



Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Value-for-Money Audit:
Ontario
Provincial Police



December 2021

Ontario Provincial Police

1.0 Summary

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) operates under the *Police Services Act* (Act), and primarily provides:

- frontline policing services in areas of Ontario that do not have their own police force;
- patrols on provincial highways, waterways and trail systems;
- municipal policing services under contract where requested by municipalities;
- emergency and other support services to all communities in the province; and
- investigations into complex criminal cases and organized crime.

The OPP was established in 1909 and is one of the largest police forces in North America, with about 5,600 police officers and 2,500 civilian employees. The OPP has 69 police stations, called detachments, located throughout the province, and the detachments operate an additional 92 satellite stations. Each detachment reports to one of five regional headquarters or to the Highway Safety Division, which in turn report to General Headquarters in Orillia.

In 2020, the OPP provided municipal policing services to 327, or 74%, of Ontario's municipalities, and is responsible for patrolling over 1 million square kilometres across the province, from remote northern and First Nation communities to rural and urban centres. This includes more than 99,000 kilometres of waterways and trails, and over 130,000 kilometres of roadways. In 2020, OPP officers laid over 424,000 charges, including over 104,000 charges

for violations of the Canadian Criminal Code, and over 269,000 charges related to the *Highway Traffic Act*. The OPP's operating expenditures totalled more than \$1.2 billion in the 2020/21 fiscal year, an increase of 26% since our last audit in 2011/12. Salaries and benefits costs represented 88% of these expenditures.

Despite increases in OPP expenditures, we found that the OPP employed 9% fewer police officers than at the time of our previous audit. In addition, detachments were increasingly understaffed with frontline officers, known as constables. In 2020, over 1,000 frontline constable positions were vacant, representing 26% of the OPP's total funded frontline constable positions.

Frontline constable vacancies also appear to be contributing to a decline in the service levels provided by the OPP to municipalities. Despite increasing reported incidents of crime and calls for service in recent years, and an increase in the number of municipalities and population that the OPP serves, the number of hours of patrol that the OPP provided to municipalities and on provincial highways decreased by 48% from 2011 to 2020, from 1.87 million hours to just over 975,000 hours. Not surprisingly, we also found that the OPP's fleet of frontline road vehicles was underutilized. Patrol is the primary means of providing proactive policing, and studies have shown that police presence in an area can reduce and act as a deterrent to crime. In addition, our testing indicated that the OPP was not providing each municipality it provides policing services to with the level of service, specifically uniformed officer hours, that its deployment model identifies as required to respond to calls for service

on a timely basis. We also found that frontline officer vacancy rates varied considerably between OPP regions and detachments, and that regions with higher vacancy rates also have lower crime clearance rates. However, despite the differences in officer staffing between regions, and at detachments within regions, the OPP has not taken sufficient steps to adjust its deployment of officers to equalize staffing at detachments most in need.

The OPP's efforts to monitor and measure the quality and effectiveness of the police services it provides is limited. We found that detachment inspections often showed recurring compliance violations, and the number of violations identified during inspections were increasing. We also found that generally, there were limited consequences for officers responsible for violations that posed a significant safety or liability risk. In addition, the OPP has not identified key performance indicators to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations.

The following are some of our specific concerns about the OPP's delivery of police services:

- **OPP detachments are increasingly understaffed with frontline officers.** The number of frontline officers working in detachments across the province has been in decline, and these detachments are significantly understaffed. In 2020, over 1,000 frontline constable positions were vacant, this includes officers on accommodated working arrangements that are restricted from performing some or all of their frontline duties. These vacancies represent 26% of the total funded frontline constable positions at the OPP. Constables on long-term leave made up 33% of these vacancies, constables unavailable for frontline duty on accommodated working arrangements made up 37%, constables on non-frontline temporary assignments made up 18%, and open constable positions that had not been filled made up the remaining 12%.
- **Stress-related officer leaves are contributing to rising vacancies and costs.** Medical leave taken by officers with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is contributing significantly to increasing vacancies at detachments. In addition, the OPP is incurring rapidly increasing financial costs, reaching \$42.7 million in 2020, in relation to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims submitted by officers, in large part due to claims for PTSD. Exposure to psycho-social situations, which includes traumatic incidents leading to diagnoses of PTSD, represented 75% of all OPP WSIB incidents in 2020, and these types of claims in 2020 led to 11,037 days of leave for OPP employees. The increasing number of OPP officers filing WSIB claims for PTSD and other mental health injuries is symptomatic of an ongoing issue related to officer mental health and stress.
- **The OPP is providing less proactive policing in the province.** One of the most significant impacts of OPP constable shortages is in the amount of patrol the OPP is providing in municipalities and on highways. Patrol is the primary means of providing proactive policing. In 2020, the OPP provided just over 975,000 hours of patrol, down 28% from the over 1.35 million hours it provided in 2016, and down 48% from the 1.87 million hours it provided in 2011. In 2020, patrol made up just 13% of frontline officer hours, compared to 22% in 2011. Studies have shown that police presence in an area can reduce and act as a deterrent to crime. The OPP's reduced frontline staffing and patrol hours over the last decade are occurring at the same time as incidents of crime in OPP-patrolled areas have been increasing after reaching a low in 2017, and while calls for service and the number of municipalities and population the OPP serves have steadily increased.
- **Many OPP vehicles are underutilized.** We found that where the OPP had recorded the kilometric travel of its frontline road vehicles, from 2018/19 to 2020/21 between 16% and 34% of them were underutilized relative to the Ministry of Transportation's utilization guideline for OPS vehicles (including enforcement vehicles) of 14,400 annual kilometres. (The OPP does not have its own internal benchmark.) We estimated the cost to the OPP to purchase 241 vehicles

identified as underutilized in 2019/20 at over \$9 million; the cost to repair and maintain these 241 underutilized vehicles was nearly \$640,000 in 2019 alone. Given these costs, even a modest reduction in vehicles owned and operated by the OPP based on utilization could result in significant savings in capital and operating costs.

- **The OPP is not delivering service levels to municipalities that are identified as required by its deployment model.** The ability of the OPP to provide sufficient policing services to each municipality is critical, as the OPP is the only policing option for many small municipalities with no nearby municipal or city police services to retain as an alternative. We found that municipalities do not always receive the level of service (hours and full-time equivalent staff) that the OPP's deployment model identifies as required to respond to calls for service on a timely basis. Specifically, for the 230 municipalities for which the OPP had available data, we found that 111, or 48% of these municipalities received less than 75% of the constable hours and full-time equivalent staff (FTE) the OPP identified were needed to respond to calls for service on a timely basis, including 26 municipalities that received less than 50% of the needed hours and FTEs.
- **Regions with higher frontline officer vacancies resolve fewer crimes.** Frontline officer vacancy rates vary considerably between OPP regions and detachments. While the West and East regions had 28% and 27% of their frontline constable positions vacant in 2020, the North West region had only 17%. In addition, while one detachment in the West region had a 44% vacancy rate, another detachment in the same region had a vacancy rate of just 18%. We also found that regions with lower vacancy rates (higher staffing) also have higher crime clearance rates. However, despite the differences in constable staffing between regions, and at detachments within regions, the OPP has not taken sufficient steps to adjust officer deployment to equalize staffing.
- **Frontline officer schedules are not aligned with calls for service.** In our 1998, 2005 and 2012 audits of the OPP we found that officers were not scheduled in a way that corresponded to peak workload periods. During our current audit, we found this continues to be the case. Our analysis of 2020 shift data for all detachments found that:
 - OPP detachments receive their peak number of calls for service between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., and receive the fewest calls between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m.—75% lower than during peak hours. However, the number of frontline constables on duty during this much less busy time was only 25% lower than during peak hours.
 - Frontline constables take the most vacation time and work the fewest hours in August, which is also the month with the greatest number of calls for service. In contrast, frontline constable hours worked in January were 4% greater than in August, even though the OPP received 30% fewer calls.
- **Detachment inspections lack authority to drive improvement.** The OPP's Quality Assurance (QA) Unit is responsible for detachment inspections that check for compliance with requirements under the *Police Services Act*, OPP and OPS policies. We selected a sample of 10 detachments and compared their most recent inspection results, conducted between 2018 and 2020, with the results from their previous inspection. We found that:
 - In previous inspections, inspectors found 233 violations across the 10 detachments. In the most recent inspections they found 422, an increase of 81%.
 - Nine of the 10 detachments had more violations identified in their most recent inspection than in their previous inspection, and nine of 10 had recurring violations across both inspections.Officers at detachments who were found with significant violations appeared to face

limited consequences. For example, following a 2020 detachment inspection that found an officer with various weapons and ammunition in their unlocked personal locker, the officer removed the items and was merely advised to follow standard operating procedures.

- **Procurement policies and approvals are not being followed at the OPP.** The OPP does not have effective controls in place to prevent duplicate purchases and purchases that were not properly authorized. For example:
 - In 2019, OPP staff made the decision to issue a \$1.89 million purchase order before the proper approvals were received, including the approval of the Deputy Solicitor General, Community Safety, as required for purchases greater than \$1 million.
 - The OPP hired a vendor under a non-competitive procurement process to provide daily meals for as many as 160 officers, for a significant eight month long operation at a cost of over \$444,000. While the Ontario Public Service Procurement directive allows for non-competitive procurement in urgent situations, an exemption must be sought and the reasons documented. The OPP had not sought an exemption or documented why they had not conducted a competitive procurement.
- **The OPP does not accurately track or monitor call response times.** An important indicator related to public safety is how quickly a police service responds to calls, particularly high-priority, urgent calls. However, the OPP does not analyze information about how much time elapses between when a call is received by one of its regional communications centres and when the officer arrives on the scene. Consequently, the OPP does not know whether average response times are reasonable, particularly for more serious or higher-priority calls. Our attempt to analyze response times found significant issues with the accuracy and reliability of OPP data that made this analysis impossible. We found examples of several

jurisdictions that measured and publicly reported response times to calls for service, including the Vancouver Police Department and the Ottawa Police Service.

