

Feb. 21, 2018

No charges arising from use of force by EPS

On Oct. 23, 2016, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) was directed to investigate the circumstances surrounding the apprehension of a 20-year-old Edmonton man seriously injured during an encounter with members of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS).

On Oct. 22, 2016, at about 8:33 p.m., officers went to the area of Fox Drive and Fort Edmonton Park Road in response to a 911 call reporting a stabbing. Police arrived and saw a shirtless man, who appeared agitated and possibly under the influence of unknown substances, wandering on Fox Drive. As officers approached, the man tried to flee. In the course of running away, and prior to any physical contact with police, the man fell down a steep embankment and into a wooded area.

With assistance from the EPS Air 1 helicopter, police located and apprehended the man. During the apprehension, officers used force to gain control of him, including physical restraint, a conducted energy weapon (commonly known as a Taser) and a police service dog. Following arrest, paramedics treated the man on scene and later admitted him to hospital to treat a collapsed lung as well as identify and eliminate any substances he might have ingested.

Meanwhile, additional officers who responded to the initial 911 call found a deceased man during a search of the area. The man arrested by EPS and taken to hospital was later charged in connection with the other man's death.

ASIRT's investigation of the arrest determined that during the course of his contact with police, the man was physically resisting officers, non-compliant with their commands and making continued efforts to flee. On the basis of the information available to them, the officers were lawfully entitled to detain and later arrest the man. As such, the officers were permitted to use as much force as was reasonably necessary in the lawful execution of their duties. While the man's condition was serious, it was largely due to the man's ingestion of illicit substances. It's also difficult to exclude the man's initial fall off the embankment as the cause of his injury.

ASIRT executive director Susan D. Hughson, QC, reviewed the completed investigation and determined that even if the force used was the cause of the man's injury, it was no more than what was reasonably necessary in the circumstances. Accordingly, no criminal charges will stem from police conduct during this incident.

ASIRT's mandate is to effectively, independently and objectively investigate incidents involving Alberta's police that have resulted in serious injury or death to any person, as well as serious or sensitive allegations of police misconduct.

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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