

ASIRT DECISION

**IN THE MATTER OF A USE OF FORCE BY GRANDE
PRAIRIE RCMP OFFICERS ON JULY 19, 2025**

Acting Executive Director: Matthew Block

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Introduction

On July 19, 2025, pursuant to s. 46.1 of the *Police Act*, the Director of Law Enforcement directed the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) to investigate a fatal shooting involving members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) that occurred earlier that morning. The shooting of the affected person (AP) arose in the context of him fleeing from a traffic stop after having been observed driving at excessive speeds and proceeding through red lights over an extended period of time. This investigation began prior to the establishment of the Police Review Commission on December 1, 2025, and associated changes to the *Police Act*.

ASIRT designated four subject officers and provided them with notice. ASIRT's investigation is now complete.

ASIRT's Investigation

ASIRT's investigation was comprehensive and thorough, conducted using current investigative protocols, and in accordance with the principles of major case management.

ASIRT investigators interviewed three civilian witnesses, two police witnesses, and two community peace officers (CPO). They also obtained the reports and notes of eight additional police officers.

As the subjects of a criminal investigation, the subject officers were entitled to rely on their right to silence and not speak to ASIRT. In this case, each of the four subject officers provided ASIRT investigators with a prepared written statement and participated in an interview.

ASIRT also reviewed all available video of the incident, including body worn camera (BWC) footage from three police officers, video from four police vehicles (WatchGuard system equipped with forward-facing and rear-facing cameras), doorbell camera footage from the AP's residence, video footage from the exterior of the Grande Prairie RCMP detachment, and RCMP drone footage recorded after the shooting.

ASIRT investigators also reviewed all relevant RCMP electronic communications and radio transmissions from the incident.

ASIRT investigators oversaw a scene examination conducted by the Grande Prairie RCMP Forensic Identification Service unit.

Circumstances Surrounding the Incident

On July 18, 2025, at approximately 9:45 p.m., the AP was observed on residential doorbell camera footage leaving his residence while concealing what appeared to be a firearm beneath his jacket, with the magazine visibly protruding.

At approximately 10:35 p.m., a Grande Prairie CPO observed the AP's vehicle being driven through a red light while executing a left turn into the outside lane, followed by erratic driving at a high speed. A description of the vehicle was broadcast over the police radio. At approximately 11:05 p.m., a second CPO located a vehicle matching the earlier broadcast description travelling at an excessive speed. After the vehicle was observed parked on the front lawn of a residence, the CPO initiated a traffic stop. However, the driver – believed to be the AP – maneuvered around the CPO's vehicle and fled the scene.

Between 11:16 p.m. and 11:26 p.m., the AP drove past the Grande Prairie RCMP detachment on three separate occasions. During the final pass, the AP drove slowly along the roadway in front of the

detachment entrance before suddenly accelerating forward. He then stopped, reversed, and remained idling in place. A marked police vehicle approached and stopped adjacent to the driver's side of the AP's vehicle. At that point, the AP accelerated away with speed, prompting the officer to turn and follow. Additional police units began mobilizing into the area and commenced covert surveillance of the AP's vehicle. A further attempt to conduct a traffic stop was made; however, the AP again fled.

Covert surveillance continued as the AP was observed driving erratically on rural gravel roads, at times with his vehicle lights turned off, proceeding through multiple stop signs at high speed and causing the vehicle to fishtail.

Subject officer #1 (SO1) and subject officer #2 (SO2) occupied the lead police vehicle in the covert pursuit, while subject officer #3 (SO3) and subject officer #4 (SO4) followed in a second vehicle. The officers maintained distance while tracking the AP until he turned onto a dead-end range road. SO1 and SO2 continued onto the range road, while SO3 and SO4 initially remained at its entrance. SO1 and SO2 subsequently observed that the AP's vehicle appeared to have become stuck in mud at the end of the road. SO3 and SO4 then proceeded into the area, passed SO1 and SO2's vehicle, and positioned their vehicle closer to the AP.

The AP exited his vehicle with his hands raised, appearing to surrender. SO1 advised the AP that he was under arrest, while SO2 and SO4 issued repeated commands to "keep [his] hands up," and directed him to walk toward them. The AP failed to comply or otherwise respond. He then returned to his vehicle and reached inside, contrary to police instructions. The AP removed a long black firearm from the vehicle, which appeared to be an assault-style rifle. SO4 broadcast "gun, gun, gun" over the police radio to alert other officers. The AP then pointed the firearm in the direction of the officers, at which point the subject officers discharged their firearms.