- **The OPP does not use performance indicators with targets to measure its effectiveness.** The OPP has not identified key performance indicators with targets, and does not use such indicators to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations. Prior to 2020, the OPP was using provincial reduction targets for violent and property crime, and motor vehicle collisions. The provincial target for 2017 to 2019 was a reduction of 2% in these areas. However, the OPP did not publicly report organization-wide results against these targets, and has not performed an overall analysis to determine whether they had or had not been met.

This report contains 15 recommendations, consisting of 34 action items, to address our findings.

Overall Conclusion

Our audit concluded that the OPP did not have processes in place to consistently deliver provincial and municipal police services efficiently and effectively. For example, we found that in 2020, over 1,000 front-line constable positions were vacant, representing 26% of the OPP's total funded frontline constable positions. In addition, we noted that these vacancies appear to be contributing to a decline in the service levels provided by the OPP to municipalities. We found that despite increasing reported incidents of crime and calls for service in recent years, the number of hours of patrol that the OPP provided to municipalities and on provincial highways decreased by 48%, from 1.87 million hours in 2011 to just 975,000 hours in 2020. In addition, we found that frontline officer vacancy rates varied considerably between OPP regions and detachments, and that the regions with the higher vacancy rates also have lower crime clearance rates. However, the OPP does not sufficiently adjust officer deployment to equalize staffing levels.

We also found that the OPP does not schedule frontline officers in accordance with peak workload periods. We noted that OPP detachments receive the fewest calls between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m.—75% lower than during peak hours. However, the number of frontline constables on duty during this much less busy time was only 25% lower than during peak hours. As well, we also found that many of the OPP's frontline road vehicles are underutilized when compared to MTO's utilization guideline for OPS vehicles. We estimate that the cost to the OPP to purchase the 241 road vehicles that were identified as underutilized in 2019/20 was over \$9 million, and that the cost to repair and maintain these 241 underutilized vehicles was nearly \$640,000 in 2019 alone.

Finally, we concluded that the OPP does not have performance indicators with targets to measure and publicly report on the effectiveness of the police services it delivers. We found that the OPP has not identified key performance indicators with targets, and does not use such indicators to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations.

OPP OVERALL RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) appreciates the work of the Auditor General in its completion of the value-for-money audit. The OPP is committed to its mission to serve our province by protecting its citizens, upholding the law and preserving public safety, while respecting the values of leading with integrity, honesty and courage. As the Auditor General has noted, the OPP is faced with staffing challenges and has taken steps to address this by developing a draft Service Delivery Model.

As noted in the report, since 2019, the OPP has made progress regarding promoting a healthy workplace and taking action to mitigate stress placed on its members. With the support of the provincial government, the OPP has invested significant resources into mental health supports, including the establishment of the Healthy Workplace Team in 2020. In keeping with the

Auditor General's recommendations, the OPP is highly focused on continuing to make progress in this area through the ongoing implementation of the recommendations in its Mental Health Strategy & Action Plan and the Ontario Provincial Police Independent Review Panel: Final Report.

The OPP is committed to continuous improvement and will benefit in this regard from the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's report. Actions taken by the OPP to respond to the Auditor General's recommendations will be developed, where appropriate, in consultation with the Ontario Provincial Police Association, interested stakeholders and the communities we serve.

2.0 Background

2.1 Overview of the Ontario Provincial Police

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) operates under the *Police Services Act* (Act), and primarily provides:

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in Orillia. The OPP also operates five regional communications centres that take 9-1-1 emergency and other calls from the public, and dispatch police. See **Appendix 1** for a listing of all OPP detachments, satellite stations and regional headquarters, and **Appendix 2** for a map illustrating each OPP region.

In 2020, the OPP provided municipal policing services to 327, or 74%, of Ontario's municipalities, including 326 municipalities on a cost-recovery basis. The OPP is responsible for patrolling over 1 million square kilometres across the province, from remote northern and First Nation communities to rural and urban centres—this includes more than 99,000 kilometres of waterways and trails, and over 130,000 kilometres of roadways. In 2020, OPP officers laid over 424,000 charges, including over 104,000 charges for violations of the Canadian Criminal Code, and over 269,000 charges related to the *Highway Traffic Act*.

The OPP's operating expenditures totalled over \$1.2 billion in the 2020/21 fiscal year, with salaries and benefits costs representing 88% of these expenditures. In 2020, municipalities that received OPP policing services reimbursed the OPP for over one-third, or nearly \$426 million, of the OPP's total operating expenditures. The OPP's Commissioner, the

highest-ranking member of the OPP, reports to and is accountable to the Deputy Solicitor General of Community Safety.

2.2 Key Statistics

2.2.1 Ontarians and Municipalities Served by the OPP

In 2020, the OPP provided policing services to 327, or 74%, of Ontario's 444 municipalities, and 16.3% of Ontario's population. **Figure 1** provides a breakdown of the number of municipalities the OPP provided with police services each year for the last 10 years.

2.2.2 Number of Calls for Service Received by the OPP

In 2019, the OPP received approximately 851,500 calls for service—a 19% increase from the 716,500 received in 2011, at the time of our last audit of the OPP. Calls decreased by 18% in 2020 to approximately 722,500, primarily driven by public health measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include calls related to criminal activity, traffic-related incidents, and other matters such as requests to help locate a family member.

Figure 1: Number of Municipalities and Percentage of Population Provided with Police Services by OPP, 2011–2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police and Statistics Canada

Year	OPP Municipalities Served	OPP Population Served (million)	Ontario Population (million)	Population Served by OPP (%)
2011	323	2.26	13.26	17.0
2012	323	2.26	13.39	16.9
2013	325	2.27	13.51	16.8
2014	325	2.28	13.62	16.8
2015	324	2.28	13.71	16.6
2016	324	2.31	13.88	16.7
2017	325	2.34	14.07	16.6
2018	325	2.35	14.31	16.4
2019	326	2.38	14.55	16.3
2020	327	2.40	14.75	16.3
Change (%)	1.2	6.2	11.2	-4.1

Note: OPP population served is an estimate.

Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the number of calls by type since the time of our last audit.

Our 2012 audit of the OPP identified that there had been a decline in the number of crimes over the previous two decades both nationally and in Ontario. Crimes in Ontario continued to decrease in the years following our 2012 audit, reaching a low of approximately 547,600 incidents in 2014. Following 2014, crimes increased by 21% to over 660,900 incidents in 2019, before declining by 10% in 2020 due to public health measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Figure 3** illustrates the number of confirmed incidents of crime reported by all police services in Ontario from 2011 to 2020, as well as the proportion reported by the OPP.

Crime in OPP jurisdictions decreased to approximately 85,700 incidents in 2014, and remained at approximately this level until 2017. Between 2017 and 2019 crime in OPP jurisdictions increased by 12%, eventually reaching over 95,400 in 2019, as shown in **Figure 3**. In 2020, incidents of crime in OPP jurisdictions decreased by 5%, to 90,471 incidents, driven by public health measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Canada, incidents of crime are classified under the following seven broad types for reporting purposes:

- **Violent:** such as homicide, assault, sexual assault, attempted murder and robbery.
- **Property:** such as breaking and entering, theft of a motor vehicle, arson and identity theft.
- **Other criminal:** such as counterfeiting, prostitution-related offences, weapons-related offences and disturbing the peace.
- **Criminal Code traffic:** such as impaired driving causing death, dangerous operation causing death, and failure to stop or remain at the scene of an accident.
- **Drug-related:** such as possession and trafficking.
- **Youth:** offences under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
- **Other federal statutes:** offences under other federal statutes such as the *Income Tax Act*, *Firearms Act* and *Customs Act*.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of crimes by type reported in OPP jurisdictions compared to other police services in the province in 2019. Although data for 2020 is available, 2020 crime incidents were impacted by public health measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and are not representative of a typical year.

The OPP primarily provides police services in rural communities; however, as shown in **Figure 4**, the types of crime reported by the OPP are largely

Figure 2: Number and Types of Calls for Police Services Received by OPP, 2011–2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Year	Criminal	Traffic	Other	Total
2011	103,230	290,909	322,362	716,501
2012	101,842	285,875	345,461	733,178
2013	92,527	293,049	343,045	728,621
2014	88,614	291,501	348,156	728,271
2015	92,910	308,876	357,354	759,140
2016	92,756	310,929	350,494	754,179
2017	93,923	327,304	361,963	783,190
2018	100,400	360,792	381,543	842,735
2019	101,692	348,041	401,761	851,494
2020	95,358	279,919	347,273	722,550

Figure 3: Number of Confirmed Incidents of Crime in Ontario Reported by OPP and All Police Services, 2011–2019

Source of data: Statistics Canada

Year	Reported by All Police Services*	Reported by OPP	% Reported by OPP
2011	635,913	106,909	17
2012	618,001	103,867	17
2013	566,931	90,845	16
2014	547,570	85,726	16
2015	551,243	85,905	16
2016	567,624	86,022	15
2017	599,238	85,306	14
2018	644,828	90,357	14
2019	660,927	95,401	14
2020	595,868	90,471	15

* Includes OPP.

