

ASIRT DECISION

**IN THE MATTER OF A USE OF FORCE BY AN
EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE OFFICER ON
OCTOBER 14, 2025**

Executive Director: Matthew Block

File No.: 2025-0046(S)

Date of Release: July 15, 2026

Introduction

On October 16, 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 allegations of an excessive use of force during an arrest on October 14, 2025. The investigation was transferred from the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Professional Standards Branch (PSB), which had been initially assigned carriage of the matter. This investigation was initiated prior to the establishment of the Police Review Commission on December 1, 2025, and associated changes to the *Police Act*.

ASIRT designated one subject officer and provided him 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 the affected person (AP) and obtained and reviewed his medical records in relation to this incident. They also reviewed an interview conducted by an EPS PSB investigator with the AP's sister, who provided relevant background information concerning the AP.

ASIRT investigators interviewed one police witness, witness officer #1 (WO1), who was the SO's partner. They also reviewed the SO's written report and notes.

ASIRT also reviewed video footage from a business nearby, which captured the incident in its entirety.

Circumstances Surrounding the Incident

On October 14, 2025, at about 1:18 a.m., the AP approached the driver's side window of a marked police vehicle occupied by the SO, WO1, and an unidentified individual in police custody. The AP appeared to be intoxicated and refused to comply with repeated directions to leave the area.

The SO exited the police vehicle and advised the AP that he was under arrest for public intoxication. As the SO took hold of the AP's arm to apply handcuffs, the AP resisted, turned toward the SO, and raised his hands toward the SO's head and neck area. The SO instructed the AP to "let go," before taking him forcefully to the ground.

During the takedown, the AP's head struck the ground resulting in a brief loss of consciousness. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) attended the scene and transported the AP to the University of Alberta Hospital. Medical assessment determined that the AP sustained a brain bleed, a facial abrasion, and a laceration to his nose and lip.

Affected Person (AP) Interview

ASIRT investigators interviewed the AP. Due to a language barrier, they required the assistance of an interpreter.

The AP reported that he was walking when police officers approached him from behind and began assaulting him. He was unable to recall the time of the incident, provide descriptions of the officers involved, or otherwise identify them.

The AP further believed that he had been struck with a steel bar or a similar object. He was unable to provide any additional details regarding his interaction with police. The AP also did not recall being admitted to hospital and advised that his memory has been impaired as a result of injuries he has sustained.

AP's Medical Records

The AP's medical records were obtained by ASIRT investigators pursuant to a signed consent release.

The records confirm that the AP was admitted to the University of Alberta Hospital on October 14, 2025, with a right-sided subdural hematoma, as well as cuts and abrasions to the forehead, and a laceration at the corner of his nose and upper lip. The AP was discharged on October 19, 2025, after declining a recommended craniotomy to evacuate the hematoma and making repeated efforts to leave the hospital against medical advice. The AP had previously undergone the same procedure in late 2024 and did not wish to repeat it. His family indicated that they were prepared to provide full support for his care at home.

The records further indicate that the AP had sustained a severe traumatic brain injury in November 2024, as a pedestrian involved in a motor vehicle collision.

Subject Officer

As the subject of a criminal investigation, the SO was entitled to rely on his right to silence and not speak to ASIRT. In this case, he provided ASIRT investigators with his report and notes.

The SO reported that he and his partner, witness officer #1 (WO1), were seated in their marked police vehicle attending to an unrelated intoxicated individual when the AP approached the driver's side window, where WO1 was positioned. The AP exhibited signs of gross intoxication, including glassy eyes, drooling, and an inability to speak coherently. His close proximity to the driver's side window caused the SO concern, as the AP's intentions were unclear. WO1 attempted to discern whether the AP required police assistance; however, the AP continued to speak incoherently. After a brief period, both the SO and WO1 directed the AP to leave the area and return home.

The AP failed to comply. Instead, his tone became increasingly confrontational, which the SO interpreted as an attempt to provoke an argument.

The SO's concerns were further heightened by contextual factors, including the neighbourhood's elevated rates of violence, their close proximity to a location where a security guard had recently been fatally shot, and his awareness of a growing antipathy toward police among some residents in the area. Additionally, the AP was wearing a bulky jacket, raising concerns for the SO that it could conceal a weapon.

In response, the SO exited the police vehicle and approached the AP, immediately advising him that he was under arrest for public intoxication. When the SO took hold of the AP's left arm, the AP pulled away and turned toward him. The SO interpreted this movement as an indication that the AP was prepared to engage him physically. In an effort to prevent further escalation, the SO quickly gained control of the AP and forcefully took him to the ground. The SO noted that, despite the AP's level of intoxication, he expected that the AP would brace himself prior to hitting the ground; however, this did not occur.

The AP struck the ground with significant force and lost consciousness. He regained consciousness by the time EMS arrived. The AP became aggressive towards EMS personnel, necessitating the use of restraints and the application of a spit mask. The AP was subsequently transported to the University of Alberta Hospital for further medical assessment.

Witness Officer #1 (WO1)

ASIRT investigators interviewed WO1 and reviewed his report and notes.

