

NZ Police Annual Tactical Options Research Report #3

1 January to 31 December 2014

Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation (RORE)

Introduction

This Annual Tactical Options Research Report covers the 2014 calendar year (1 January to 31 December), with a focus on all tactical options. It is part of an external tactical options reporting series produced by Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation, Police National Headquarters, for monitoring and accountability purposes.

Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) data

The data in this report is derived from Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) data, which counts TOR events and tactical options used.

A TOR event is the reportable use of one or more tactical options, by one officer, against one individual. As some TOR events involve the use of more than one tactical option, the total number of TOR events is lower than the total number of tactical options used.

TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. Modes of TASER deployment are: shows (presentation, laser painting or arcing); and discharges (discharge with probes and/or contact stun).

View from the frontline...

"[He] lifted his shirt and pressed the blade of the knife against the bare skin on his stomach threatening to stab himself if we did not leave the address. I then pulled out my Taser and challenged him by saying "Put the knife down we just want to talk to you". [He] ignored my challenge and kept saying he was going to stab himself. Numerous more challenges were made... [He] kept ignoring our requests... Just as I closed the gap [he] lifted the knife in the air with the blade pointing towards me in a stabbing position. I feared he was about to either stab himself or me. I discharged the Taser to prevent [him] from stabbing me or himself with the intention of incapacitating [him] and removing the knife. The discharge was successful and [he] dropped the knife and hit the ground straight away... [He] was handcuffed without altercation and put in police custody."

Key findings

Police rarely used tactical options when engaging with the public.

- 99.9% of recorded face-to-face interactions with the public involved no use of tactical options.
- 7,162 tactical options were used at 4,823 TOR events.

Alcohol was a key variable at TOR events

- 54% of subjects were suspected of being impaired by alcohol, including 60% of Pacific peoples, 54% of Europeans, and 52% of Māori.
- Subjects suspected of being impaired by alcohol were more likely to be violent towards police (51%) and threaten police (48%), compared with subjects at events where alcohol was not a factor (39% and 35%, respectively).
- Staff injury rates were slightly higher at events where subjects were suspected of being impaired by alcohol (12%) compared to events where alcohol was not a factor (10%).

Most of the tactical options used were lower levels of force.

- The three most common tactical options deployed were: empty hand tactics (44% of TOR events), handcuffs and restraints (39%), and OC spray (30%).
- Firearms (7% - all 'shows'), dogs (5%), baton (2%) and 'other' tactical options (1%) were used least frequently at TOR events.
- TASER was deployed (ie, shown or discharged) at 21% of TOR events.

Most TASER events did not involve TASER discharge.

- TASER 'shows' (ie, presentation, laser pointing, or arcing) were the highest mode of deployment at 88% of TASER events.
- TASER was discharged (ie, contact stun or discharge with probes) at 12% of TASER TOR events (1% contact stun and 11% discharge with probes).
- Overall, this equates to a TASER 'show' to 'discharge' ratio of 8:1.

Injuries at TOR events were uncommon.

- 18% of TOR events resulted in an injury to the subject (10% minor, 6% moderate and 1% serious).
- Firearms (0% - all shows), TASER (1% - excluding superficial probe injuries), and OC spray (2%) had the lowest subject injury rates of all tactical options.
- Staff were injured at 11% of TOR events (9% minor, 2% moderate, 0.1% serious).

