



REGIONAL DISTRICT of Fraser-Fort George

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REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION

TO: Chair and Directors

FROM: Blaine Harasimiuk, Manager of Inspection Services and Sustainable Practices

DATE: August 5, 2025

SUBJECT: "Bylaw Enforcement Safety Tools and Training"

SUMMARY: Purpose: For Information

File No.: N/A

Attachments:

1. Backgrounder

Previous Reports: None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT the report dated August 5, 2025, regarding "Bylaw Enforcement Safety Tools and Training" be received for information.

ENTITLEMENT	HOW VOTE COUNTED
All 1 Director/1 vote	Majority

ISSUE(S):

The role of Bylaw Enforcement Officers in local governments throughout British Columbia has evolved dramatically over the years and there is a need to ensure that Regional District staff are trained and equipped with the necessary tools to effectively conduct their roles. This report provides information on the training and implementation plan for defensive tool options within Bylaw Services. These new tools and training assist Bylaw Services staff and provide them with adequate protections so they can complete their duties in a safe and confident manner when unexpected events occur.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

- Local Government Act* - Part 12 Division 1 Bylaw Enforcement and Related Matters:
 - Regulation that outlines bylaw enforcement authority.
- Officer Position Establishment Bylaw No. 3275, 2022:
 - Outlines and establishes officer positions for the Regional District.
- Corporate Policy RD-18-20 Bylaw Enforcement:
 - Establishes guidelines for the investigation and enforcement of Regional District bylaws to improve consistency in enforcement practices.
- Procedure DS-19-23 Bylaw Investigation Risk Assessment and Mitigation:
 - To provide a consistent procedure for assessing potential risks and hazards associated with Bylaw Enforcement Investigations and designate a risk classification of a property and occupants prior to site investigations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT:



Indigenous and
Intergovernmental
Partnerships



Organizational
Strength and
Adaptability



Quality Community
Services



Environmental
Stewardship and
Climate Action

☐Awareness and
Engagement☐Statutory or
Routine Business**SERVICE RELEVANCE:**

Under Section 419 of the *Local Government Act*, where a board is authorized to regulate, prohibit and impose requirements in relation to a matter, the board may, by bylaw, authorize officers, employees and agents of the Regional District to enter, at all reasonable times, on any property to inspect and determine whether all regulations, prohibitions and requirements are being met.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The Regional District is planning on hosting a Bylaw Officers Protective Force Option training session in Prince George. Invitations to the training have been sent out to all other local governments in central and northern BC. The training session will be held in a Regional District facility, which reduces the costs significantly. The cost of this two-day training session is approximately \$6,000 and will be shared between the 12 participants. Budget 2201 – Untidy and Unsightly, has funds available for three Regional District staff participation.

Once the training and certification is completed, each Bylaw Enforcement Officer will be provided with the following PPE:

PPE Description	Cost	Status
Safety footwear	\$200	Currently in possession
Protective vest	\$1,200	Currently in possession
Jacket with ID	\$50	Currently in possession
Personal ID	In House	Future purchase
Puncture/cut resistant gloves	\$70	Currently in possession
Flashlight	\$40	Currently in possession
Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray	\$75	Once certified
Collapsible baton	\$400	Once certified
Handcuffs	\$110	Once certified
Body camera	\$2,000	Future purchase
Total safety investment for each Bylaw Officer	\$4,145	
Micro drone (under 250g)	\$200	Future purchase for department use
Garmin InReach	\$200	Currently available in the department
Body camera initial software investment	\$16,000 - 20,000	Future purchase for department use

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

N/A

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. Approve recommendation.
 - Receive for information only

Other Options:

- a. Request Administration bring back further information

COMMENTS:

Being a Bylaw Enforcement Officer (BEO) does have some inherent risks and therefore the Regional District has performed a risk assessment as required by WorksafeBC. Because it has been determined that there is the risk of violence in the workplace, Bylaw Services developed a procedure (DS-19-23), which is completed for each complaint received to assess potential risks and hazards associated with Bylaw Enforcement investigations and designate a risk classification of a property and occupants prior to site investigations. This assessment then provides options for the Bylaw Enforcements Officer to attend by themselves, if there are no known risks, to requesting the RCMP to attend the property with the Bylaw Enforcement Officer if a risk or hazard is identified. The backgrounder provides some examples of incidents which have involved Bylaw Enforcement Officers.

