any groups in use of force events, as well as improved trust and confidence in NZ Police.

# Notes

## Operational Capability Insights and Performance (OCIP)

This report was compiled by *Operational Capability Insights and Performance* which is part of the Operational Capability Group at NZ Police National Headquarters. One of OCIP's key roles is to undertake research, analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of NZ Police use of force, to provide accountability and assist evidence-based decision making, in support of police and public safety.

## Tactical Options Reporting (TOR)

A *TOR Event* is the reportable use of one or more tactical options by one officer, against one individual. Multiple TOR events can occur at one incident.

The following deployments of tactical options are reportable: Handcuffs with pain compliance, or without pain compliance when used with another reportable tactical option (but note that these uses do not form part of the analyses reported here; see page 22); other restraints; OC Spray bursts; Empty Hand tactics; Baton use against a person's body; Dog bites or other Dog-related deployment injuries; "Other" tactics (e.g. weapons of opportunity); shows and discharges of a TASER, 40mm Sponge Round, or Firearm (noting the exemptions below).

Members of Armed Offenders Squads (AOS) and Special Tactics Group (STG) are exempt from reporting shows (but not discharges) of TASER, 40mm Sponge Rounds, and Firearms during an AOS or STG deployment.

## Tactical Options Reporting data

Percentages are rounded.

TOR data presents a quantitative overview of the deployment of tactical options. However, it does not provide a nuanced understanding of factors that influence the deployment of tactical options. Further, where the numbers in these reports are small, slight increases or decreases may result in large percentage differences. For these reasons, caution should be exercised when interpreting TOR data, including when comparing TOR data across reporting years or districts.

TOR data for the 2023 calendar year was extracted on 1 March 2024. Reports for 34 TOR events (0.4%) had not completed the two-stage review process at the time of data extraction and were excluded from the analyses.

## Disclaimer

The data reported in this publication is drawn from a dynamic operational database and is subject to change as new information is recorded or updated. The data provided is the most accurate available at the time of data extraction. Data entry errors were corrected where identified. While some data inaccuracies may remain (as with all large administrative databases), New Zealand Police is confident that the data is more than sufficiently accurate to monitor and describe the reported deployment of tactical options by Police.

2023 TOR data extracted prior to 1 March 2024 and provided through the OIA process may not be consistent with the values reported here. TOR reports that completed the two-stage review process after the OIA data was extracted but before 1 March 2024 are included in this dataset but would not have been included in the earlier OIA dataset.

NZ Police makes no warranty, expressed or implied, nor assumes any legal liability or responsibility, for the accuracy, correctness, completeness, or use of, the data or information in this publication. Further, NZ Police shall not be liable for any loss or damage arising directly or indirectly from reliance on the data or information presented in this publication.

# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| Ask-Why-Options-Confirm-Action (AWOCA) | Step-by-step tactical communications process that is part of the Tactical Options Framework and should be used throughout any incident. |
| Attended event | An event recorded in the Communication and Resource Deployment (CARD) system with an assigned arrival time. Attended events data reported throughout this report includes police response to calls for service as well as police generated events where police-public interaction may have occurred, but excludes a small number of event types where police-public interactions were highly unlikely. |
| Communication and Resource Deployment (CARD) | Collection of systems used by New Zealand Police to provide resource deployment, operational communications, and command and control services. |
| Empty Hand tactics | A range of close-quarter skills using arms, hands, legs and/or feet to control or defend against a subject. |
| Mode of deployment | In relation to deployment of TASER, firearm and sponge rounds.<br>At the lowest level of deployment—a show—there is no physical contact with the subject. For firearms and sponge rounds, a "show" is a presentation, drawing and presenting the appointment at the subject as a visual deterrent. For TASER, a "show" may comprise a presentation, laser painting (overlaying the laser sighting system on the subject), or arcing (activating the TASER as a visual/auditory deterrent).<br>The highest mode of deployment for all three tactical options is a discharge; for TASER this involves either discharging probes to connect with the subject or the placing the TASER directly against the subject to apply a contact stun. |
| Offence | A crime that meets a specific legal definition. |
| Offender proceedings | Actions taken by Police against an offender e.g. prosecution. |
| Operational Capability Insights and Performance (OCIP) | Workgroup who produced this report. Part of the Operational Capability group. |
| Operational environment | Public environment in which frontline police officers operate. |
| Perceived Cumulative Assessment (PCA) | Officers' subjective assessment of the threat level at a moment in time. |
| Tactical Database | Database used to report and review incidents in which Police used force. |
| Tactical Options | Appointments/equipment and techniques that officers can use when required to use force on a subject. |
| Tactical Options Framework | Framework used by New Zealand Police to inform decision making around the use of force, which includes TENR, PCA and AWOCA. |
| Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) event | Reportable use of one or more tactical option by one officer against one individual. There may be multiple TOR events related to the same incident. |
| Threat Exposure Necessity Response (TENR) | Decision-making framework to determine the most appropriate response to the immediate circumstances, including whether (and what level of) force is required. |

# Sources

## NZ Police Data Sources

Most data in this report comes from Tactical Options Reports recorded in the Tactical Database. It also includes data from other NZ Police data holdings including the Armed Offender Squad deployment database, Police Professional Conduct database (complaints), Communication and Resource Deployment data (attended events), the Gun Safe database, and Recorded Crime Offender Statistics (offender proceedings).

