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The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Moves Forward with National Taser-Related Research Initiatives

(Ottawa) – The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP) today announced that the Canadian Police Research Centre (CPRC) will undertake, on its behalf, a comprehensive review of, and additional research on, the use of Conducted Energy Devices (CEDs) — more commonly known as Tasers — to provide a national perspective on the safety and use of the devices.

“A large body of research already exists on Conducted Energy Devices,” remarked Steven Chabot, Deputy Director General of the Sûreté du Québec and President of the CACCP, “and while CEDs have a solid track record for safety, CED-related incidents that involve injury or death are an obvious concern for law enforcement personnel and the public alike. We have asked the CPRC to update its comprehensive 2005 report to reflect any new findings regarding CEDs and CED-related issues, to proceed with a study of individuals resisting arrest as recommended in that 2005 report and to look at ways of establishing a more national approach to evaluating evolving CED technology and encouraging CED information-sharing.”

The latest research will include a year long study that aims to identify links between the individual and situational characteristics of people who have been subject to police restraint, different methods of restraints and the risk of death associated. This study is entitled RESTRAINT: Risk of dEath in Subjects That Resist: Assessment of Incidence and Nature of faTal outcomes. Data collection has already begun and the study will be expanded to include several cities across Canada.

CED technology is continuously evolving and the CACCP's renewed focus on these technologies will enable the law enforcement community to better respond to these changes/ to keep abreast of the latest developments/ to monitor the situation and respond accordingly. There are also a number of new developments in less lethal and directed energy technologies that will soon be available to police services in Canada. In response, the CACCP has asked the CPRC to act as the point of contact for the study and evaluation of these systems for law enforcement in Canada.

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“Continued research and evaluation work on CED technology is a natural fit for the Canadian Police Research Centre,” stated Steve Palmer, CPRC Executive Director. “We are already working with the US National Institute of Justice and the UK Home Office Scientific Development Branch to coordinate and share research to evaluate the latest generation CEDs. The CACP’s support in establishing the CPRC as a Canadian centre of excellence on CED technologies bolsters our role as the single, national focal point for technology research and development efforts in support of Canada's police and public safety community.”

“The CPRC is widely recognized as an organization that can provide objective information for both the public and policy makers on a number of issues,” added Mr. Chabot. “The organization’s continued work regarding the safety and effectiveness of CED technologies is most welcomed.”

An update on the state of CED-related technology and issues is expected by the end of the first quarter in 2008. The RESTRAINT study will begin early in 2008 with a final report available in 2009 (a full year of data collection is foreseen).

Additional information on the CPRC and its work involving CEDs (including the 2005 technical report on CEDs released in 2006) is available on the CPRC’s Web site at www.cprc.org.

A background document is attached.

For additional information, media representatives may contact:

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BACKGROUND

Conducted Energy Devices — The Canadian Perspective

- The term Conducted Energy Device or CED is a generic term used to represent the TASER© X26 and M26 as well devices from other manufacturers. While some police services prefer the term “Conducted Energy Weapon” the CPRC, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the US National Institute of Justice and the Police Executive Research Forum amongst others have agreed to standardize on the term CED.
- CEDs are a less than lethal option deployed in a variety of serious situations that may include dealing with dangerous and unstable individuals who have become combative or self-destructive. By instantly stopping an uncontrollable individual, the CED enables police to avert injuries or a potentially fatal outcome.
- Thousands of police agencies throughout the world have equipped their officers with CEDs, including some 4,400 law enforcement and corrections agencies in North America. In Canada, CEDs are in use or have been tested by the vast majority of agencies.

Typically, CEDs work by delivering an electric output to temporarily subdue an individual. For example, M26 Taser propels two probes (which travel at 50 m per second) attached to insulated wire with a maximum range of six metres. When contact is made with the individual, the M26 Taser delivers 50,000 volts at 26 watts for a full cycle, lasting up to five seconds. This electrical output simply “jams” the body’s nervous system. The Taser sends signals called Taser Waves, similar to those used by the brain to signal body activity, which overpower the normal signals of the body’s nerve fibres. This less than lethal force option is designed to interrupt the central nervous system with no long term effects, briefly incapacitating the individual so that police can intervene and administer appropriate restraints.

- The CPRC was originally established as a partnership between the National Research Council Canada (NRC), Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, The Canadian Professional Police Association and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). As a national focal point for research and development efforts that support Canada's law enforcement and responder communities, the CPRC will work in partnership with Canada’s responder community, the private sector and the broader S&T community to advance research, to develop standards, and evaluate tools and technologies that support the work of police and other first responders in communities across the country. In February 2007, the Government of Canada announced that the CPRC would be provided with 10 million dollars over two years and relocated to Regina.

The CPRC is managed by Defence Research and Development Canada's (DRDC) Centre for Security Science (the Centre); a joint endeavour with Public Safety Canada to provide S&T services and support to address national public safety and security objectives. The Centre's capabilities lie in leading and administering research, development, testing and evaluation of technologies, and identifying future trends and threats. It has also established a network of national and international S&T partners within the public safety and security communities. DRDC, an agency within the Department of National Defence, is comprised of a national network of seven defence research centres. The Agency works in collaboration with private industry, allied forces and academia to respond to the needs of the Canadian Forces.