Figure 4: Types of Crime Reported in Ontario by OPP and Other Police Services, 2019

Source of data: Statistics Canada

Type of Crime	Reported by OPP		Reported by Other Police Services	
	# of Incidents	%	# of Incidents	%
Violent crime	21,529	22.5	115,512	20.4
Property crime	49,039	51.4	338,875	59.9
Other criminal	14,283	15.0	75,764	13.4
Criminal Code traffic	6,951	7.3	21,089	3.7
Drug-related	2,745	2.9	11,745	2.1
<i>Youth Criminal Justice Act</i>	81	0.1	327	0.1
Other federal statutes	773	0.8	2,214	0.4
Total	95,401	100	565,526	100

consistent across most categories with other police services in Ontario, which tend to serve communities that are more urban. While the OPP reported a lower proportion of property crime, it reported a higher proportion of criminal traffic offences—consistent with its jurisdiction over provincial highways.

2.2.3 Road Safety

The OPP patrols all provincial highways, waterways and trails, as well as all municipal roads in municipalities where it is responsible for providing police services. The OPP therefore plays an important role alongside other police services and the Ministry of Transportation in promoting and enforcing road safety in the province.

As shown in **Figure 5**, there were between approximately 9,100 and 12,200 collisions resulting in injury or fatality on OPP-patrolled roadways between 2011 and 2019, compared to between approximately 22,100 and 34,400 collisions resulting in injury or fatality on roadways patrolled by other police forces in Ontario. Collisions on OPP roadways remained relatively consistent over this period, while collision on other roadways showed consistent improvement. As a result, the proportion of collisions in the province resulting in injury or fatality on OPP-patrolled roadways increased from 23% in 2011 to 32% in 2019. Collisions decreased significantly in 2020, due to decreased traffic as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 5: Ontario Motor Vehicle Collisions Resulting in Injury or Fatality, 2011–2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police and Ministry of Transportation

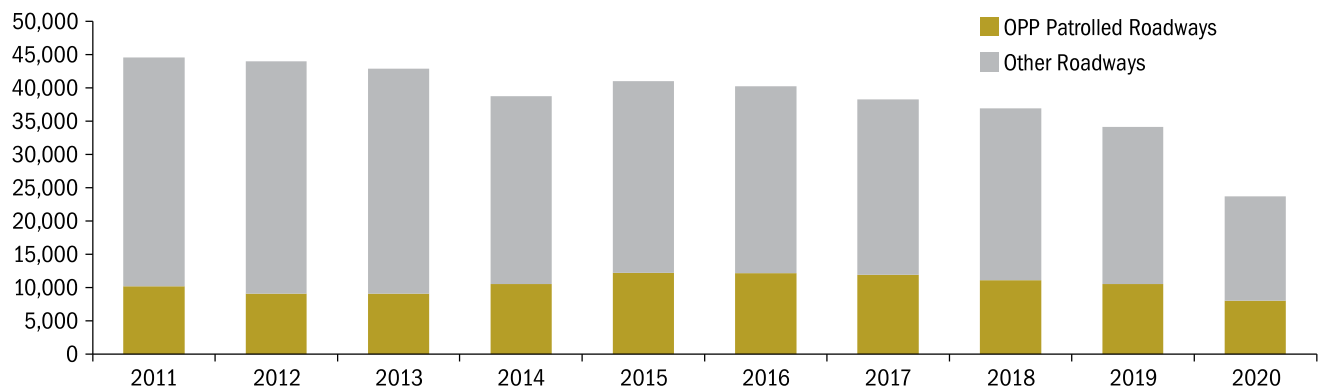
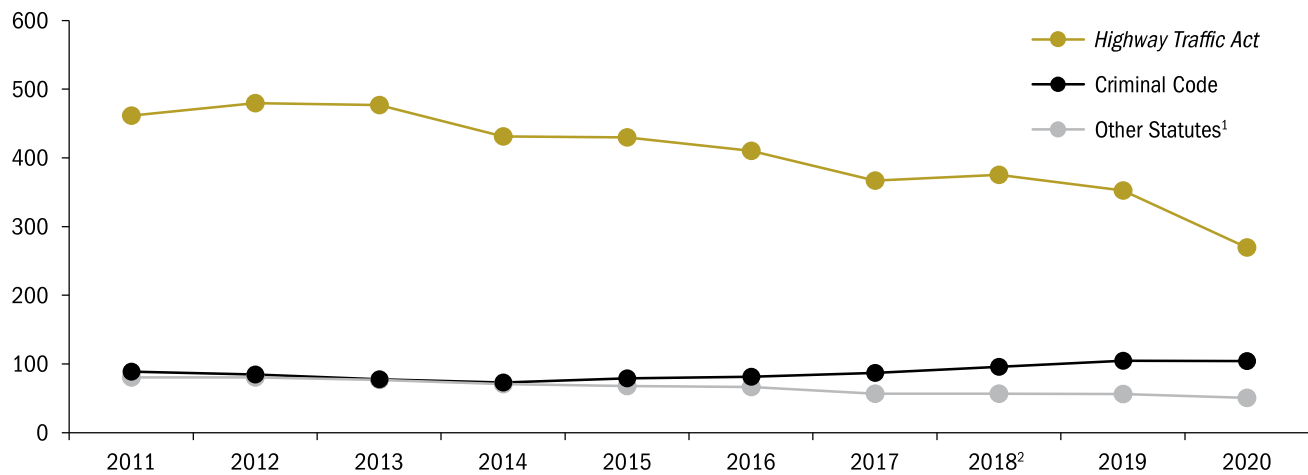


Figure 6 : OPP Charges Laid by Statute, 2011–2020 (000)

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police



1. Includes charges under various acts, including the *Liquor Licence Act*, *Controlled Drug and Substance Act*, *Income Tax Act*, *Firearms Act*, *Customs Act*, etc. In addition, charges under the federal and provincial cannabis acts began when cannabis was legalized on October 17, 2018.

2. In 2018 the OPP began including in its totals charges officers laid in Indigenous communities.

2.2.4 Charges Laid by the OPP

OPP officers lay the most charges in response to offences under the Canadian Criminal Code and the *Highway Traffic Act*. They also lay charges under various other statutes, such as the *Liquor Licence Act*, *Controlled Drug and Substance Act* and the *Firearms Act*. **Figure 6** shows the number of charges laid by OPP officers between 2011 and 2020, by statute.

As illustrated in **Figure 6**, the number of *Highway Traffic Act* charges declined significantly, by 24%, between 2011 and 2019, and this trend was accelerated in 2020 due to decreased traffic as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over this same period, the number of serious collisions, meaning those resulting in injury or fatality, on OPP-patrolled roadways was virtually unchanged, as discussed in **Section 2.2.3**. Criminal Code charges have increased from a low of approximately 72,800, to over 104,000 in both 2019 and 2020, consistent with increases in reported incidents of crime discussed in **Section 2.2.2**.

2.3 Legislation

Police Services Act

The *Police Services Act* (Act) and related regulations were created to define the roles and responsibilities of police forces in the province of Ontario. The Act has seen numerous amendments since its introduction. The Act:

- Assigns municipalities the responsibility for providing police services. Municipalities can fulfill this responsibility by:
 - establishing their own police force;
 - establishing a joint police force with other municipalities;
 - entering into a contract to have another municipality provide police services; and
 - entering into a contract to have the OPP provide police services.
- Requires that if a municipality does not fulfill its obligation to provide policing services under one of the options available, then the OPP must provide policing services to that municipality.
- Establishes the five core policing activities that must be provided by police services: crime prevention, law enforcement, assistance to victims of

crime, public order maintenance and emergency response.

- Sets out the principles that are to guide police services' actions, such as ensuring the safety and security of all persons and property in Ontario.
- Establishes the responsibilities of the OPP.
- Sets out the duties of police officers, and required criteria for hiring police officers.

Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019

The *Community Safety and Policing Act* (CSPA) has received royal assent, but has not been proclaimed into force, and is not expected to be until 2022. The CSPA will replace the *Police Services Act*. Significant changes in the CSPA include the following:

- An Inspector General of Policing will be named with responsibility for monitoring and inspecting police services' conduct and compliance with the CSPA. The Inspector General will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and serve a term of five years.
- New police officers will be required to complete various educational programs regarding human rights, systemic racism, diversity and Indigenous issues.

- Municipalities will be required to prepare a community safety and well-being plan. An advisory committee must be established as part of the plan development, and the committee must include a representative from the police service that provides policing to the municipality.

2.4 Expenditures and Cost Recovery

The OPP's operating expenditures increased from \$979 million in 2011/12 (at the time of our last audit) to \$1.229 billion in 2020/21—representing a 26% increase. **Figure 7** illustrates the OPP's total operating expenditures by type between 2011/12 and 2020/21.

As shown in **Figure 7**, the increase in the OPP's total operating expenditures was driven by regular annual increases to employee salaries, wages and benefits. In 2020/21, the OPP's staffing costs totalled \$1.082 billion and accounted for 88% of its total operating expenditures.

The OPP provides municipalities with policing services on a cost-recovery basis, as described in **Section 2.6**. In 2020, the OPP was reimbursed a total of \$425.6 million by 326 municipalities, which

Figure 7: OPP Operating Expenditures, 2011/12–2020/21 (\$ million)

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Year	Salaries and Wages	Employee Benefits	Transport and Communications	Services	Supplies and Equipment	Other	Recoveries	Total	Year-over-Year Change (%)
2011/12	748.2	101.8	21.8	73.0	65.8	0.9	(32.2)	979.3	n/a
2012/13	745.1	103.1	23.6	74.8	70.8	0.6	(38.0)	980.0	0.1
2013/14	760.8	107.1	23.5	83.3	68.4	0.5	(38.6)	1,005.0	2.6
2014/15	810.8	111.4	25.0	109.2	76.7	0.5	(41.8)	1,091.8	8.6
2015/16	853.2	116.2	25.0	135.8	69.6	0.4	(38.8)	1,161.4	6.4
2016/17	841.7	121.5	27.5	87.1	73.6	0.6	(38.8)	1,113.2	-4.2
2017/18	858.3	126.4	28.8	86.3	68.1	0.4	(39.8)	1,128.5	1.4
2018/19	888.2	128.5	27.8	89.8	65.1	0.6	(40.9)	1,159.1	2.7
2019/20	909.9	134.9	28.0	92.5	44.3	0.5	(42.5)	1,167.6	0.7
2020/21	938.7	143.5	22.8	102.2	58.1	0.4	(36.4)	1,229.3	5.3
Change 2020/21 over 2011/12 (%)	25	41	5	40	-12	-56	13	26	-

represented a 22% increase from the \$348.8 million reimbursed in 2011 from 323 municipalities.