Even with the risk assessment and due to the isolated rural environments, BEOs may encounter hostile or unpredictable individuals while enforcing bylaws related to property use, unpermitted building sites, unsightly premises or other RDEFG related bylaws where help is not immediately available or witnessed by the public. Training in use-of-force techniques, such as de-escalation and defensive tactics, gives the BEOs the training where it becomes necessary to protect themselves from physical harm when removing themselves isn't an option. This aligns with the objective of ensuring BEOs return home safely, as emphasized by training providers like Sheepdog Self Protection Inc.

Properly trained BEOs can manage situations effectively, reducing the risk of escalation that could endanger others or themselves. Training in situational awareness and violence prevention equips BEOs to handle conflicts calmly and professionally, minimizing harm to all parties involved. Force option training ensures BEOs act within legal boundaries and local government guidelines when using force. This reduces the risk of legal mistakes or excessive force, which could lead to lawsuits or loss of public trust. Training in force options, including de-escalation and crisis intervention, enables BEOs to secure compliance without resorting to unnecessary force. This is critical when addressing contraventions like unsightly properties, unpermitted building sites or property use, where verbal persuasion is often the first step.

The Local Government Compliance and Enforcement Association of British Columbia (LGCEA) is working on promoting consistency across BC for BEOs for standard practice, uniforms and recommended PPE. Based on local government feedback and standard practices in British Columbia, as well as the LGCEA's emphasis on professional standards, the following tools and PPE are commonly recommended for BEOs to ensure safety and effectiveness, as inferred from training providers and BEO job descriptions:

Uniform Standardization: Standardization was identified as one of the main issues in the profession at the 2019 Conference Bylaw Forum. The creation of a standardized uniform would provide guidance to local governments and a standardized appearance for citizens across the province.

Protective Vest: A lightweight, stab-resistant vest to protect against physical assaults or sharp objects, especially in high-risk situations, such as dealing with aggressive individuals or hazardous environments.

High-Visibility Clothing: Reflective uniform shirt, jackets or vests clearly marked with "Bylaw Enforcement" to ensure visibility and identification during fieldwork, particularly in low-light conditions or traffic-related duties.

Durable Footwear: Slip-resistant or steel-toed boots to protect against heavy objects or uneven terrain, as BEOs may need to lift items over 20 kg or navigate challenging environments.

Defensive Tools (where authorized and trained):

- Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray: A non-lethal tool for self-defense against aggressive individuals or animals, requiring specific training for safe use.
- Collapsible Baton: Used for defensive purposes in situations where de-escalation fails or an attack by a person or animal occurs, with training emphasizing legal and safe application. Also used to move debris during investigations.
- Handcuffs: For safely restraining individuals during enforcement actions, requiring training to ensure proper use and compliance with legal standards.

Communication Devices: Radios or mobile devices to coordinate with other BEOs, police, or emergency services, ensuring rapid response in hazardous situations.

Flashlight: A high-lumen flashlight for visibility in low-light conditions, which can also serve as a defensive tool if needed.

Puncture-Resistant Gloves: To protect against sharp objects or biohazards, particularly when dealing with unsightly properties or hazardous materials.

Identification and Badges: Official identification to establish authority and distinguish BEOs from other personnel, reducing confusion during enforcement.

Body Cameras: To enhance BEOs safety, accountability, and evidence collection, with the following considerations regarding body cameras for BEOs:

- **Officer and Public Safety:** Body cameras can de-escalate situations by making individuals aware their actions are recorded, reducing the likelihood of aggressive behavior toward BEOs.
- **Evidence Collection:** Cameras provide objective documentation of interactions, which is valuable for enforcing bylaws, resolving disputes, or supporting investigations, especially in cases involving non-compliance or complaints.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Body cameras promote professional conduct by BEOs and increase public trust by providing a clear record of enforcement actions, which can be critical in addressing complaints or legal challenges.