Table 1: Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 2014^{1,2}

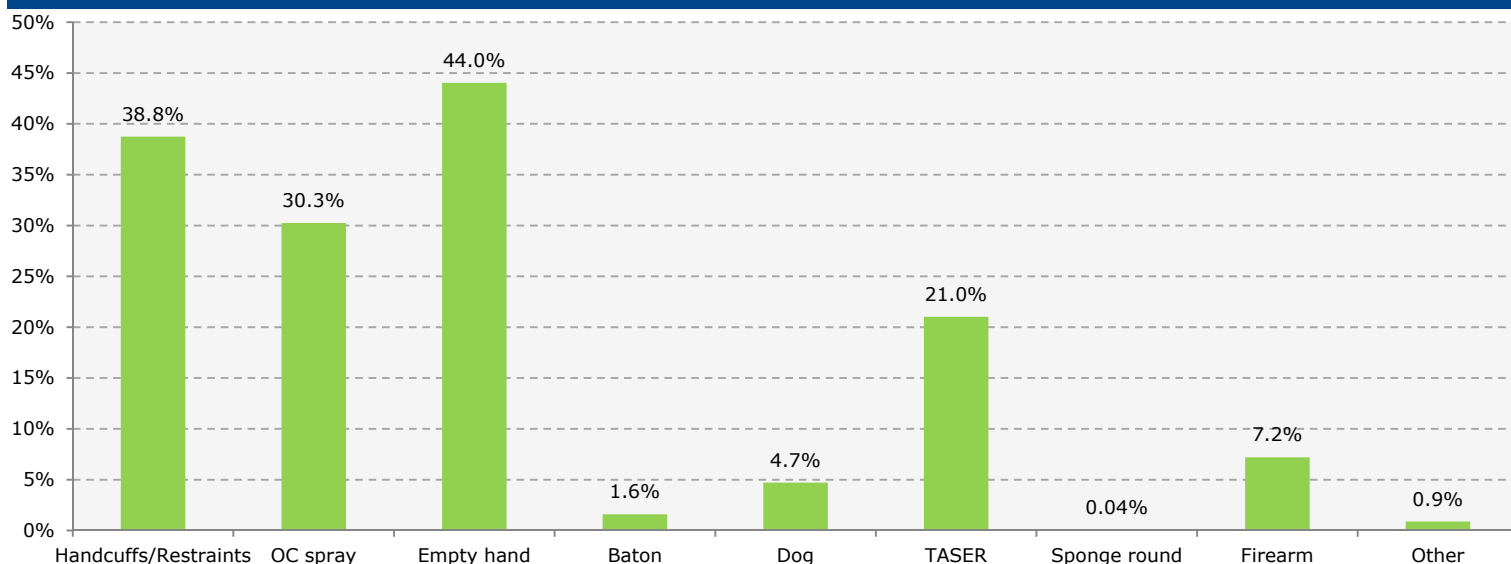
	Handcuffs/ Restraints	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Sponge round ³	Firearm	Other
Northland	78	80	83	5	17	36	0	20	2
Waitematā	176	88	199	3	7	73	0	28	3
Auckland City	218	116	210	5	19	134	0	32	2
Counties Manukau	292	174	382	8	11	108	0	56	2
Waikato	120	157	127	11	15	81	0	18	4
Bay of Plenty	191	173	226	9	20	117	0	64	10
Eastern	121	155	132	5	20	59	0	10	3
Central	146	155	165	13	21	123	0	38	10
Wellington	190	104	203	5	47	69	0	30	3
Tasman	58	54	76	0	9	51	2	11	0
Canterbury	174	123	211	6	39	109	0	34	3
Southern	105	80	110	7	2	54	0	6	1
Total TOR events	1,869	1,459	2,124	77	227	1,014	2	347	43
National average	156	122	177	6	19	85	0.2	29	4

¹ An officer may use more than one tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event.

² Table 1, Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 count whether a particular tactical option was used at a TOR event, not the number of times that tactical option was used at the event. See page 7 for tactical options deployments that are reportable in a Tactical Options Report.

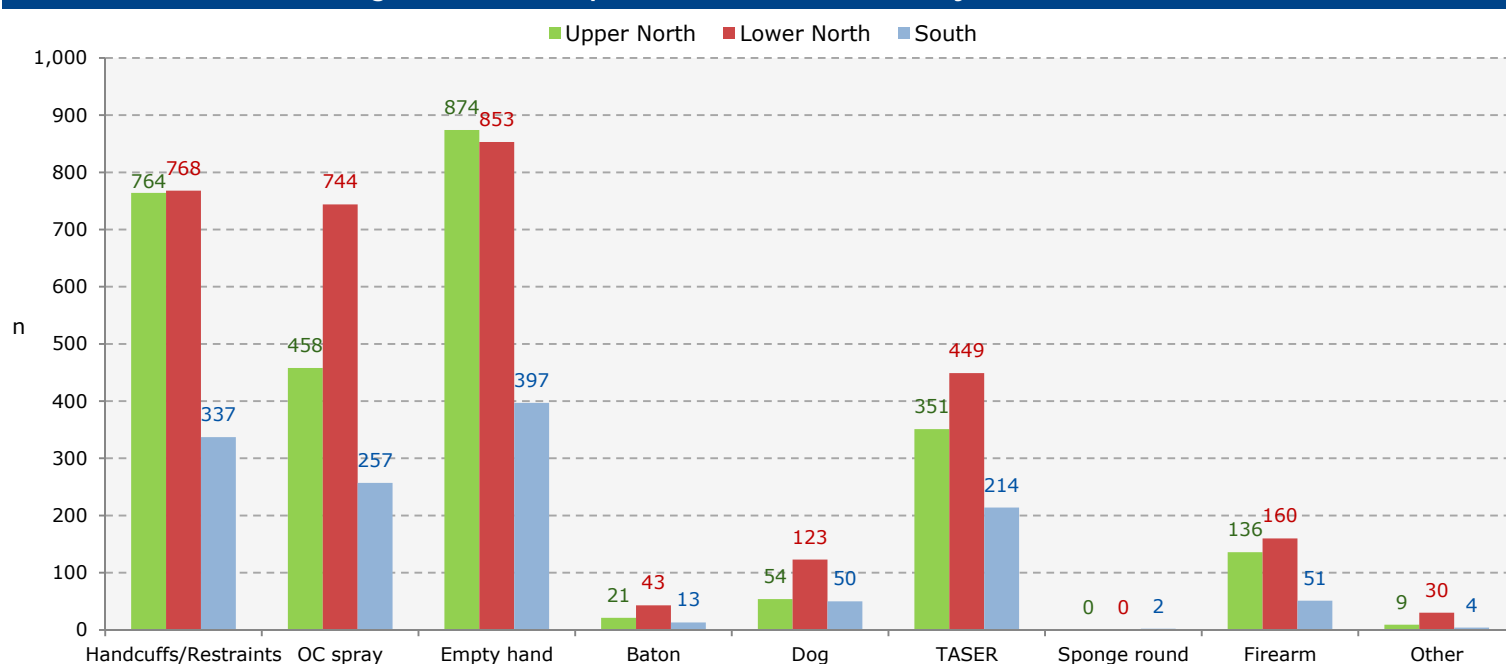
³ The two deployments of sponge rounds occurred at the same incident, involving one subject. At the time of the incident, the sponge round was being trialled by the Special Tactics Group and Armed Offenders Squad in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.

