



## VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT | *Beyond the Call*

November 19, 2025

IPU Reference: 25-1216A

VIA EMAIL

Gre McMullen



Dear Greg McMullen:

**Re: Records Access Request**

We are writing further to our letter dated October 3, 2025. In that letter, we responded to items 1) and 3) of your request for information made to the Vancouver Police Department on August 21, 2025. We are now in a position to respond to the remainder of your request:

2) Tools and Technical Capabilities

- (a) Records describing or relating to software or hardware tools used to conduct searches or seizures of electronic devices, including tools used to bypass encryption, biometrics, passwords, passphrases, or other security measures.
- (b) For each such tool, any manuals, technical documentation, training material, promotional material, contracts, purchase orders, or other records.

...

4) Statistics

- Statistical records, reports, or summaries showing:
  - (a) the number of times access credentials (passwords, passphrases, biometrics) were requested from device owners or users;
  - (b) the number of times such requests were refused;
  - (c) the number of times hardware or software tools were used to facilitate searches or seizures of electronic devices or the data on them.

Seeking records from 2020 to present".

In response to item 2)(a), the VPD Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) utilizes software or hardware tools from the following vendors to conduct searches and/or seizures of electronic devices:

1. Cellebrite
2. Magnet Forensics
3. MSAB (Micro Systemation AB)
4. SCG Canada
5. Digital Intelligence
6. Arsenal Recon
7. XWays
8. Final Data
9. Passware
10. Deepspar
11. Opentext.

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Item 2)(b) of your request is particularly broad, both in category of records sought and length of time. DFU assessed this portion of your request and estimated a minimum of 500 hours to conduct this search. Rather than levy an unreasonable fee estimate we wondered if you would consider rewording or narrowing the scope of this item as it may significantly reduce resources required to fulfil this portion.

We are unable to compile statistics responsive to items 4)(a) as these are not data mineable fields from which a record can be produced. Responding to this portion of your request requires a manual review of all records for the specified time period, which would exceed our duty to respond under section 6 of the Act (excerpt attached). In an effort to assist, DFU provided the following response with respect to access credentials:

DFU conducts searches of electronic devices by 3 primary search authorities: judicial authorization (90%+), consent (9%+) and under the provisions of the Coroner's Act (1%). For cases involving criminal jeopardy we obtain judicial authorization to access and review data on digital devices.

In response to item 4)(c), DFU provided the following numbers and explanatory notes:

YEAR	Number of Electronic Devices Searched by VPD DFU
2020	906
2021	1286
2022	943
2023	1063
2024	849
2025 to date	510

\* This number may be in excess of devices submitted to DFU. For example, a computer server submitted to DFU for examination may contain 10 hard drives. This would only count as 1 device by VPD Property Office records, but DFU would split this exhibit into 10 exhibits, as each hard drive is a separate object to be examined.

\*\* In accordance with accepted forensic practices of using industry standard forensic tools to search electronic devices, the number of devices searched will correlate with the number of times hardware or software tools were used.

Under s. 52 of the Act, you may ask the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review our response to your request. You have thirty (30) days from receipt of this letter to request a review by writing to:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner  
P.O. Box 9038, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9A4  
Telephone (250)387-5629 Fax (250)387-1696

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's office with a copy of this letter and a copy of your original request to the Vancouver Police Department.

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Before requesting a review, you may wish to contact our office regarding the information you have received. If you have questions or require clarification, please feel free to contact the Information and Privacy Unit at (604) 717-3071 or email [foi@vpd.ca](mailto:foi@vpd.ca).

Yours truly,



Civilian Analyst (VA9426)  
Information and Privacy Unit  
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**Duty to assist applicants**

- 6 (1) The head of a public body must make every reasonable effort to assist applicants and to respond without delay to each applicant openly, accurately and completely.
- (2) Moreover, the head of a public body must create for an applicant a record to which section 4 gives a right of access if
- (a) the record can be created from a machine readable record in the custody or under the control of the public body using its normal computer hardware and software and technical expertise, and
  - (b) creating the record would not unreasonably interfere with the operations of the public body.