2.5 Organizational Structure and Responsibilities

The OPP is a Division of the Ministry of the Solicitor General, and the Commissioner of the OPP reports to the Deputy Solicitor General of Community Safety. The Commissioner is the highest-ranking member of the OPP and is responsible for overseeing all aspects

of the OPP’s operations. The organization is divided into four commands: Traffic Safety and Operational Support, Corporate Services, Investigations and Organized Crime, and Field Operations. **Figure 8** illustrates the OPP’s organizational structure.

Figure 9 provides a breakdown of the number of full-time equivalent employees by command/office.

The chain of command among police officers is determined by rank. There are several ranks within the OPP, as outlined in **Figure 10**.

Figure 8: OPP Organizational Chart

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

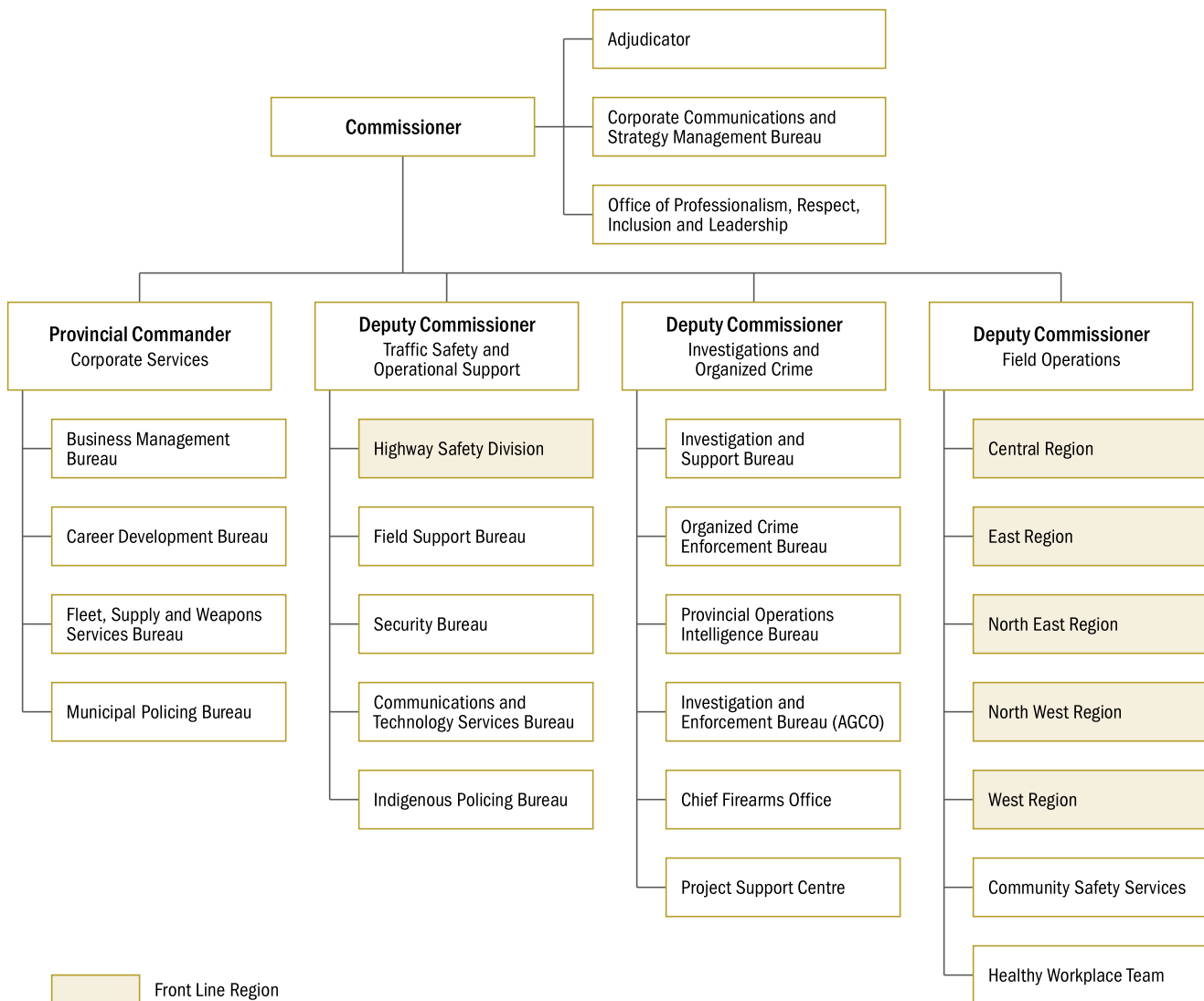


Figure 9: OPP Full-Time-Equivalent Staff as of December 31, 2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Command/Office	Police Officers	Civilian Employees	Total	% Police Officers
Field Operations	3,892	721	4,613	84
Traffic Safety and Operational Support	739	1,057	1,796	41
Investigations and Organized Crime	810	409	1,219	66
Corporate Services	127	299	426	30
Office of the Commissioner	9	36	45	20
OPP Total	5,577	2,522	8,099	69

Figure 10: OPP Ranks and Full-Time-Equivalent Officer Counts, as of December 31, 2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Rank	FTE* Officer Count	Description
Constable	4,145	The lowest ranking police officers in the OPP: provide the majority of frontline police services, such as answering calls and conducting patrols and investigations, and other specialized services functions.
Sergeant	953	May work as frontline shift supervisors, special project leads, media officers and in other specialized roles.
Staff Sergeant	256	Often serve as frontline detachment commanders and special team or project leads.
Sergeant Major	6	Responsible for the co-ordination and investigation of complaints against the conduct of employees.
Inspector	159	Have various roles: often serve as Detachment Commanders in larger communities, as leaders within a bureau at General Headquarters or as criminal investigators.
Superintendent	40	Have various roles: may be in charge of a smaller region or bureau, and may serve in leadership roles in larger regions or as OPP adjudicators.
Chief Superintendent	14	Often serve as commanders of a Regional Headquarters or larger bureaus at General Headquarters.
Deputy Commissioner	3	Three Deputy Commissioners each lead one of four Command Structures within the OPP (the fourth—Corporate Services—is led by a civilian Provincial Commander), as illustrated in Figure 8 .
Commissioner	1	The top rank within the OPP, responsible for working closely with the provincial government and determining the OPP's goals and priorities for each year.
Total Police Officers	5,577	

* FTE = full-time-equivalent.

2.5.1 Office of the Commissioner

The Commissioner is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the OPP's operations. Working closely with the provincial government, the Commissioner determines the OPP's goals and priorities for each year.

2.5.2 Field Operations Command

The OPP's Field Operations command provides local, frontline policing services to Ontario through five regional headquarters, 64 detachments and 88 satellite stations. The command also includes the Healthy Workplace Team. Details of the five regions under the Field Operations Command are provided in **Figure 11**.

Figure 11: Field Operations Command Regional Details

Source of data: Statistics Canada

Region	Regional Headquarters	Detachments (#)	Satellite Detachments (#)	Police Officers (FTE)*	Civilian Employees (FTE)*
West	London	14	26	1,129	152
East	Smiths Falls	16	16	876	163
Central	Orillia	12	8	868	141
North East	North Bay	13	21	585	125
North West	Thunder Bay	9	17	404	104

Note: Officer and civilian counts will not add to **Figure 9** totals for the Field Operations command, as this figure does not include employees in the Healthy Workplace Team and employees not assigned to a region working for the command out of OPP General Headquarters in Orillia.

* FTE = full-time-equivalent.

A list of all regional headquarters, detachments and satellite stations is provided in **Appendix 1**, and **Appendix 2** shows a map of OPP regions.

Detachments and satellite stations provide front-line services such as patrol, responding to calls and investigations. They may also enforce local municipal bylaws for the communities they serve. Detachments and satellite stations receive support as needed from operational, supportive and investigative bureaus under other provincial commands. For instance, a major case such as a murder requires assistance from the Investigative and Support Bureau under the Investigations and Organized Crime provincial command.

2.5.3 Traffic Safety and Operational Support Command

Members of Traffic Safety and Operational Support command are frontline and specialized unit officers, security experts and information and technology specialists. The command is divided into five distinct units: Highway Safety Division, Field Support Bureau, Security Bureau, Communications and Technology Services Bureau, and the Indigenous Policing Bureau.

The Highway Safety Division (Division) is responsible for traffic enforcement and safety on approximately 139,000 kilometres of highway in Ontario, and is considered a frontline division. The Division provides expertise and support to regional field operations related to traffic safety, and runs various traffic-related programs.

The Division is also responsible for providing frontline services on provincial highways that travel through the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton, Niagara and Kitchener-Waterloo. Though all of these regions have municipal police forces, the significant stretches of provincial highways require the OPP to operate detachments dedicated to highway patrol in these areas. Five detachments and four satellite stations report to divisional headquarters located in Aurora.

The Division employs 500 full-time-equivalent police officers and 44 civilian employees. The Traffic Safety and Operational Support command employs another 239 police officers and 1,013 civilians in operational support roles in the Field Support Bureau, the Security Bureau, the Communications and Technology Services Bureau, and the Indigenous Policing Bureau.