Figure 1: Proportion (%) of TOR events (n=4,823) where a tactical option(s) was used, nationally, 2014⁴



⁴ For example, 38.8% of subjects at TOR events had handcuffs or restraints used on them. As officers may use more than one tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

Figure 2: Tactical options used at TOR events, by location, 2014⁵



⁵ 'Upper North' comprises Northland, Waitematā, Auckland City and Counties Manukau. 'Lower North' comprises Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Eastern, Central and Wellington. 'South' comprises Tasman, Canterbury and Southern.

Table 2: TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment⁶, by district, 2014

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Contact Stun ⁷	Discharge with probes ⁷	Total TASER events	Per 10,000 apprehensions ⁸
Northland	5	29	0	1	1	36	50
Waitematā	12	44	1	1	15	73	58
Auckland City	23	90	4	1	16	134	102
Counties Manukau	17	75	0	2	14	108	57
Waikato	14	57	1	1	8	81	61
Bay of Plenty	31	76	0	1	9	117	69
Eastern	7	48	0	0	4	59	51
Central	25	86	1	0	11	123	90
Wellington	10	52	0	0	7	69	49
Tasman	5	41	0	0	5	51	63
Canterbury	12	83	0	3	11	109	68
Southern	8	38	0	1	7	54	52
Total TASER events	169	719	7	11	108	1,014	65
National average	14	60	0.6	0.9	9	85	

⁶ TASER data is presented by 'highest mode of deployment', and is shown from left (lowest) to right (highest). Thus, where TASER discharge with probes is the highest mode of deployment, any other mode of deployment that preceded the discharge with probes is excluded from the data. This caveat applies to Table 2 and Figure 3.

⁷ TASER discharge (ie, contact stun and discharge with probes) data in Table 2 and Figure 3 counts the number of TOR events at which a discharge occurred, but not the number of discharges. Discharge refers to all instances where a TASER was discharged in an operational setting, including discharges that made no or insufficient contact with the subject.

⁸ Police apprehension data does not represent the number of offences or offenders, as one offender may be apprehended for multiple offences, or multiple offenders may be apprehended for one offence. Thus, care should be used when interpreting this data as one apprehension does not necessarily refer to one individual.

Figure 3: TASER TOR events (n=1,014), by highest mode of deployment, by district, 2014