The AP subsequently went out of the officers' line of sight. A drone was deployed to confirm his location and that of the firearm. Once it was established that the AP was lying motionless near his vehicle and that the firearm was on the ground, officers approached and placed him in handcuffs. The AP was then transported by police vehicle to the end of the range road to facilitate access by Emergency Medical Services (EMS). During transport, SO1, SO2, and SO4 administered first aid. EMS arrived shortly thereafter, at which time the AP was pronounced deceased.

The firearm recovered at the scene was later determined to be a Valken tactical black airsoft rifle (Figure 1).



Figure 1 - The AP's replica firearm. The magazine for the firearm was also recovered at the scene.

Autopsy

An Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) pathologist performed an autopsy on the AP. A pathologist report has not yet been received; however, upon the conclusion of the exam, the medical examiner opined that the immediate cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds.

WatchGuard and Body-Worn Camera (BWC) video footage

ASIRT investigators reviewed BWC footage from three police officers, including that of SO1 and SO2. SO3 and SO4 were not equipped with BWCs. They also reviewed the WatchGuard in-car camera footage from four police vehicles, including the vehicle operated by SO4.

The quality of the video evidence was significantly limited by poor lighting conditions at the scene, as well as the positioning of police vehicles and their distance from the AP. The AP is not clearly visible in much of the footage. SO1 and SO2's police vehicle was positioned approximately 100 metres from the AP, while SO3 and SO4's police vehicle was positioned closer, at an estimated distance of 50 metres. Although SO4's WatchGuard footage provides the clearest, largely unobstructed view of the AP, the BWCs captured relevant audio and portions of officer movements. Accordingly, this summary represents a synthesis of all available video and audio evidence to present the most objective account of events.

At midnight on July 19, 2025, both police vehicles came to a stop and the four subject officers exited. The AP was observed standing outside his vehicle with his back to police, initially with his hands on his head before raising his arms above his head (Figure 2).



Figure 2 - The AP standing next to his vehicle (both circled in yellow) with his arms raised, facing away from police. Image sourced from: SO4's police vehicle.

S01 and S02 advanced toward S03 and S04's police vehicle, which was positioned closer to the AP. S01 moved to the passenger side to provide cover for S03, while S02 positioned himself behind S04 on the driver's side. S04 stood adjacent to the open driver's side door.

S02 and S04 repeatedly issued commands to the AP, including directions to "walk to us," "keep your hands up," and "walk backwards." S03 was observed retrieving a carbine from the police vehicle and preparing it for use. S01 provided updates over the police radio, advising that the AP was being held at gunpoint but was not complying. S04 continued issuing commands, including "walk towards us right now," and attempted to gain compliance by warning the AP that he would be "bit by the dog," despite no police canine being present at the time. S01 was also heard stating, "police, you're under arrest, come towards us."

The AP then lowered his arms and moved toward his vehicle. He leaned into the open driver's side door and retrieved a long, black object, despite repeated commands from officers to "stop reaching." In response, the officers adopted cover positions around the police vehicle, with S03 opening the passenger door to provide additional protection. S01 advised over the radio that the AP was reaching into his vehicle, and a drone operator indicated that a drone would be airborne within approximately 30 seconds.

The AP subsequently closed the vehicle door, turned to face the officers, and pointed what appeared to be a firearm in their direction (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - The AP (circled in yellow) turned and pointed a firearm (identified by red arrow) towards the subject officers. Image sourced from: S04's police vehicle.

S04 was heard announcing, "he has a gun, he has a gun." The AP took several steps forward while holding the apparent firearm. At 12:01:22 a.m., a volley of gunshots were discharged. Dust clouds were visible in the area between the officers and the AP, consistent with rounds impacting the ground. S03 was observed falling backward from his position behind the passenger side door, after which he crawled behind the vehicle as S04 moved to provide additional cover.

S01 broadcast over the radio that shots had been fired. Following the initial volley, several individual shots were discharged as officers continued to direct the AP to raise his hands. The AP did not comply. Instead, he extended his arms outward to his sides while facing the officers (Figure 4), before again bringing the firearm in front of his body (Figure 5).



