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Shelburne police will now carry tasers

As of June 10th all frontline Shelburne police officers will be carrying Conducted Energy Weapons (CEW's) ? commonly known as ?Tasers' while on duty.

CEW's have had much media attention, several coroners' inquiries and public debate over the past 10 years. New legislation has opened the door for all frontline officers in Ontario to carry CEWs on duty. Several police services are researching or already moving forward with outfitting and training all front line officers with this tool.

In November 2013, the provincial government issued revised guidelines allowing for the expanded deployment of the devices by police services, as previously only frontline supervisors and officers who are members of tactical units, hostage rescue teams and containment teams were allowed to carry the weapon.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services initiated a review, which included an examination of current medical literature, a jurisdictional scan and consultation with stakeholders, including police and civil liberties advocates. The ministry has now placed the decision in the hands of police services in order for them to determine which officers should be permitted to carry tasers, based on their local needs and circumstances.

On Wednesday May 14th at 7 p.m. the Shelburne Police Service hosted a presentation and public consultation in regards to expanding the issuance of CEWs to all frontline officers. The presentation provided information on how CEWs work, current legislation in regards to police carrying CEWs, and what the options were for Shelburne Police.

Since the public consultation in May, the Shelburne Police Services Board approved the use of CEW's by all sworn officers, and procedures have been put in place as required by the Police Service's Act and Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Shelburne officers are being trained throughout this year. The majority of Shelburne officers are already qualified on the CEW and all should be carrying them by the end of 2014.