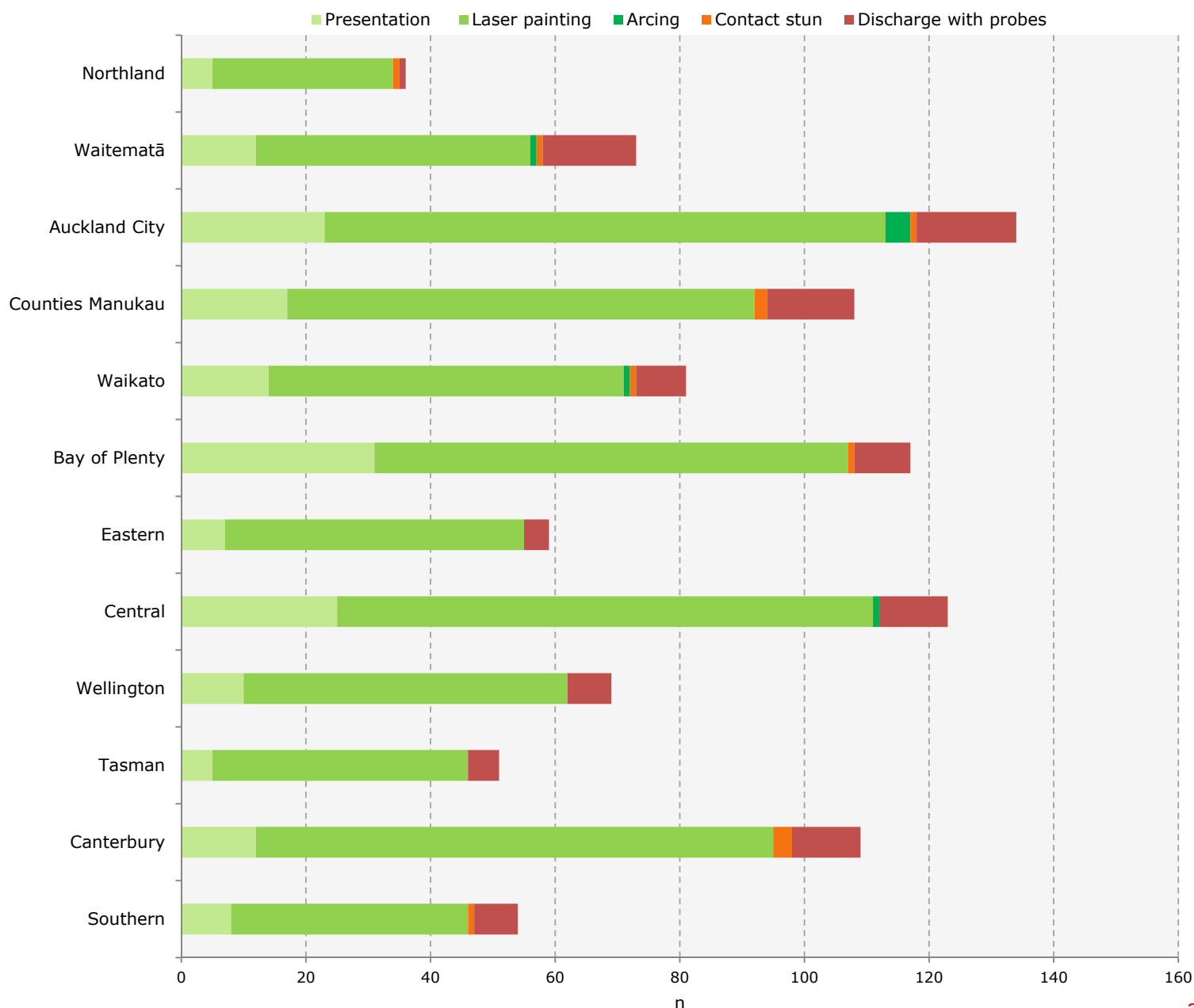
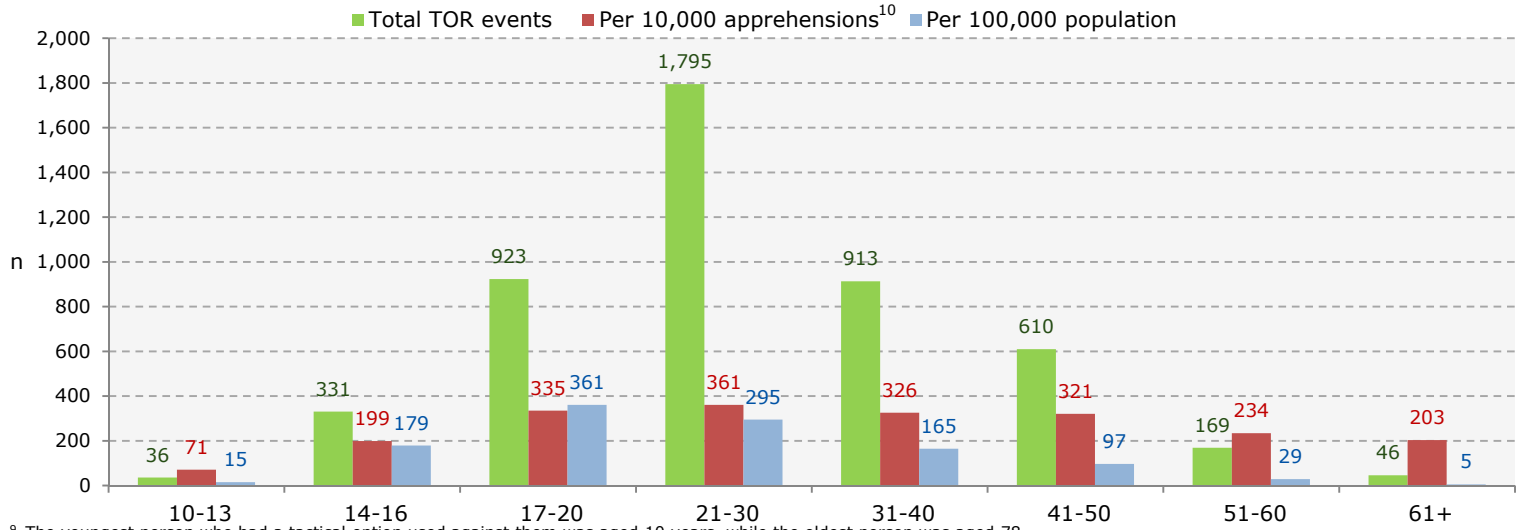


Figure 4: TOR events, by subject age, 2014⁹



⁹ The youngest person who had a tactical option used against them was aged 10 years, while the oldest person was aged 78.

¹⁰ Police apprehension data does not represent the number of offences or offenders, as one offender may be apprehended for multiple offences, or multiple offenders may be apprehended for one offence. Thus, care should be used when interpreting this data as one apprehension does not necessarily refer to one individual. The data in Figures 4 and 5, and Table 3 do not account for subject behaviours at TOR events.