Figure 4 – After being shot at by police, the AP (circled in yellow) extended his arms out to the side while facing police, still armed with a replica firearm (identified by red arrow). Image sourced from: S04's police vehicle.



Figure 5 - The AP (circled in yellow) then moved his replica firearm (identified by red arrow) back in front of him. Image sourced from: SO4's police vehicle.

Between approximately 12:01:37 a.m. and 12:01:59 a.m., a second series of gunshots was fired (Figure 6).



Figure 6 - View of the officers' respective positions vis-a-vis the AP (circled in yellow) at the time of the final volley of gunshots. SO2, SO3, and SO4 are each labelled on the image. Image sourced from: SO1's BWC.

The AP then appeared to lower himself into the tall grass, after which he was no longer visible to officers.

During the final volley of gunfire, an officer vocalized in a manner consistent with having sustained an injury. Officers immediately began shouting directions to retreat and withdrew toward the second police vehicle positioned further back. They were subsequently heard assessing one another for injuries. Shortly thereafter, a drone was deployed to locate the AP.

Throughout the interaction, the AP was not heard making any verbal statements to police. His demeanour, as reflected in his body language, appeared notably indifferent to the unfolding events. Despite sustained gunfire, he remained largely unreactive and, at times, gestured in a manner suggesting a lack of concern for the situation.

Subject Officers

All four subject officers participated in interviews with ASIRT, notwithstanding their right to remain silent. Each officer provided accounts consistent with the circumstances outlined above regarding the events leading to the covert police pursuit. Their statements were mutually corroborative and aligned with the available video evidence, particularly with respect to the interaction between police and the AP after he exited his vehicle.

Each of the subject officers formed the belief that the AP presented an imminent risk of grievous bodily harm or death to themselves and to other officers at the scene. While there was some variation in their recollections as to the precise direction in which the AP initially pointed the firearm, it is clear that each officer believed the weapon was directed toward them. SO3 and SO4 each believed the AP initially pointed the firearm in their respective directions, despite being positioned on opposite sides of a police vehicle. SO2 believed the AP was targeting the passenger side of the vehicle, where SO3 and SO1 were located.

Upon observing the AP point the firearm in their direction, each of the subject officers discharged their weapons at the AP. All officers acknowledged firing additional shots after the initial volley, noting that the AP remained in possession of the firearm, exhibited no changes in behaviour, and continued to disregard police commands. SO3 further indicated that during the final volley of shots, he heard SO4 exclaim "ow," leading him to believe that SO4 had been struck by gunfire. This perception heightened his sense of urgency and contributed to his continued use of force. SO3 subsequently learned that SO4 had not been shot but had instead sustained an injury to his eardrum as a result of the gunfire.

The discharge of firearms ceased once the AP was no longer visible. However, the subject officers consistently indicated that their concern persisted, as they believed the AP may have moved into the tall grass with the intention of concealing himself and potentially ambushing officers. In their view, the threat did not abate until the AP was located by drone.

SO2 specifically noted that, given the poor lighting conditions and the distance between the officers and the AP, he lacked confidence in his ability to accurately engage the AP using a service pistol. Nevertheless, he did not believe that any reasonable alternative use of force options were available. He further believed that the AP was armed with an assault-style rifle, which, in his assessment, significantly elevated the level of threat. He was concerned that such a firearm would be capable of discharging multiple high-powered rounds with speed and accuracy at that distance, and that, in the event the AP began firing, officers would have no realistic opportunity to retreat or reposition safely.

Analysis

Section 25 Generally

Under s. 25 of the Criminal Code, police officers are permitted to use as much force as is necessary for the execution of their duties. Where the force used by an officer is intended or is likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm, s. 25(3) applies and the officer must believe on reasonable grounds that the force is necessary for the self-preservation of the officer or preservation of anyone under that officer's protection. The force used here – discharging a firearm at a person – was clearly intended or likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm. The subject officers therefore must have believed on reasonable grounds that the force they used was necessary for their self-preservation or the preservation of another person under his protection. Another person can include other police officers.

For the defence provided by s. 25 to apply to the actions of an officer, the officer must be required or authorized by law to perform the action in the administration or enforcement of the law, must have acted on reasonable grounds in performing the action, and must not have used unnecessary force.