2.5.4 Investigations and Organized Crime Command

Members of this command are lead investigators, analysts and support personnel and often specialize in specific types of crime. The command includes four specialized criminal bureaus: the Investigation and Support Bureau, the Provincial Operations Intelligence Bureau, the Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau, and the Investigation and Enforcement Bureau.

Investigation and Support Bureau

The Investigation and Support Bureau supports highly technical, major, serial or multi-jurisdictional criminal investigations. There are a number of specialized units within the bureau, including financial crime services, behavioural sciences, electronic and cybercrime, forensic identification, and photographic services.

Provincial Operations Intelligence Bureau

The Provincial Operations Intelligence Bureau anticipates, prevents and monitors criminal activities with respect to a person or group involved in organized or sophisticated and professional crime, by investigating source information and collecting, analyzing and disseminating the resulting intelligence to relevant bureaus and units within the OPP.

Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau

The mandate of the Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau is to disrupt and suppress organized crime. Its investigations are complex and long-term, targeting criminal organizations at all levels. The bureau works with federal, municipal and other law enforcement agencies in co-ordinating enforcement action in response to organized crime.

Investigation and Enforcement Bureau (Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario)

The Investigation and Enforcement Bureau is an OPP bureau embedded within the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), and includes OPP uniformed and civilian members in addition to AGCO civilian staff. The bureau conducts investigations across all AGCO business lines, which include the administration of the following laws:

- *Alcohol, Cannabis and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act;*
- *Liquor Licence Act;*
- *Liquor Control Act;*
- *Gaming Control Act;*
- *Horse Racing Licence Act;* and
- *Cannabis Licence Act.*

In addition to investigative work for the AGCO, the bureau also provides intelligence support to external

law enforcement and other regulatory agencies and stakeholders.

2.5.5 Corporate Services Command

Corporate Services is the only command that is led by a civilian. The command provides support services to frontline officers and the many investigative units of the OPP and is made up of four bureaus: Business Management; Career Development; Fleet, Supply and Weapons Services; and Municipal Policing.

Quality Assurance Unit

The Quality Assurance Unit under the Municipal Policing Bureau of the Corporate Services Command is responsible for detachment inspections, physical property audits, and administering the Management Inspection Program. The Quality Assurance Unit consists of one case manager, three municipal policing specialists and one analyst.

Detachment inspections are conducted on-site and follow an inspection procedure manual that checks for compliance with requirements in the Act and OPP policies. For example, holding cells, property vaults, detachment weapons and financial processes are examined during inspections for compliance with policy. Physical inspections have been postponed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Quality Assurance Unit advised us that its staff are conducting more limited virtual inspections.

Comprehensive audits are conducted by detachment staff once per calendar year to reconcile all seized property such as firearms, drugs and cash with the records in the OPP's information systems to identify discrepancies. The purpose of the audit is to ensure that all property items are accounted for, properly packaged and documented, and that the detachment vault contains only items required to be retained.

The **Management Inspection Program** is a self-assessment questionnaire completed by each detachment commander twice a year. Questions focus on areas of high risk based on the Act and OPP policies, such as prisoner lockup and vault

access. Summary reports are sent to senior commanders for review. The Quality Assurance Unit attempts to check the accuracy of the questionnaire by verifying responses during detachment inspections.

2.6 Municipal Policing Services, Contracts and Reimbursement

Under the Act, municipalities may establish police forces either on their own or with other municipalities, or they may enter into an agreement to purchase policing services from other municipalities, or from the OPP. If municipalities make no arrangements, the OPP is required to provide adequate and effective policing services, and those municipalities reimburse the OPP for the cost of the policing provided. Municipalities that have contracts with the OPP have more control over the accountability and level of service that they get from the OPP, and in setting community priorities for their own policing.

The OPP municipal billing model divides municipal policing costs into three categories:

- **Base service** allocates costs among municipalities on an equal per property basis. Base services include services such as routine patrols, crime prevention, RIDE programs and proactive policing. In 2020, base service made up approximately 52% of OPP billing to municipalities.
- **Calls for service** allocate costs to municipalities based on their individual usage level. The charge for calls for service varies among municipalities based on the number and types of calls responded to. In 2020, calls for service charges made up approximately 40% of OPP billing to municipalities.
- **Additional costs** (over and above base service and calls for service) are billed based on specific usage, such as overtime, court security and prisoner transportation. In 2020, additional costs made up approximately 8% of OPP billings to municipalities.

As of December 31, 2020, the OPP policed 148 municipalities with contracts, and

180 municipalities that pay for services without a contract. The OPP received \$425.6 million in revenues for providing these services, with 67% coming from municipalities with contracts.

3.0 Audit Objective and Scope

Our audit objective was to assess whether the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) has cost-effective systems and processes in place to protect Ontarians and to:

- deliver provincial and municipal police services efficiently and effectively, and in compliance with key legislative and policy requirements; and
- measure and publicly report on the effectiveness of the police services it delivers.

In planning for our work, we identified the audit criteria (see **Appendix 3**) we would use to address our audit objective. These criteria were established based on a review of applicable legislation, policies and procedures, internal and external studies, and best practices. Senior management reviewed and agreed with the suitability of our objectives and associated criteria.

We conducted our audit between December 2020 and October 2021. We obtained written representation from OPP management and the Ministry of the Solicitor General that, effective November 16, 2021, they had provided us with all the information they were aware of that could significantly affect the findings or the conclusion of this report.

Our audit work was conducted remotely due to public health measures and guidance implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our audit work was primarily conducted with the assistance of staff at OPP General Headquarters in Orillia, and additional discussions were held with staff at the five regional headquarters and a selection of detachments as required. We also visited six detachments (including one virtually), to gain a better understanding of their operations and key challenges, and to conduct inventory testing on their evidence vaults.

We also spoke with stakeholders, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Ontario Association of Police Service Boards, OPP Commissioned Officers Association, Ontario Civilian Police Commission, and the Ontario Provincial Police Association to discuss their role in police services and to gain their perspective on services delivered by the OPP.

We conducted our work and reported on the results of our examination in accordance with the applicable Canadian Standards on Assurance Engagements—Direct Engagements issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada. This included obtaining a reasonable level of assurance.

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario applies the Canadian Standards of Quality Control and, as a result, maintains a comprehensive quality control system that includes documented policies and procedures with respect to compliance with rules of professional conduct, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

We have complied with the independence and other ethical requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour.

4.0 Detailed Audit Observations

4.1 Police Officer Staffing and Deployment

4.1.1 OPP Detachments Are Increasingly Understaffed with Frontline Officers

Our audit found that the number of frontline officers working in detachments across the province was in decline, and these detachments were significantly understaffed. Since our previous audit in 2012, the number of full-time-equivalent police officers

employed by the OPP has decreased by 544, or 9%, from 6,121 on December 31, 2011 to 5,577 at the end of 2020, as shown in **Figure 12**. The majority of this decrease occurred in the Field Operations command, which provides frontline policing to municipalities through detachments, and the Traffic Safety and Operational Support command, which provides support to frontline officers as well as highway patrol through Highway Safety Division detachments.

While frontline commands saw a significant reduction in available uniformed officers, staffing in the Investigations and Organized Crime command experienced smaller reductions in full-time-equivalent staff.

In addition to a declining number of officers employed in commands responsible for frontline policing (Field Operations and Traffic Safety and Operational Support), the OPP increasingly has fewer officers in those commands available for frontline duty. As discussed in **Section 2.5**, frontline policing duties are typically carried out by officers at the rank of constable. **Figure 13** provides the number of full-time-equivalent constables that worked in each region relative to the number of funded full-time equivalent frontline positions from 2016 to 2020. As the figure shows, the OPP had almost 1,030 vacancies in frontline constable positions in 2020. Although the OPP noted that in 2020 over 160 of its staff tested positive for COVID-19 and took time off to isolate and

Figure 12: OPP Full-Time-Equivalent Police Officers by Command, 2011 versus 2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Command	Dec 31, 2011	Dec 31, 2020	Change
Field Operations	4,264	3,892	(372)
Traffic Safety & Operational Support	863	739	(124)
Investigations/ Organized Crime	849	810	(39)
Corporate Services	135	127	(8)
Office of the Commissioner	10	9	(1)
Total	6,121	5,577	(544)

Figure 13: Frontline Constable Positions and Vacancies, 2016–2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Year	FTE ¹ Frontline Constable Positions	Actual FTE Frontline Constables ^{1,2}	Vacancies ³	Vacancy Rate (%)
2016	3,880	3,156	724	19
2017	3,863	3,073	790	20
2018	3,878	2,990	888	23
2019	3,901	2,903	998	26
2020	3,933	2,905	1,028	26
Change 2020 over 2016	53	(251)	304	7

1. FTE = full-time-equivalent.

2. Excludes constables on leaves of absence (Workplace Safety and Insurance Board [WSIB], Long-Term Income Protection [LTIP] and other leaves of absence such as maternity/paternity, and discretionary), whether paid or unpaid.

3. Vacancies include constables on long-term leave such as LTIP, WSIB and maternity/paternity. Vacancies also include constables on accommodated work arrangements.

recover, the OPP advised us that these temporary sick leaves did not impact total vacancies.

Increasing vacancies have created the need for additional overtime. In fiscal 2019/20, the overtime cost for police officers in the five frontline regions and the Highway Safety Division was \$36.1 million, an increase of about 12% over \$32.1 million in 2015/16.

The 1,028 frontline constable vacancies in 2020 consisted of:

- 340 frontline constables on long-term leave, accounting for 33% of constable vacancies. Long-term leave is discussed in **Section 4.1.2**.
- 377 frontline constables on accommodated working arrangements and unavailable for frontline duty, accounting for 37% of constable vacancies. Accommodated arrangements for officers are discussed in **Section 4.1.2**.
- 189 frontline constables on non-frontline temporary assignments, accounting for 18% of constable vacancies. These temporary assignments are discussed in **Section 4.1.3**.
- 122 open frontline constable positions that the OPP had not yet filled with recruits, accounting for 12% of constable vacancies.