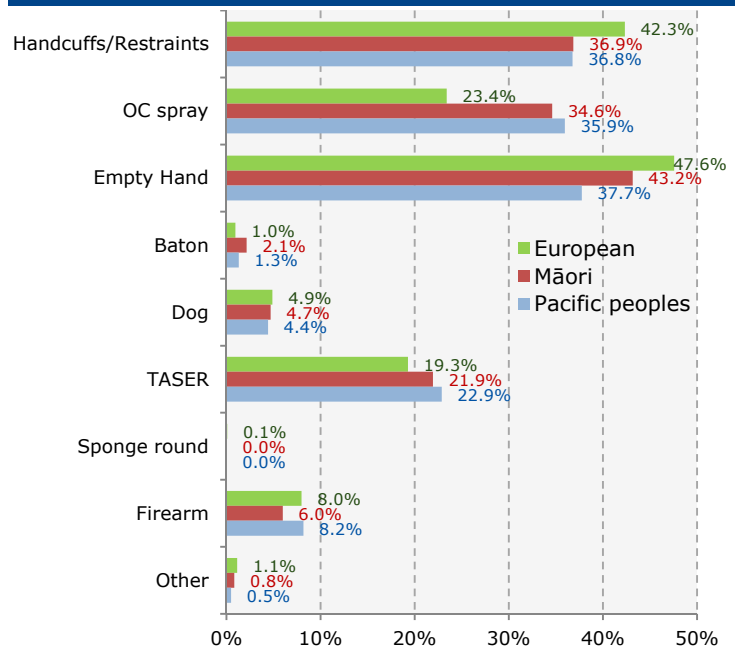
Table 3: TOR events, by subject ethnicity, 2014

	n	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁰	Per 100,000 population
European	1,680	269	57
Māori	2,393	334	400
Pacific peoples	612	438	207
Other	138	175	24
Total TOR events	4,823	309	108

Table 4: TOR events, by work group, 2014

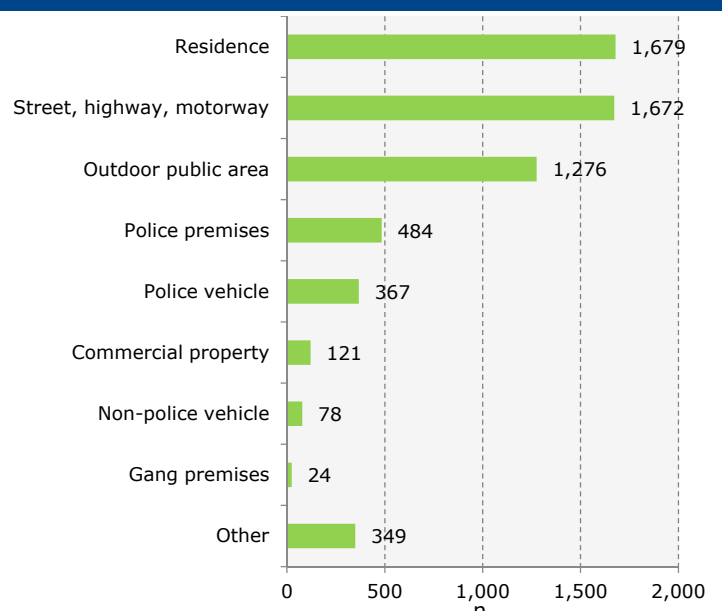
Work group	n
GENERAL DUTIES BRANCH	3,960
General Duties Branch	3,479
General Duties Branch Rural	138
Team Policing/Tactical Policing Unit	125
Watchhouse	121
Prisoner Escort/Jailer	49
Other General Duties Branch	48
SPECIALIST	367
Dog Section	349
Armed Offenders Squad	14
Special Tactics Group	3
Protection Services	1
ROAD POLICING	263
Strategic Traffic Unit	129
Highway Patrol	61
Traffic Alcohol Group	46
Road Crime Unit	13
Other Road Policing	14
INVESTIGATION	120
Criminal Investigation Branch	117
Scene of Crime Officer	3
PREVENTION	78
Community Relations	35
Neighbourhood Policing Team	20
Youth Aid Services	19
Family Violence	4
OTHER	35
Tactical Crime Unit	16
Off Duty	13
Authorised Officer	2
Other	4
Total TOR events	4,823

Figure 5: Proportion (%) of tactical options used, by subject ethnicity¹¹, 2014



¹¹ For example, 42.3% of European subjects at TOR events had handcuffs or restraints used on them. As officers may use more than one tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event, the total percentage for each ethnicity exceeds 100%.

Figure 6: Number of TOR events, by location type¹², 2014



¹² More than one location type may be reported for each TOR event. Thus, the sum of the numbers in Figure 6 (n=6,050), exceeds the number of TOR events (n=4,823). 4