## External Sources

### *New Zealand Data*

Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa (population data). See National ethnic population projections, by age and sex, 2013(base)-2038 update, available at http://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLECODE7994.

Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections (prison population). See *Prison Facts and Statistics – December 2023*, available at https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/statistics/quarterly_prison_statistics/prison_facts_and_statistics_-_december_2023

### *International Use of Force*

Australian Federal Police. See *ACT Policing Annual Report 2022-23*, available at https://www.police.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/Reports/actp-ar-2022-2023.pdf

Chicago Police Department. See *Use of Force Dashboard*, available at https://home.chicagopolice.org/statistics-data/data-dashboards/use-of-force-dashboard/#:~:text=The%20dashboard%20is%20a%20central,to%20facilitate%20transparency%20and%20accountability

Police Service of Northern Ireland. See *Statistics on Police Use of Force*, available at https://www.psni.police.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/official-statistics/statistics-police-use-force

The Washington Post: *Police Shootings Database*, Figure "*How 2024 compares with previous calendar years*," available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/

UK Home Office Official Statistics. See *Police Use of Force Statistics*, England and Wales: April 2022 to March 2023, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-use-of-force-statistics-april-2022-to-march-2023/police-use-of-force-statistics-england-and-wales-april-2022-to-march-2023

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Loeber R., Farrington D.P. (2014) Age-Crime Curve. In: Bruinsma G., Weisburd D. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5690-2_474

Minhas, R. & Walsh, D. (2021). The role of prejudicial stereotypes in the formation of suspicion: An examination of operational procedure sin stop and search practices. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 1 – 13. https://doi.org/10.1177/14613557211016499

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Strote, J., Warner, J., Scales, R. M., & Hickman, M. J. (2021). Prevalence and correlates of spitting on police officers: New risks in the COVID era. *Forensic Science International,* 322 (2021), 110747. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2021.110747

## Contact

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https://forms.police.govt.nz/oiarequest

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# *Appendix*

**Table A1. TOR Events where each Tactical Option was used by District**[30]

| District | Empty Hand | OC Spray | TASER | Handcuffs-Restraints | Firearm | Dog | Baton | Sponge Round | Other Tactic | Total TOR Events |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northland | 101 | 126 | 32 | 18 | 18 | 30 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 270 |
| Waitematā | 230 | 122 | 152 | 76 | 99 | 24 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 586 |
| Auckland City | 217 | 221 | 178 | 51 | 79 | 44 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 683 |
| Counties Manukau | 395 | 194 | 218 | 128 | 88 | 51 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 909 |
| Waikato | 204 | 187 | 162 | 53 | 67 | 57 | 5 | - | 7 | 613 |
| Bay of Plenty | 277 | 244 | 228 | 61 | 91 | 68 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 844 |
| Eastern | 291 | 239 | 136 | 64 | 34 | 33 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 669 |
| Central | 256 | 177 | 164 | 32 | 71 | 26 | 8 | 13 | 4 | 628 |
| Wellington | 282 | 252 | 207 | 92 | 67 | 47 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 789 |
| Tasman | 161 | 93 | 100 | 38 | 40 | 17 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 372 |
| Canterbury | 435 | 223 | 281 | 109 | 44 | 57 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 969 |
| Southern | 201 | 106 | 89 | 45 | 23 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 387 |
| **TOR Events** | **3050** | **2184** | **1947** | **767** | **721** | **463** | **48** | **43** | **63** | **7719** |
| Percent TOR Events | 40% | 28% | 25% | 10% | 9% | 6% | 1% | 1% | 1% | - |
| **Total Uses** | **3432** | **2216** | **1981** | **835** | **729** | **469** | **48** | **45** | **63** | **9818** |

[30] Because officers may use multiple tactical options or the same tactical option multiple times at the same TOR event, the number of TOR events for each tactical option and for each District sums to more than the overall total number of TOR events, and total uses of each tactical option is higher than the total number of TOR events where a given tactical option was used.

