

June 23, 2015

ASIRT concludes investigation into RCMP officer-involved shooting

On October 4, 2014, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) was directed to investigate an incident that had occurred near Red Deer, Alberta, that led to an officer discharging his firearm, although no injuries resulted. Our investigation is now complete.

On October 3, 2014, RCMP officers attempted to intercept two vehicles that had been followed to a gravel road located north of Highway 11A, west of Taylor Drive on the northern perimeter of Red Deer, Alberta. Shortly after 11:30 p.m., one of the vehicles was stopped and two men were apprehended without incident. During the stop, a police vehicle was parked in order to block the roadway.

The second vehicle, a stolen Ford Escape, was encountered further down the roadway by three marked police vehicles with emergency equipment activated. The Ford Escape failed to stop and accelerated towards police. It was forced into the ditch but was able to bypass the three police vehicles and regain the roadway, accelerating rapidly towards where two officers and the two men in-custody from the first vehicle were on the road.

Both officers saw the stolen Ford Escape rapidly approaching and had concerns that it would ram either the police vehicle or the stopped Ford truck, propelling the vehicles into the officers and the truck's occupants. One officer grabbed one truck occupant pulling him away from the potential collision scene to safety. The second officer, while attempting to move the second truck occupant to safety, drew his service pistol and fired one shot towards the driver of the Ford Escape. At that point, the Ford Escape was very close and on a course to strike the parked police vehicle. The Ford Escape took evasive action, drove into the field around the officers, and fled the scene.

The stolen Ford Escape was involved in a collision shortly thereafter with a civilian vehicle. The driver was apprehended with the assistance of a police service dog after he fled the vehicle. A passenger in the Ford Escape was also apprehended fleeing the vehicle. No injuries were suffered by any of the parties involved. RCMP charged both the driver and passenger with multiple offences arising out of the incident. It was later determined that the officer's shot had struck the Ford Escape in the front grill.

The completed investigation has been carefully reviewed and the Executive Director, Ms. Susan D. Hughson Q.C., has determined that the officers were lawfully placed and the use of force, in this case the discharge of the firearm, was reasonable in the circumstances. There are no reasonable grounds to believe that the conduct of the officer constituted a criminal offence. The officers acted to preserve the lives in their care and their own lives in an objectively dangerous situation.

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.

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