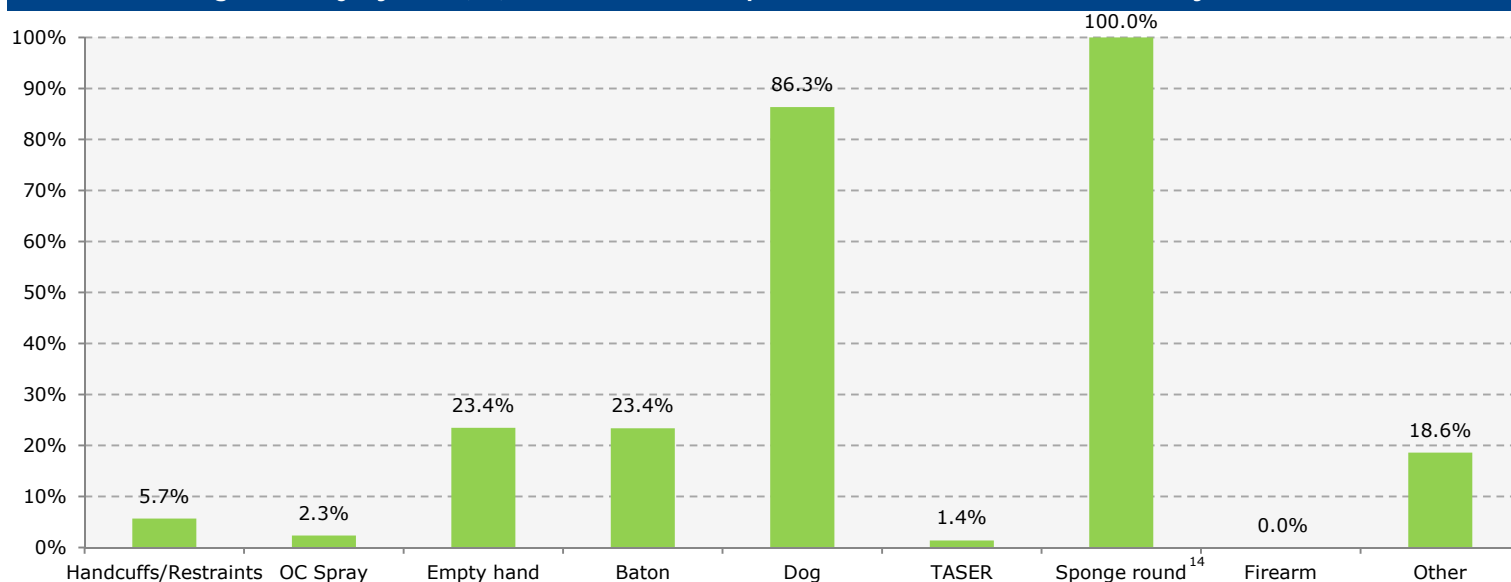
Table 5: Number of subject injuries as a result of tactical options use, by district, 2014¹³

	Handcuffs/ Restraints	OC Spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Sponge round ¹⁴	Firearm	Other	Total injuries	% of all injuries
Northland	2	2	15	1	17	0	0	0	1	38	4.3%
Waitematā	13	3	43	0	7	0	0	0	0	66	7.5%
Auckland City	6	2	50	1	15	3	0	0	1	78	8.9%
Counties Manukau	17	3	57	2	6	2	0	0	0	87	9.9%
Waikato	7	4	33	4	14	1	0	0	1	64	7.3%
Bay of Plenty	19	7	54	1	17	0	0	0	0	98	11.2%
Eastern	4	2	37	1	16	0	0	0	1	61	7.0%
Central	7	2	38	5	17	1	0	0	4	74	8.4%
Wellington	9	4	66	0	43	2	0	0	0	124	14.2%
Tasman	8	1	14	0	8	1	2	0	0	34	3.9%
Canterbury	11	2	60	2	34	2	0	0	0	111	12.7%
Southern	3	2	31	1	2	2	0	0	0	41	4.7%
Total injuries	106	34	498	18	196	14	2	0	8	876	100.0%
% of all injuries	12.1%	3.9%	56.8%	2.1%	22.4%	1.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	100.0%	

¹³ More than one subject injury may be reported as a result of a TOR event. Table 5 presents injuries caused by each tactical option, as a proportion of all injuries caused by all tactical options. Thus, the 876 injuries shown in Table 5 represents the total injuries received as a result of tactical options use, rather than the number of TOR events at which one or more injuries occurred. Fatalities associated with a use of force are not reported in a TOR form, but are instead subject to internal and external investigations.

¹⁴ The two injuries caused by the two deployments of sponge rounds occurred at the same incident involving one subject. At the time of the incident, the sponge round was being trialled by the Special Tactics Group and Armed Offenders Squad in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.

Figure 8: Injury rate (%) for each tactical option used at TOR events, nationally, 2014^{15,16}



¹⁵ Figure 8 shows the injury rate (%) for each tactical option eg, 86.3% of dog bites resulted in subject injury. As the injury rate for each tactical option is independent, percentages should not be summed.

¹⁶ TASER and firearm subject injury data includes shows and discharges (excluding fatalities).

Table 6: Subject injuries¹⁷ at TOR events, by severity¹⁸, and district

	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Total injuries
Northland	14	21	3	38
Waitematā	48	13	5	66
Auckland City	47	29	2	78
Counties Manukau	66	17	4	87
Waikato	33	23	8	64
Bay of Plenty	61	29	8	98
Eastern	34	23	4	61
Central	47	23	4	74
Wellington	60	55	9	124
Tasman	16	16	2	34
Canterbury	60	43	8	111
Southern	27	10	4	41
Total injuries	513	302	61	876

¹⁷ More than one subject injury may occur, and be reported, as the result of a TOR event. The n=876 in Table 6 counts individual injuries, rather than TOR events at which one or more injuries occurred. Superficial TASER probe injuries are excluded.