## Table A2. TASER TOR Events by Highest Level of Deployment and District

| District | Presentation only | Laser Paint | Arc | Discharge | Total TASER TOR Events | *Unintentional Discharge*[31] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northland | 2 | 20 | 1 | 9 | 32 | |
| Waitematā | 21 | 97 | 3 | 31 | 152 | |
| Auckland City | 14 | 107 | 4 | 53 | 178 | |
| Counties Manukau | 27 | 146 | 2 | 43 | 218 | 1 |
| Waikato | 25 | 107 | 6 | 24 | 162 | |
| Bay of Plenty | 33 | 150 | 7 | 38 | 228 | |
| Eastern | 18 | 78 | 3 | 37 | 136 | |
| Central | 46 | 70 | 1 | 47 | 164 | 1 |
| Wellington | 26 | 144 | 1 | 36 | 207 | |
| Tasman | 18 | 51 | 12 | 19 | 100 | |
| Canterbury | 10 | 216 | 6 | 49 | 281 | |
| Southern | 17 | 57 | 5 | 10 | 89 | |
| **TOR Events** | **257** | **1243** | **51** | **396** | **1947** | |
| Percent of TASER TOR Events | 13% | 64% | 3% | 20% | 100% | |

[31] Operational unintentional discharges (UD) only; these values do not include UDs during training or pre- and post-operational checks. UDs are not counted in the total TASER deployments or percentage calculations.

## TOR Event Summaries for Youngest and Oldest Subjects of TASER, Sponge Round, and Firearm Deployment

### TASER Show and Discharge: Youngest

Police were attending a family harm incident, in which they were struggling to restrain a person armed with a knife. While apprehending the person, their 10-year-old child has taken the knife, and attempted to stab a police officer. One officer laser-painted the 10-year-old, and another discharged their TASER shortly after, whereupon they were able to restrain the child and take the knife.

### TASER Show: Oldest

A 75-year-old was laser-painted with a TASER after a traffic incident in which they became aggressive toward attending police. After a time and continued communication, the subject was able to be safely moved off the road without further incident.

### TASER Discharge: Oldest

A 66-year-old was experiencing deteriorating mental health, and setting fire to furniture on their property. Police were attending to detain the person for a mental health assessment. Police discharged a TASER when the subject threw an axe at them through a glass door pane when they attempted to enter the residence. Both the subject and officers sustained minor injuries as a result of the broken glass when the axe was thrown.

### Sponge Round Presentation: Youngest

Police were apprehending a 16-year-old who had committed an armed robbery, seriously injuring the victim and holding a knife to their throat. The subject had recently posted images of firearms online, and their behaviour indicated they may be intending further criminal harm. The 40mm was presented during the apprehension, which was concluded without further incident.

### Sponge Round Presentation: Oldest

A 50-year-old in a motel unit was experiencing mental distress, and threatening to self harm. After communication was lost, officers entered the unit and located the person with a knife close to hand. Concerned that they may attempt to harm themselves, the 40mm was presented as a precaution should the police officer need to prevent self-harm before they could be safely brought into custody.

### Sponge Round Discharge: Youngest

A 20-year-old experiencing mental distress was trying to force his way into a house while armed with multiple bladed weapons including a homemade machete. A sponge round was discharged when he advanced on a police officer. The round struck his arm, causing him to run away. He was apprehended shortly after, following an assault on the officer and a TASER discharge.

### Sponge Round Discharge: Oldest

Police were assisting a Duly Authorised Officer to detain a 62-year-old  for assessment following a decline in mental health. The person was known to possess firearms, had been throwing glass bottles at attending police, and claimed the house was booby-trapped. The subject was pouring petrol on the property and had climbed onto the roof during the incident. The 40mm was discharged twice when they returned to the ground and the police officer believed they may be attempting to enter the garage to access a firearm. Combined with use of a police dog, attending police were able to secure the subject, provide first aid, and enable them to be admitted safely to a mental health ward.

**Firearm Presentation: Youngest**

There were two incidents with firearms presentations at 11 year olds. In one incident, Police were advised that a person in a vehicle with multiple occupants was brandishing a firearm out the window and pointing it at people on the footpath in a busy area. A firearm was presented during an armed vehicle stop while the occupants were verbally appealed to exit the vehicle. All occupants were taken into custody without further incident. One of the passengers was 11 years old, and another 13 years old. The firearm was later determined to be a BB gun.

In the other, Police were called in relation to a person seen holding a firearm in each hand in the central business district, before entering a vehicle as a passenger and leaving the area. The vehicle was later sighted and police officers conducted an armed vehicle stop, presenting a firearm while verbally appealing to the occupants to exit the vehicle. Two people were taken into custody, including an 11-year-old passenger, without further incident.

**Firearm Presentation: Oldest**

Police were en-route to a location where a person had been reported smashing a vehicle with a hammer. Checks indicated a connection to a person with charges for unlawful firearm possession and a previous interaction for a mental health incident. A firearm was presented by the police officer when the subject brandished the hammer and threatened to kill the officer. The subject was apprehended after a struggle in which they attacked the officer with a wooden pole, and the officer's TASER was discharged.