Regional District Bylaw Services is planning on hosting a Bylaw Officers Protective Force Option training session in Prince George on September 15 and 16. Invitations to the training have been sent out to all other local governments in central and northern BC. The Bylaw Officer Protective Force Options program

(<https://sheepdogselfprotection.com/bylaw/>) will be facilitated by Sheepdog Self Protection Inc., which focuses on equipping BEOs with the skills and knowledge to perform their duties safely, effectively, and professionally. Led by a certified Use of Force Instructor, with extensive law enforcement experience, the training emphasizes:

- **Personal Safety and De-escalation:** BEOs learn verbal and nonverbal communication, tactical positioning, threat cues, and legal authorities to de-escalate situations and avoid physical confrontations. The program prioritizes minimal force to ensure safety, control subjects, or disengage to a safe position.
- **Legal and Articulation Skills:** Participants are educated on legal aspects of force, including the National Use of Force Framework, to enhance confidence and competence. Emphasis is placed on articulating actions (threat perception, legal basis, and execution) to justify decisions.
- **Practical Training:** The course includes reality-based scenarios, physical techniques, and officer safety strategies tailored to bylaw enforcement. Topics cover managing aggressive people, mental health considerations, and environmental awareness (e.g., positioning during door knocks or during communications).

In discussions with City of Prince George Bylaw Services and based on a report to Council on August 30, 2024, staff who have received this training and equipment have relayed that they feel more confident and better prepared to handle their daily duties in a safe manner. Some employees have gone so far as to say that they would no longer feel comfortable doing the job without these tools and wished they had received them sooner.

Bylaw Services currently employs BEOs who have received training through the Justice Institute of BC and equip BEOs with safety shoes, a jacket and protective vest (both clearly identifying the Bylaw Enforcement Officer), a cell phone, a Garmin InReach and cut/puncture resistant gloves. BEOs attend training on an ongoing basis, such as dog safety and awareness, mental health and addiction symposium, and achieving compliance before having to attend court and steps in building a case.

In the near future, Bylaw Services will be working with Corporate Services to explore the implementation and the use of body cameras and micro drones for the safety of our BEOs, and the collection of evidence to promote the accountability and transparency of our BEOs.

Respectfully submitted,

“Blaine Harasimiuk”