We found that the increasing number of vacancies in frontline constable positions appeared to be contributing to issues in the OPP's delivery of policing services to municipalities that are outlined in **Section 4.2**, including that:

- the OPP is providing fewer proactive policing hours, such as patrol, to municipalities (**Section 4.2.1**);
- the OPP is not delivering the level of service to municipalities that its deployment model identified as required (**Section 4.2.2**); and
- there are significant variations in the constable vacancy rates across regions, and regions with higher vacancy rates are clearing fewer crimes (**Section 4.2.3**).

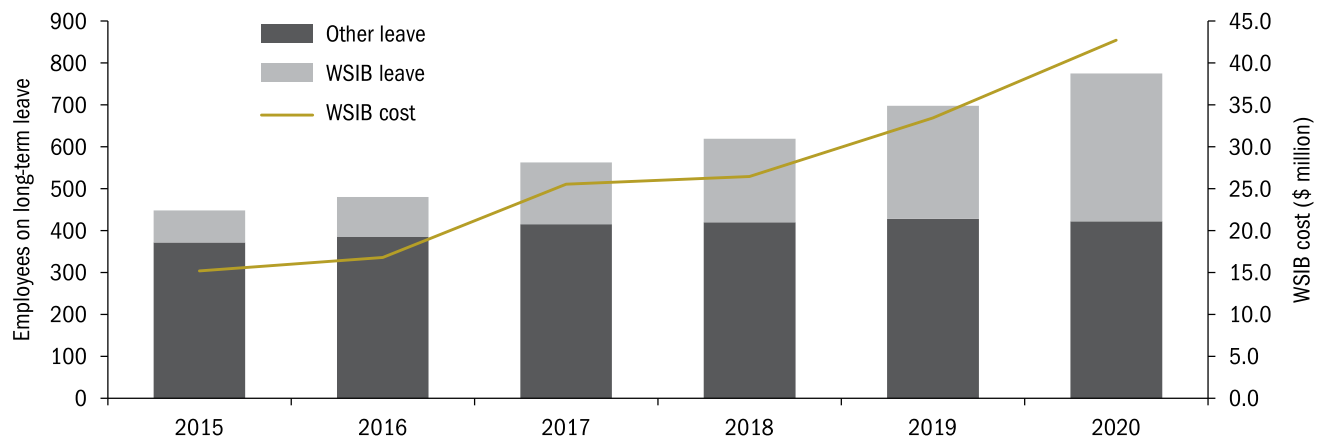
4.1.2 Stress-Related Officer Leaves Contributing to Rising Vacancies and Costs

We found that medical leave taken by officers due to a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was significantly contributing to increasing vacancies at detachments. In addition, the OPP was incurring rapidly increasing financial costs, reaching \$42.7 million in 2020, in relation to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims submitted by officers, in large part due to claims for PTSD.

By the end of 2020, 775 OPP employees were on long-term leave, an increase of 62% over the 480 on leave at the end of 2016. Frontline constables made up approximately 44% of all employees on long-term leave, with 340 constables on leave at the end of 2020. This accounts for 33% of the 1,028 frontline constable vacancies at the OPP in 2020.

Figure 14: OPP Employees on Long-Term Leave and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Costs, December 31, 2015–December 31, 2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police



There are several different types of long-term leave, such as parental leave and sick leave. However, the increase in long-term leave at the OPP has been driven by employees taking leave under WSIB claims. **Figure 14** provides the number of OPP employees on WSIB and all other types of long-term leave, as well as the cost of WSIB claims to the OPP, from 2015 to 2020.

As the figure shows, while employees on other types of leave increased only modestly, employees on WSIB leave increased by 364% between 2015 and 2020, from 76 employees to 353. Similarly, the cost of WSIB claims to the OPP increased by 181%, from \$15.2 million in 2015 to \$42.7 million in 2020. The increase in WSIB leave is also contributing significantly to frontline officer vacancies. Frontline constables on WSIB leave increased by 267%, from 51 to 187 over this time period.

The increase in WSIB claim costs by OPP employees is due in large part to a change brought about by the *Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act, 2016*, which included "PTSD Presumptive" amendments to the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*. The amendments changed the way PTSD claims filed by first responders, such as police officers, are treated by the WSIB. Prior to the amendment, claims for a PTSD diagnosis were treated the same as all other WSIB claims, with a WSIB decision-maker attempting to

establish through evidence that events in the workplace had led to traumatic mental stress for the claimant. Subsequent to the passing of the PTSD Presumptive legislation in April 2016, first responders diagnosed with PTSD by a psychiatrist or psychologist are presumed to have developed PTSD during the course of their employment, unless the contrary is shown. The purpose of the presumption is to allow first responders faster access to WSIB benefits, resources and timely treatment.

WSIB claims can be made for a variety of reasons—for example, exposure to biological agents, assaults and violent acts, slips and falls, and overexertion. However, "exposure to psycho-social situations," which includes traumatic incidents leading to diagnoses of PTSD, represented 75% of all OPP WSIB incidents in 2020. Psycho-social situations include being subject to harassment, bullying, stress such as exposure to life-or-death situations, or witnessing traumatic events. These types of claims in 2020 led to 11,037 days of leave for OPP employees. The increasing number of OPP officers filing WSIB claims for PTSD and other mental health injuries is symptomatic of an ongoing issue related to officer mental health and stress.

We question the sustainability of the rapidly rising financial costs, declining frontline officers in local communities, and effects on employee well-being

caused by traumatic stress at the OPP. We noted the OPP had not performed any analysis to project how much the financial cost and vacancies associated with traumatic stress would continue to rise over the coming years, or whether these effects could be mitigated.

Many Constables Are on Accommodated Work Arrangements and Unavailable for Frontline Duty

In addition to frontline constables on long-term leave, we found that a significant number of constables were on an accommodated work arrangement due to injury or illness.

Accommodated constables are restricted from performing some or all of their regular frontline duties (described in **Section 2.5.2**). For example, an accommodation may involve limiting an officer to working daytime shifts, or restricting the type of work performed by an officer to non-frontline tasks such as administrative functions.

In 2020, there were 377 frontline constables on accommodated work arrangements, which accounted for 37% of the 1,028 frontline constable vacancies in 2020. The OPP advised us that a significant number of these officers were on an accommodated work arrangement due to mental health concerns. However, the OPP noted that due to privacy and confidentiality requirements, it did not track the specific reason (medical condition) that resulted in an accommodation, and was thus unable to identify the number of officers who were receiving an accommodation due to mental health concerns.

Mental Health of OPP Officers Is Not Sufficiently Considered in the OPP Deployment Model

As previously noted, the increasing number of OPP officers filing WSIB claims for PTSD and other mental health injuries is symptomatic of an ongoing issue related to officer mental health and stress. Since our previous audit in 2012, there have been three major reviews of mental health issues and workplace culture within the OPP. In addition, in 2019, a report on police officer deaths in Ontario by suicide was issued. These reports are summarized in **Figure 15**.

Since 2019, the OPP has invested significant resources into mental health supports and addressing the recommendations of these reviews. In 2020, the OPP established the Healthy Workplace Team, a bureau responsible for the wellness of the OPP and its members. The team has implemented several initiatives, including:

- hiring in-house clinical staff that, as of October 2021, consists of four psychologists and seven mental health clinicians;
- receiving approval for \$12.5 million in new funding over three years, allowing for the hiring of 16 additional mental health staff;
- reporting completing 51%, with work underway on 44%, of the recommendations in the 2019 Internal OPP Mental Health Review, the 2019 Ontario Provincial Police Independent Review Panel report and the 2019 Chief Coroner of Ontario's Report of the Expert Panel on Police Officer Deaths by Suicide, as summarized in **Figure 15**.

However, a 2021 survey by the Ontario Public Service identified that while 86% of OPP employees were aware of available mental health support programs, 27% indicated they felt that they were not free to discuss mental health struggles with the person they report to, and 31% indicated they were exposed to work pressures that adversely impacted their mental health. In addition, we found that the OPP needs to make additional progress in the following key recommendation from the Independent Review Panel report:

The OPP should apply a wellness lens to all operational decisions related to staffing across the Province.

Despite some detachments being significantly understaffed (as discussed in **Section 4.2.3**), the OPP has not taken sufficient steps to adjust its deployment of officers to detachments most in need. Understaffed detachments are self-reinforcing, as understaffing leads to increased stress and burnout of frontline officers required to take on a higher workload, which in turn leads to more officers taking leave. The Ontario Provincial Police Independent Review Panel report