¹⁸ 'Minor', 'moderate', and 'serious' are proxy indicators of severity. Minor injuries = 'nil, self, or staff treatment'; moderate injuries = 'medical treatment (but not hospital admission)'; serious injuries = 'treatment at a hospital. Care should be taken in interpreting 'serious' injury data as injuries can be treated at hospital for practical reasons rather than necessity. 5

Table 7: Staff injuries¹⁹ at TOR events, by severity¹⁸, and district

	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Total injuries
Northland	14	5	0	19
Waitematā	40	15	0	55
Auckland City	51	8	0	59
Counties Manukau	52	12	1	65
Waikato	32	10	0	42
Bay of Plenty	56	11	1	68
Eastern	25	7	2	34
Central	45	13	0	58
Wellington	40	9	1	50
Tasman	24	3	0	27
Canterbury	37	12	0	49
Southern	18	6	1	25
Total injuries	434	111	6	551

¹⁹ Officers can only report one injury and injury severity type received at a TOR event. The n=551 in Table 7 counts TOR events at which one or more staff injuries occurred rather than individual injuries.

Focus on: Alcohol

Figure F1: Proportion (%) of TOR events involving alcohol, by district, 2014

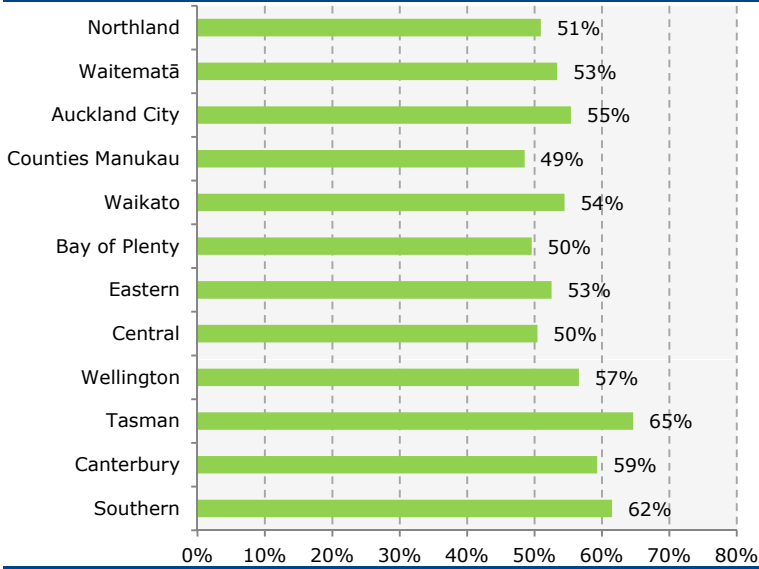


Figure F2: Proportion (%) of TOR events by incident type and alcohol involvement²¹

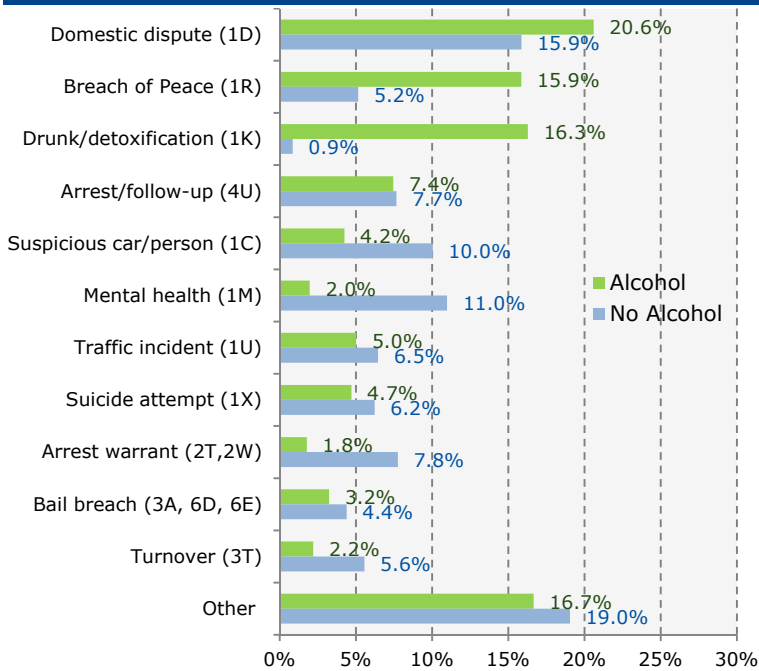
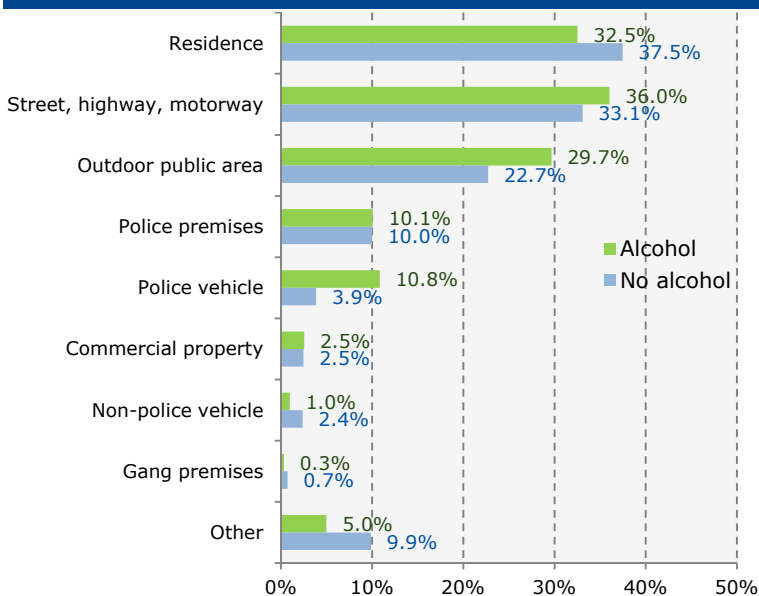


