



Justice

Law Enforcement Review Agency (LERA)
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News Release

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2006 LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW AGENCY ANNUAL REPORT RELEASED

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Increase in Allegations Of Disciplinary Defaults Noted

The independent agency responsible for handling public complaints about the province's 14 municipal police agencies has released its most recent annual report.

The Law Enforcement Review Agency (LERA) does not investigate criminal matters, but focuses on the way officers conduct themselves on duty.

In 2006, a total of 244 formal complaints were filed with LERA. Allegations of abuse of authority included arrest without reasonable or probable grounds, using unnecessary or excessive force, using oppressive or abusive conduct or language, and being discourteous or uncivil.

While the number of complaints has decreased slightly, the number of allegations of disciplinary defaults in three of the most serious categories has increased: arrest without reasonable or probable grounds, using unnecessary or excessive force, and being discourteous or uncivil.

The number of new investigations combined with ongoing files meant the agency worked on a total of 560 complaints last year. A total of 324 investigations were completed, which is a significant increase from the previous year when 217 were done. Investigations required an average of 13 months to complete.

This year LERA added a new clerk and recently added another investigator to help deal with the volume of cases the agency investigates.

In cases where a complainant alleged there had been criminal misconduct, LERA investigators let them know they could also file a complaint with the police force involved. Last year there were 21 such cases.

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LERA investigations can only begin when police investigations of potentially criminal misconduct are done. The resulting delay in the length of time taken to complete LERA investigations is the subject of ongoing discussions with police.

Some cases brought to LERA were resolved through an informal process. Sixteen cases where an informal resolution was not possible and there was evidence supporting a complaint were referred to a provincial judge for a hearing.

The complete report and other information about LERA is posted on the agency's website at www.gov.mb.ca/justice/lera.

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