Figure 15: Summary of Reviews of OPP Mental Health and Workplace Culture

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Report	Focus	# of Recommendations	Key Points and Observations
<i>In the Line of Duty</i> , Ontario Ombudsman Oct 2012	Assessing complaints about OPP handling of operational stress injuries affecting police officers	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 23 suicides among active and retired OPP members between 1989 and 2012. • Both the OPP and Ministry of the Solicitor General had been reluctant to acknowledge and tackle operational stress injuries among police and had shown little leadership in implementing proactive, preventive programs. • The OPP had no consistent, co-ordinated programs for dealing with operational stress injuries or suicide prevention. • There were no formal statistics kept or acknowledgement of OPP suicides, no formal prevention program and no analysis of why they occurred.
<i>OPP Mental Health Review</i> , OPP (Internal) June 2019	Internal review of suicide deaths of officers and a series of mental health roundtables and interviews involving OPP members, their family members and outside stakeholders	150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transformational change is required in OPP culture. • Members experiencing mental health issues reported facing intolerance, judgment and resentment from their colleagues and supervisors. • Some members chose not to come forward for assistance as a result of the stigma. • Bullying, harassment and discrimination were identified as far too frequent, and workplace conflict resolution mechanisms were perceived to be ineffective.
<i>Report of the Expert Panel on Police Officer Deaths by Suicide</i> Sep 2019	An independent panel initiated by the Chief Coroner of Ontario to examine police officer deaths by suicide	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2018, nine deaths by suicide occurred among serving and retired police officers in the Province of Ontario. • Stigma and misinformation about mental health care and recovery can lead to harsh and even hostile presumptions among peers, supervisors and managers. • Police resources in Ontario are strained and the mental health impacts can be expected to continue and perhaps even grow in frequency and intensity if this situation is not addressed.
<i>Final Report</i> , Ontario Provincial Police Independent Review Panel Dec 2019	Review of the workplace culture of the OPP in light of members' suicide deaths and mental health concerns, as well as complaints about the workplace culture by current and former OPP staff	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since January 2012, 17 members were known to have died by suicide, including three in 2019. • Officers reported concerning incidents related to workplace bullying, harassment, conflict and disharmony. • Officers reported a diminished confidence in management support. • OPP leadership faces an immediate and significant challenge with respect to the workplace culture and health of the organization. • The lack of credible, accessible and meaningful support for members with mental health issues is approaching crisis.

noted that there is a “vicious cycle of increased exposure due to staffing shortages leading to greater stress on those left to cover the shifts.” The OPP’s Healthy Workplace Team states in its Strategy and Action Plan, “Staffing shortages can result in employee burnout as members try to do more with less. This contributes to overall workplace stressors.”

RECOMMENDATION 1

To promote a healthy workplace, limit stress placed on officers, and reduce the number and cost of employees on long-term leave and accommodation, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- study and establish a minimum acceptable staffing level for detachments based on officer workload and stressors; and
- establish benchmarks for leave of absence and accommodation rates, and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claims indicative of a healthy workplace, and evaluate the Healthy Workplace Team initiatives against progress toward these benchmarks.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) welcomes and agrees with the Auditor General’s recommendation which prioritizes the health and wellness of our members. The OPP recognizes there are a vast array of mental and physical conditions, including PTSD, which affect our members. Under the draft Service Delivery Model, provincial staffing targets have been established. This service model will inform the OPP with respect to staffing requirements, taking into account various leaves and workload, and will allow the OPP to develop target numbers for detachments and platoons. The OPP will also create a benchmark using historic information related to accommodations, duration of leaves of absence, and related delays, and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claims which will be used to assess Healthy Workplace Team initiatives.

4.1.3 Frontline Constables Leaving for Specialized Units and Temporary Assignments Contributing to Vacancies

We found that constables transferring from frontline duties to positions in specialized units and to temporary assignments contributed significantly to frontline constable vacancies.

As noted in **Section 4.1.1**, in 2020 there were 1,028 frontline constable vacancies. We found that 189, or 18% of these vacancies were related to constables that were placed in non-frontline temporary assignments. Although the OPP noted that many of these individuals may assist the frontline in a supervisory capacity, we nevertheless found that the number of constables placed in temporary assignments had increased by 75% over the last five years, from 108 in 2016 to 189 in 2020.

In addition to constables placed in non-frontline temporary assignments, we noted that between January 2018 (when the OPP started to track transfers to specialized units) and July 2021, 206 frontline constables moved from frontline duties to specialized units (described in **Section 2.5**), further contributing to the rise in vacancies among frontline constables.

The contribution of these transfers to frontline officer vacancies is concerning since, as noted in **Section 4.2.3**, we also found that regions with higher frontline officer vacancies resolve fewer crimes.

RECOMMENDATION 2

So that frontline detachments are sufficiently staffed to provide adequate and effective police services to the communities they serve, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police review the rate of redeployment of constables to specialized units and specialized areas of policing, including the impact of redeployment on crime clearance, and determine if the rate should be reduced.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with the recommendation. The OPP Vacancy

Committee, which includes representation from both frontline and specialty areas, will review the rate of assigning uniform constables to specialized units and areas. The OPP will continue to review the incident clearance status and any effect deployment to non-frontline roles may have, and take corrective action if necessary.

4.1.4 The OPP Does Not Use a Consistent Model for Deploying Officers to Detachments

Similar to what we found in our 2012 audit, we found that the OPP still does not have a consistent, province-wide model that it uses to periodically identify staffing needs and adjust the deployment of officers to detachments. As noted in **Section 4.2.3**, we found significant differences in frontline officer vacancies between regions and detachments, and noted that regions with higher frontline vacancies resolve fewer crimes. The OPP does have a model it uses when it first contracts with a municipality to calculate how many officers are required to serve the area. However, the OPP does not revisit the model after the contract is agreed to in order to compare actual staffing levels against those indicated in the contract, or to guide deployment decisions.

Consistent with recommendations from our 2012 audit of the OPP, as well as recommendations made by the Ontario Internal Audit Division and the Ontario Provincial Police Independent Review Panel (discussed in **Section 4.1.2**), in January 2020, the OPP established a committee of internal staff and external experts to research and develop a deployment model to ensure adequate and effective levels of service, prioritizing both operational demands and the health and wellness of its officers. At the time of our audit, the group had developed a new draft Service Delivery Model (model). The model calculates how many police officers are required to serve each detachment and region by considering factors such as officer leave, response time standards, calls for service, providing support to First Nations, and community engagement. It is designed to be run regularly with updated inputs and used to guide deployment decisions.

We noted several differences in the new model relative to the model the OPP uses when it first contracts with a municipality. The new model considers additional factors in determining how many frontline officers are needed. These include an additional number of expected high-priority calls that require two officers to respond rather than one, such as reports of a person threatening to commit suicide, domestic disputes and assault. The new model also increases the minimum standard for frontline officer time devoted to community engagement such as community mobilization, school patrol and community outreach to First Nations from 2% to 5%.

At the time of our audit, the OPP was making adjustments to the model, and it had not yet been approved to be used to guide decision-making. In its current form, the model calculates that the OPP requires 3,873 constables across the frontline regions and the Highway Safety Division in 2020. The actual number of constables for 2020 was 2,905, a shortfall of 968, or 25%.

While the Service Delivery Model appears to be well researched and developed with the purpose of guiding decision-making, we noted that the OPP has had computer models that calculate staffing requirements at its detachments since the 1980s. For any deployment model to have an effect, it must be continuously updated, compared to actual deployment, and consistently used to guide decision-making and to adjust deployment.

RECOMMENDATION 3

To maintain consistent police services across detachments and regions, and to ensure that detachments are sufficiently staffed with frontline officers according to the needs of local communities, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- adjust deployment of constables with the goal of increasing staffing at detachments with the most need;
- implement the Service Delivery Model as soon as it has been validated; and
- periodically update the Service Delivery Model, compare its outputs to actual

deployment, and utilize the results to adjust deployment throughout the province.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with the recommendation and shares the Auditor General's view on the importance of adequate staffing and deployment. The OPP's draft Service Delivery Model (SDM) will inform the changes needed for the frontline staffing deployment to detachments with the most need. The SDM will be run annually to identify any deployment changes required. In the short-term, the OPP will continue to deploy constables and staff with a wellness lens (as per Recommendation 1).

4.2 Police Service Delivery

4.2.1 The OPP Is Providing Less Proactive Policing in the Province

One of the most significant impacts of OPP constable shortages appears to be in the amount of patrols the OPP is providing in municipalities and on highways. Patrol is the primary means of providing proactive policing. Proactive and reactive policing can be defined as follows:

- **Proactive policing** is the practice of deterring illegal activity before it happens. Showing police presence in an area through patrol is an example of proactive policing.
- **Reactive policing** involves reacting to something that has already happened, such as responding

to a call for service, investigating a crime or attending the scene of an accident.

Figure 16 provides a breakdown of how much time frontline OPP officers spent on proactive, reactive and administrative duties. It shows that in 2020, the OPP provided just over 975,000 hours of patrols, down 28% from the over 1.35 million hours it provided in 2016, and down 48% from the 1.87 million hours it provided in 2011. In 2020, patrol made up just 13% of frontline officer hours, compared to 22% in 2011.

We also found that the proportion of time frontline officers spent on patrol at each detachment varied significantly, ranging from almost 30% of frontline officer hours at one detachment, to approximately 3% at another in 2020. For example, we found that frontline officers at one detachment in West region spent 20% of their time on patrol in 2020, while frontline officers at another detachment spent just 4% of their time on patrol.

One of the most obvious consequences of fewer patrol hours is that fewer charges are being laid under the *Highway Traffic Act*. As discussed in **Section 2.2.4**, the number of *Highway Traffic Act* charges declined significantly, by 24%, between 2011 and 2019, and this trend accelerated in 2020 due to decreased traffic as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over this same period, the number of serious collisions—those resulting in injury or fatality—on OPP-patrolled roadways was virtually unchanged, while serious collisions on roadways patrolled by other police forces showed steady improvement, as discussed in **Section 2.2.3**.

Figure 16: Reactive, Proactive and Administrative Policing Hours, Comparison of 2011, 2016 and 2020

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Category	2011		2016		2020	
	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%
Reactive policing*	4,095,939	49	4,082,898	52	4,352,712	58
Administration & training	2,407,979	29	2,396,587	31	2,125,456	29
Proactive policing (patrol)	1,866,867	22	1,355,934	17	975,500	13
Total	8,370,785	100	7,835,419	100	7,453,668	100

* Reactive policing includes responding to calls, investigations, attending court, attending the scenes of accidents, etc.

Research has shown that police presence in an area can act as a deterrent to crime and reduce the number of crimes committed. A 2017 report by the National Academy of Sciences, a non-profit organization providing science-based advice on critical issues in the United States, found “evidence that a number of proactive policing practices are successful in reducing crime and disorder, at least in the short term, and that most of these strategies do not harm communities’ attitudes toward police.”