Figure F3: Proportion (%) of TOR events by location type and alcohol involvement²²



Overview

Evidence shows that a substantial proportion of police work involves alcohol-related incidents. For example, over a third of all Police recorded offences are committed by an offender who has consumed alcohol prior to committing the offence. The rates are higher for serious violent offending, where alcohol is involved in half of incidents.²⁰

Alcohol is a key variable at TOR events. This 'Focus on' provides analysis of TOR events at which subjects were suspected of being impaired by alcohol.

Key findings

- Subjects were believed to be impaired by alcohol in over half (54%) of all TOR events. This was consistent for all districts, ranging from 49% of TOR events in Counties Manukau to 65% in Tasman (Figure F1).
- Three incident types (domestic disputes, breaches of the peace, and drunk/detoxification) accounted for over half (53%) of all TOR incidents involving alcohol (Figure F2).
- 36% of TOR events involving a subject impaired by alcohol occurred on roads, with residences (33%) and outdoor public areas (30%) being the next most common locations (Figure F3). 77% of TOR events that occurred in a police vehicle involved a subject impaired by alcohol.
- Subjects aged 17-20 were most likely to be impaired by alcohol (57%). The subject ages least likely to be impaired by alcohol were 10-13 (22%), 14-16 (34%), and over 60 (43%).
- 60% of TOR events involving Pacific peoples involved alcohol. The rate was slightly lower for Europeans (54%), Māori (52%), and other ethnicities (45%).
- Alcohol was often associated with other relevant factors. For example, 56% of TOR events involving drugs, 55% involving excited delirium, and 53% involving emotional distress, also involved alcohol.
- Over half (56%) of TOR events involving GDB staff involved a subject impaired by alcohol. 48% of Road policing TOR events involved a subject impaired by alcohol.
- 51% of subjects suspected of being impaired by alcohol were violent towards police, and 48% threatened police (compared with 39% and 35% of events, respectively, where alcohol was not a factor).
- All tactical options, except for empty hand tactics, were less effective when used on subjects suspected of being impaired by alcohol. Effectiveness was the same for empty hand tactics irrespective of alcohol involvement.
- 58% percent of the total 551 staff injuries occurred at TOR events where alcohol was a relevant factor. This is a 12% staff injury rate at TOR events involving alcohol, compared to 10% when alcohol was not a factor.

²⁰ New Zealand Police. (2010). "Framework for preventing and reducing alcohol-related offending and victimisation 2010 - 2014". <http://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/online-version/framework-preventing-and-reducing-alcohol-related-offending-and>

²¹ For example, domestic disputes accounted for 20.6% of TOR events involving alcohol and 15.9% of events where alcohol was not a factor.

²² More than one location type may be reported for each TOR event, thus total percentages exceed 100%.



Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation (RORE)

This report was compiled by Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation (RORE) at Police National Headquarters. A key role of this team is to undertake research, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of police use of force, to provide accountability and assist evidence-based decision making, in support of police and public safety.

Tactical Options Reporting (TOR)

The following deployments of tactical options are reportable: handcuffs with pain compliance, or without pain compliance when used with another reportable tactical option; other restraints; OC spray bursts; empty hand tactics; baton strikes; dog bites or other dog-related deployment injuries; weapons of opportunity (reported in "other"); sponge rounds; shows and discharges of a TASER and/or firearm (noting the exemptions below).

The Armed Offenders Squads (AOS) and Special Tactics Group (STG) are exempted from reporting shows (but not discharges) of TASER and firearms. Fatalities associated with the use of force are also not reported in a TOR form, but are instead the subject of internal and external investigations. Accordingly, some use of force data is not included in this report.

Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) data limitations

TOR data presents a quantitative overview of deployment of tactical options; however, it does not provide a nuanced understanding of factors that influence the deployment of tactical options. Further, where the numbers in these reports are small, slight increases or decreases may result in large percentage differences. For these reasons, caution should be exercised when interpreting TOR data, including when comparing TOR data across biannual reports, districts, and areas.

Disclaimer

The TOR data reported in this publication is provisional, and is the most accurate available at time of extraction. Data entry errors were corrected where identified. While some data inaccuracies may remain (as with all large administrative databases), New Zealand Police is confident that the data is more than sufficiently accurate to monitor and describe reported deployment of tactical options by police. Police makes no warranty, expressed or implied, nor assumes any legal liability or responsibility, for the accuracy, correctness, completeness, or use of, the data or information in this publication. Further, Police shall not be liable for any loss or damage arising directly or indirectly from reliance on the data or information presented in this publication.

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