Blaine Harasimiuk
Manager of Inspection Services

BH:dk

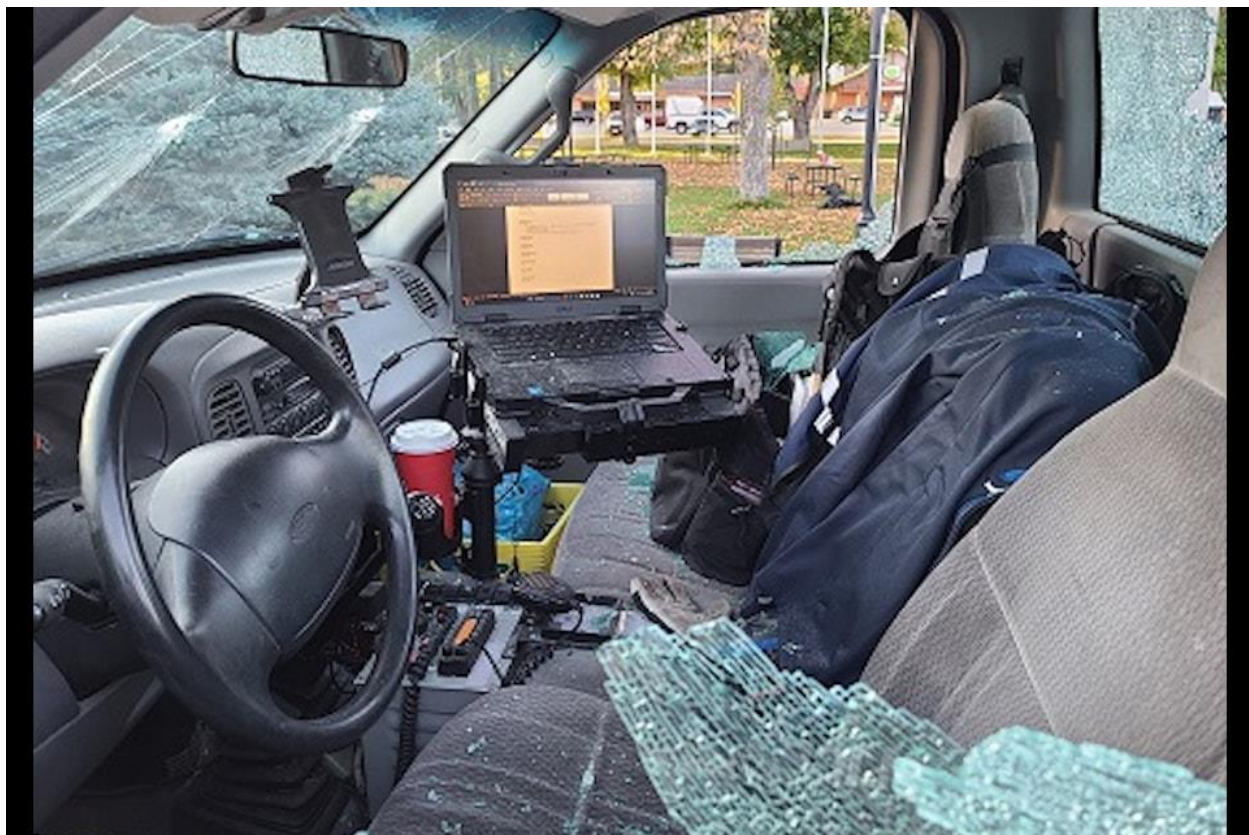
BACKGROUNDER

Over the past years, violence towards Bylaw Enforcement Officers has seen a troubling rise, reflecting growing tensions in public interactions. Reports indicate that officers face increasing hostility, ranging from verbal abuse to physical assaults, often during routine enforcement of local regulations. Factors such as resistance to authority and economic stressors may contribute to this trend. However, the true extent of this issue is likely underreported, as the following articles only capture incidents significant enough to garner media attention, leaving many altercations undocumented.

One incident of note occurred while two RDFFG Bylaw Enforcement Officers were investigating and unsightly premises and potential illegal structure. One Bylaw Enforcement Officers was crouched, looking under the building when a dog escaped the building and then charged aggressively at the Officer. The dog was stopped approximately half a metre away from the Officers neck by the owner. The dog continued to be aggressive and was growling at the Officers neck while the homeowner held it. No physical damage was done to the Officer.

Date	Heading	Location	Article
July 2025	Bylaw Officer assaulted over accessible parking dispute	Brockville, Ottawa	https://www.ctvnews.ca/ottawa/article/arrest-made-after-brockville-bylaw-officer-assaulted-over-accessible-parking-dispute/
July 2025	Parking Enforcement Officer attacked while conducting enforcement	Etobicoke, Toronto	https://www.ctvnews.ca/toronto/article/parking-enforcement-officer-assaulted-in-etobicoke/
March 2025	Man arrested after allegedly assaulting on-duty bylaw officer with pick up door	Barrie, Ontario	https://www.ctvnews.ca/barrie/article/man-arrested-and-charged-after-alleged-assault-to-on-duty-bylaw-officer/
November 2024	Bylaw Officer while issuing a parking ticket and taken to hospital	Caledon, Ontario	https://www.caledonenterprise.com/news/crime/updated-1-suspect-remains-outstanding-after-opp-charge-2-people-with-assaulting-a-caledon-bylaw/article_fc6d2653-c8b9-5b6f-8e31-b3ba8bd5e959.html
October 2024	Calgary Transit Peace Officer stabbed	Calgary, Alberta	https://newsroom.calgary.ca/man-charged-with-stabbing-calgary-transit-peace-officer/
September 2024	Man assaults Terrace Bylaw Officer. The bylaw officer reported that a man was uncooperative while the officer was trying to do his job. The man began assaulting the officer, but the officer fought back in self-defence	Terrace, British Columbia	https://www.terracestandard.com/local-news/police-briefs-weapons-and-ammo-seized-bylaw-officer-assaulted-and-more-7539219
July 2024	Toronto Pole denounce rise in assaults on parking officers. 46 assaults in the last year	Toronto	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-police-parking-enforcement-officer-assaults-1.7272385
October 2023	Community Safety officer attacked with knife by homeless man, vandalized city truck	Grand Forks, British Columbia	https://www.boundarycreektimes.com/local-news/changes-coming-to-grand-forks-bylaw-officer-role-7286619