All uses of force by police must also be proportionate, necessary, and reasonable.

Proportionality requires balancing a use of force with the action to which it responds. As noted above, where force is intended or is likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm, s. 25(3) codifies a requirement that the officer must believe on reasonable grounds that the force is necessary for the self-preservation of the officer or preservation of anyone under that officer's protection.

Necessity requires that there are not reasonable alternatives to the use of force that would also accomplish the same goal. These alternatives can include no action at all. Analysis of police actions must recognize the dynamic situations in which officers often find themselves, and such analysis should not expect police officers to weigh alternatives in real time in the same way they can later be scrutinized in a stress-free environment.

Reasonableness looks at the use of force and the situation as a whole from an objective viewpoint. Police actions are not to be judged on a standard of perfection, but on a standard of reasonableness.

Section 25 Applied

At all material times on this date, the police were acting in the lawful execution of their duties, specifically to preserve the peace and investigate potential criminal offences. Over the course of approximately one hour, the AP was observed by both police officers and CPOs engaging in dangerous driving behaviour and actively attempting to evade police. In these circumstances, officers were authorized and, indeed, required by law to apprehend the AP.

The available video evidence establishes that police discharged their firearms in two distinct volleys. The first volley occurred immediately after the AP produced a firearm and pointed it in the direction of

the officers. Police subsequently issued verbal commands directing the AP to put his hands up; these commands were not complied with. The AP then moved his arms – along with the firearm – to his sides before again bringing the weapon forward in the direction of officers. This latter action precipitated the second volley of shots.

There is no doubt that the subject officers' decision to discharge their firearms was reasonable in the circumstances. A pointed firearm presents an immediate risk to the preservation of life. Once the AP directed the firearm toward the officers, their duty to protect themselves and their colleagues was clearly engaged. At the time, the officers had no means of determining that the AP's replica gun was, in fact, an air pistol.

The evidence of the subject officers is mutually corroborative, with each officer consistently reporting that the AP pointed a firearm in their direction immediately prior to the discharge of police firearms. All officers articulated concerns for their personal safety and that of their colleagues. The fact that all four subject officers discharged their weapons around the same time, during two separate volleys, further supports the conclusion that they perceived an urgent need to act. This provides mild evidence in support of the objective reasonableness of their actions.

It was necessary for the subject officers to fire at the AP when they did. The AP presented what they reasonably believed to be an immediate and lethal threat. He refused to comply with repeated police commands to keep his hands up and walk towards them. Despite further directions to stop reaching, the AP produced what appeared to be an assault-style rifle from within the vehicle and pointed it at police. In these circumstances, it was reasonable for officers to infer that the AP had no intention of surrendering or complying with lawful directions.

A lesser use of force was not reasonably available. The incident occurred in a poorly lit, open environment, where police vehicles provided only limited cover. As noted by SO2, the officers' available use of force options – including service pistols and conducted energy weapons – were not well-suited to effectively bridge the distance between the officers and the AP with reliable accuracy. Moreover, there was no safe avenue of retreat available to the officers, particularly given the perceived presence of an assault-style firearm.

In these circumstances, the subject officers' use of firearms was proportionate to the risk of death or grievous bodily harm that the AP reasonably appeared to pose.

The officers were required or authorized by law to act that day and acted on reasonable grounds. Their use of force was reasonable, proportionate, and necessary. As a result, the defence provided by s. 25 of the *Criminal Code* is likely to apply to each of the subject officers.

Immediately prior to the police pursuit, the AP engaged in conduct suggestive of an intention to attract police attention. Specifically, he drove slowly past the Grande Prairie RCMP detachment on three occasions, abruptly accelerated and reversed his vehicle, and then remained idling near the front entrance until a marked police vehicle approached, at which point he accelerated away. He subsequently continued to drive dangerously and fled from an attempted traffic stop. When this conduct is considered in conjunction with the AP's behaviour and gestures during the subsequent police interaction – including after officers began discharging their firearms – it raises the possibility that the AP's actions were, at least in part, intended to provoke a police response of this nature.

Conclusion

The subject officers' use of force was proportionate, necessary, and reasonable. As a result, there are no reasonable grounds to believe that an offence was committed.

Original Signed

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Acting Executive Director

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