

**2010 LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW AGENCY  
ANNUAL REPORT RELEASED**

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**Time to Investigate Complaints Continues to Drop: Commissioner**

The time it takes to investigate public complaints about the province's 12 municipal police agencies continued to decline last year and is noted in the 2010 annual report of the independent Law Enforcement Review Agency released today.

"The agency has continued to focus on improving the service it provides to the public and the average time it takes to resolve a complaint has dropped from nine months to eight," said George Wright, the commissioner of the Law Enforcement Review Agency (LERA). "Ensuring the police are held accountable for their conduct in a timely and meaningful way is an important goal and one we will continue striving to achieve."

In 2010, 266 files were opened, a decrease of 31 complaints over 2009. There were 140 formal complaints filed, with 126 files being closed where no formal complaint was received or following the completion of a preliminary investigation.

Key points of the report include:

- a reduction in the number of complaints alleging disciplinary defaults in three areas: abuse of authority, using oppressive conduct or language, and using unnecessary or excessive force;
- five complaints alleging the misuse of a conducted energy weapon, up from four in 2009; and
- one complaint alleging the misuse of pepper spray.

"The number of complaints about the use of force by the police is down again this year," said Wright. "These matters account for 47 per cent of the complaints the agency received in 2010."

The commissioner can also look at whether the organizational or administrative practices of a police service might be causing or contributing to alleged disciplinary defaults. This year, the commissioner made a recommendation that led to a change in a police policy around the seizure of still and video cameras.

"With the continued growth of citizen journalism, the Internet and social media, I was particularly pleased that the police service was responsive to the recommendation for change," said Wright. "The police service took steps to outline and clarify the guidelines followed by its members to reflect the freedom of the public to videotape."

The agency cannot and does not investigate criminal matters and refers any criminal matters for investigation by police. LERA reviews complaints and conducts independent investigations that focus on the way municipal police officers conduct themselves on duty. Allegations the agency may deal with include abuse of authority including arrest without reasonable or probable grounds, use of unnecessary or excessive force, oppressive or abusive conduct or language, and being discourteous or uncivil.

The complete report and other information about LERA is posted on the agency.s website at [www.gov.mb.ca/justice/lera](http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/lera).

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