September 2023	RCMP Officer shot dead while executing a search warrant	Coquitlam, British Columbia	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/rcmp-officer-rick-o-brien-1.6976614
May 2023	Kelowna Bylaw Officer allegedly assaulted at Rail Trail Site	Kelowna, British Columbia	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/428821/Kelowna-bylaw-officer-allegedly-assaulted-at-Rail-Trail-site
October 2022	RCMP Officer Killed in the line of duty, while assisting bylaw officers at a homeless campsite with mental health and homeless outreach team	Burnaby, British Columbia	https://globalnews.ca/news/9207858/burnaby-rmp-officer-killed-stabbing-homeless-camp/
August 2021	Police Officer violently attacked by a man in hotel lobby	Vancouver, British Columbia	https://globalnews.ca/video/11033626/vancouver-police-officer-tells-harrowing-story-of-attack-survival
February 2021	Man smashes sledgehammer into Bylaw Officer's truck	Victoria, British Columbia	https://www.terracestandard.com/news/man-arrested-after-sledgehammer-smashed-into-b-c-bylaw-officers-truck-6053595
June 2020	CRD bylaw officer left with minor injuries after picking up runaway dog at Esquimalt Lagoon	Victoria, British Columbia	https://chekevents.ca/crd-bylaw-officer-minor-injuries-runaway-dog-esquimalt-676039/
August 2019	Penticton Bylaw Officer intervenes sexual assault engaging in six minutes tussle with suspect	Penticton, British Columbia	https://www.pentictonwesternnews.com/news/bylaw-officer-and-penticton-resident-given-awards-for-intervening-in-sexual-assault-3606188
July 2019	A man off his medication who punches a taxi driver several times, kneed an RCMP officer, and both spat on and bit a bylaw officer	Abbotsford, British Columbia	https://cabinradio.ca/18547/news/yellowknife/man-who-punched-taxi-driver-and-bit-bylaw-officer-avoids-jail/
September 2018	Surrey bylaw officer severely injured after 'vicious' dog attack	Surrey, British Columbia	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/surrey-bylaw-officer-severely-injured-after-vicious-dog-attack-1.4821482
June 2018	Bylaw Officer assaulted after attempting to fine a suspect for feeding flock of feral peacocks	Surrey, British Columbia	https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/man-arrested-fined-after-feeding-surrey-peacocks-and-assaulting-officer
June 2015	Kamloops Bylaw Officer attacked with skateboard	Kamloops, British Columbia	https://vancouversun.com/news/metro/kamloops-bylaw-officer-attacked-with-a-skateboard
August 2012	Peace Officer killed while investigating dog complaint	Calgary, Alberta	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-rod-lazenby-fatality-inquiry-day-two-continues-peace-officer-kloschinsky-foothills-1.4158013
July 2011	Prince George Bylaw Officer involved in fight when man attending turned violent. Mounties were called to intervene.	Prince George, British Columbia	https://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/local-news/bylaw-officer-involved-in-fight-3707110



Grand Forks Incident October 2023