WO1 advised that he was seated in a marked police vehicle with the SO, with one individual in custody in the rear seat. While attempting to identify the individual in custody, the AP approached the vehicle and came to the window. WO1 lowered the window slightly and advised the AP that he was sufficiently close, citing officer safety concerns. WO1 observed that the AP appeared grossly intoxicated, was speaking incoherently, and failed to comply with repeated directions to maintain distance. Both WO1 and the SO directed the AP several times to leave the area. WO1 further inquired whether the AP required assistance; in response, the AP's expression shifted to what WO1 described as confusion or disgust. The AP then stepped backward, and his demeanour changed in a manner WO1 interpreted as passive aggressive.

The SO subsequently exited the police vehicle and advised the AP that he was under arrest. As the SO reached for the AP's arm, the AP immediately recoiled and pulled his arms away in a flailing motion. The SO then grasped the AP with both hands and, in a sweeping motion, grounded him. During the takedown, the AP's face made contact with the ground, and he appeared to lose consciousness briefly. WO1 broadcast a use of force notification over the police radio and requested EMS, while the SO proceeded to apply handcuffs.

Video Footage

ASIRT investigators reviewed video footage obtained from a nearby business, which captured the incident in its entirety. However, only portions of the verbal interaction between the officers and the AP are discernible due to poor audio quality.

At about 1:18 a.m., the AP is observed walking toward a marked police vehicle that was parked in a lot with its engine running. The AP approached from the rear of the vehicle and appeared unsteady on his feet. He proceeded along the sidewalk running parallel to the vehicle, briefly pausing at the front passenger side door, before retracing his steps and moving around to the driver's side window.

The AP positioned himself directly beside the driver's side window and was seen leaning forward as though speaking to someone inside the vehicle. Muffled voices are audible, and the AP can be heard intermittently raising his voice. After approximately one minute, the SO exited from the passenger side of the vehicle and walked around toward the driver's side.

As the SO approached, the AP uttered an indistinct comment, to which the SO responded, "too late for that, come here, now you're under arrest." The SO then stepped forward and began to physically engage the AP. The AP turned slightly toward the SO and raised his left arm, making contact with the SO's head and neck area. The SO directed the AP to "let go." A brief physical struggle ensued, culminating in the SO forcefully taking the AP to the ground at 1:20 a.m.

The AP fell face-first onto the pavement without making any visible attempt to brace the fall. The SO immediately moved to handcuff the AP. Within seconds, the AP can be heard groaning while on the ground.

WO1 then exited the police vehicle. EMS arrived at 1:29 a.m. and transported the AP to hospital.

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. 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.

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 relevant times, police were acting lawfully in the execution of their duties to preserve the peace. They were attending to an unrelated individual who appeared to be intoxicated when they were approached by the AP, who was intoxicated, and refused to comply with repeated police directions to leave the area.

The AP's evidence is acknowledged to be unreliable. His account of the incident, including the nature and circumstances of the alleged assault and the purported use of a weapon, is inconsistent with the available video evidence. Additionally, information provided by the AP's sister, as well as the AP's medical records, confirms a recent history of head trauma, which likely contributed to his impaired recollection.

The incident unfolded within a short timeframe. Video evidence establishes that the interaction between police and the AP lasted approximately two minutes, during which officers remained inside the vehicle for the first minute. Both the SO and WO1 reported that they were unable to discern what the AP was saying and that they issued repeated directions for him to step away from the vehicle and leave the area, which he refused to do. Although a language barrier may have contributed to the officer's difficulty in understanding the AP, it was also evident from his interactions with attending paramedics that he possessed a basic ability to comprehend and communicate in English.

After W01 asked whether he required assistance, the AP's tone and demeanour shifted. They perceived him to have become confrontational and passive aggressive. This change in behaviour, coupled with his refusal to comply and his close proximity to the police vehicle, prompted the SO to exit the vehicle and arrest the AP for public intoxication.

In effecting the lawful arrest, the SO took hold of the AP. The AP resisted by turning toward the SO and intentionally making contact with the SO's neck and head area. A brief physical struggle ensued, during which the SO executed a single sweeping manoeuvre to bring the AP to the ground. The AP made no observable attempt to brace himself for the fall, which would ordinarily be expected.

It is important to note that the SO did not drive the AP head-first into the ground. Rather, the SO used his body weight and momentum to guide the AP in a lateral, sweeping motion toward the ground, releasing him mid-movement. As a result, the AP fell under the force of his own body weight and momentum. While the impact was significant and resulted in serious, unintended injury, the force applied by the SO was minimal. The technique employed constitutes a basic control method that was reasonable, proportionate, and necessary in the circumstances to gain control of a detained individual actively resisting arrest. The SO did not use more force than was necessary to effect the arrest.

Conclusion

On October 14, 2025, the AP was lawfully arrested for public intoxication. The SO was authorized by law to control the AP and acted reasonably in doing so. The use of force by the SO was proportionate, necessary, and reasonable. As a result, there are no reasonable grounds to believe that an offence was committed.

Original Signed

Matthew Block

Executive Director

July 15, 2026

Date of Release