While the causes of crime are complicated and dependent on social, economic, cultural and family conditions, the OPP’s reduced frontline staffing and patrol hours over the last decade have been occurring at the same time as:

- incidents of crime in OPP-patrolled areas have been increasing after reaching a low in 2017, as illustrated in **Figure 3**;
- calls for service have steadily increased, as illustrated in **Figure 2**; and
- the number of municipalities and population the OPP serves has increased, as illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Fewer officers serving a larger area and population, responding to more calls, and investigating more incidents of crime have fewer hours available for proactive policing. We spoke with staff at two municipalities that had recently terminated their contracts with the OPP. These municipalities cited a lack of police presence in their community as a major factor in their decision. One of the municipalities told us that the service level and visibility of OPP officers had been an ongoing issue and that it had received complaints from the public, specifically about a lack of foot patrols in the community. The other municipality replaced the OPP with the police service of a nearby city in November 2018. We noted that after this change:

- the new police service laid more charges in the municipality during the remaining two months of 2018 than the OPP had laid in the preceding 10 months; and

- the new police service laid more charges in 2019 in the municipality than the OPP had laid in the prior seven years combined.

Police services in other jurisdictions have had success with proactive policing that places a focus on community engagement. A 2019 study by the National Academy of Sciences found that a citizen’s single positive encounter with police personnel, outside the context of law enforcement, enhanced the legitimacy of policing and increased people’s willingness to co-operate with the police. Community engagement seeks to establish a relationship between communities and the officers that police those communities through interactions while on patrol, and through participation in events, meetings and community functions. However, police officers must have sufficient time in their work day to take part in such activities. According to the OPP, between 2017 and 2019, OPP constables at detachments spent 2% of their time on community engagement activities. The OPP’s new draft Service Delivery Model, discussed in **Section 4.1.4**, sets a goal of 5% of constable time spent on community engagement, while the International Association of Chiefs of Police recommends 10%.

RECOMMENDATION 4

To increase police presence and deter crime in municipalities, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- establish evidence-based detachment targets for the proportion of frontline officer time spent on proactive policing; and
- regularly monitor time spent on proactive policing to ensure these targets are met.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with this recommendation and commits to implementing each action item. The OPP will then use its draft Service Delivery Model to assess the percentage of time allocated to proactive policing and establish and monitor evidence-based targets.

4.2.2 The OPP Is Not Delivering Service Levels to Municipalities Based on Its Deployment Model Requirements

The ability of the OPP to provide sufficient policing services to each municipality is critical, as the OPP is the only policing option for many small municipalities with no nearby municipal or city police services to retain as an alternative option. Although the OPP is required to provide adequate and effective policing under the Act, we found that nearly half of municipalities were not getting the level of service (hours and full-time equivalent staff) that the OPP's deployment model identified is required.

We asked the OPP to rerun the model it uses when it first contracts with a municipality (described in **Section 4.1.4**) with the most up-to-date information, to determine the number of constable hours and full-time equivalent (FTE) staff required to service municipalities. Data was available for 230 municipalities. The model indicated that the OPP should be providing 3.9 million constable hours annually to meet the needs of these 230 municipalities. However, we found that the OPP provided only about 3.4 million constable hours to these municipalities in 2020, or 87% of the hours the model indicated were needed. The OPP cautioned that some tasks that constables perform are not recorded against a specific municipality. Therefore, the number of hours provided to a municipality may be understated. Nevertheless, we found that 111, or 48% of the 230 municipalities, received less than 75% of the constable hours and FTEs indicated by the model, including 26, or 11% of municipalities that received less than 50% of the hours and FTEs indicated by the model.

The OPP has not undertaken an analysis to determine why it provided specific municipalities fewer constable hours than those indicated by the targets identified by the model, nor has it analyzed the impact on public safety of doing so. However, as noted in **Section 4.1.1**, in 2020, the OPP had over 1,000 constable vacancies, and

as we describe in **Section 4.1.4**, the OPP does not use a consistent model to deploy officers to detachments. These factors likely contributed to municipalities being underserved relative to the deployment model. Furthermore, as described in **Section 4.2.3**, we found that regions with higher frontline vacancies resolve fewer crimes, illustrating that providing fewer constable hours may also impact public safety.

Information Sharing with Municipalities Is Limited

Because the OPP does not bill municipalities based on the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) officers or hours it provides, but rather based on households and calls for service (as discussed in **Section 2.6**), municipalities are not aware of how many hours of service they are receiving, and how those hours are spent. Some municipalities we spoke to indicated they were frustrated that the OPP would not provide the number of FTE officers deployed to their communities when requested. Under the Act, municipal police services boards are responsible for duties such as generally determining objectives and priorities of police services in the community, participating in the selection of the detachment commander, advising the commander, and monitoring his or her performance.

The OPP Police Services Board Reporting Manual states that detachment commanders are required to report to the police services boards the following information:

- public complaints;
- motor vehicle collisions, by type;
- Criminal Code and provincial statute charges laid; and
- actual occurrences of violent crime, property crime and drug crime, and clearance rates.

Some municipalities we spoke to wanted their local OPP detachment commander to provide more detailed data and statistics than the minimum required. They believed that this would assist them to evaluate whether sufficient and effective policing was being provided in their communities and to design programs and services specific to their needs. For example:

- One municipality indicated that it would be helpful if the OPP provided its police services board with statistical data reflecting a period of at least five years, to enable it to better analyze crime trends and make more informed decisions about the policing services needed in its communities.
- Another municipality was receiving statistics from the OPP for the entire county, rather than statistics specific to the municipality, limiting its ability to draw any useful conclusions on crime and traffic in the community.
- A different municipality commented that statistics the OPP provided were not detailed enough to allow it to evaluate the extent of mental health and opioid-related issues in the community, which would assist it in providing relevant programs and services.

Given these concerns, the limited statistics provided by the OPP may not be adequate for municipal police services boards to fulfill their responsibilities. While detachment commanders have the discretion to provide additional statistics or data, we did not find any consistency in what was being provided to police services boards or individual municipalities over and above what is required.

RECOMMENDATION 5

So that municipalities receive an adequate and effective level of policing services, to increase transparency, and to provide municipalities with the information required to make informed decisions on policing in local communities, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- review the number of uniformed policing hours its deployment model identifies are required for each municipality and provide municipalities with explanations when the number of hours is not delivered;
- survey police services boards to identify what additional data and statistics on police services they would find useful; and

- expand the scope of information required to be provided to police services boards based on the results of the survey.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with this recommendation and commits to implementing each action item in order to uphold transparency and accountability.

The OPP has begun to explore making enhancements to existing reporting requirements to police service boards (PSB) through its Detachment Commanders working with their PSBs.

The OPP plans to work in consultation with Ontario Association of Police Services Boards (OAPSB) to enhance the scope of information provided to the various PSBs in a consistent manner.

4.2.3 Regions with Higher Frontline Officer Vacancies Resolve Fewer Crimes

We found that frontline officer vacancy rates varied considerably between OPP regions and detachments. **Figure 17** provides the constable vacancy rate for each region, as well as the highest and lowest vacancy rates by detachment in each region. While the West and East regions had 28% and 27% of their frontline constable positions vacant in 2020, the North West region had only 17%. In addition, while one detachment in the West region had a 44% vacancy rate, another detachment in the same region had a vacancy rate of just 18%.

Figure 17 also indicates the crime clearance rate of each region. The crime clearance rate represents the proportion of criminal incidents resolved by the police, and is a standardized measure utilized by all police services in Canada. Police can clear an incident either by laying a charge or by other means, such as using discretion not to lay a charge or referring the accused to a diversion program, or if the accused is less than 12 years old, or if the incident is cleared by another agency. As shown in **Figure 17**, the regions with lower vacancy rates (higher staffing levels) also

Figure 17: Regional Constable Vacancies and Crime Clearance Rates, 2020 (%)

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Region	Constable Vacancies	Crime Clearance Rate*	High Vacancy Rate Detachment	Low Vacancy Rate Detachment
North West	17	63.5	26	7
North East	23	51.3	36	13
East	27	41.1	37	15
Central	25	42.0	37	15
West	28	33.7	44	18

* Clearance rates do not include Criminal Code traffic incidents.

have higher crime clearance rates. While the OPP advised us that other factors can also influence crime clearance rates, we found that, despite the differences in constable staffing between regions, and at detachments within regions, the OPP has not taken sufficient steps to adjust officer deployment to equalize staffing levels, as discussed in **Section 4.1.4**.

4.2.4 Frontline Officer Schedules Are Not Aligned with Calls for Service

In our 1998, 2005 and 2012 audits of the OPP, we found that officers were not scheduled in a way that corresponded to peak workload periods. During our current audit, we found this continues to be the case, and that the OPP has made limited progress toward addressing this problem to make more efficient use of staff time in order to reduce staffing costs and improve officer availability during peak times.

Shift schedules are generally determined at the detachment level. The majority of detachments operate 24 hours a day, and the majority of frontline officers work 12-hour shifts. Shifts generally run from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., with about the same number of officers working each shift. Officer shifts are scheduled in four-week blocks based on a five-five-four rotation, as follows:

- five shifts, (two days, three nights) followed by four days' rest;
- five shifts (three days, two nights) followed by five days' rest; and

- four shifts (two days, two nights) followed by five days' rest.

This complex method of scheduling is believed to be popular among officers because it allows for long blocks of time off. However, as in our previous audits of the OPP, we found these scheduling practices lacked the flexibility to allow staffing levels to match demand for policing services. While the OPP noted that its systems do not capture instances when a shift may begin or end at a time different than scheduled, our analysis of 2019 shift data for all detachments nevertheless found that:

- OPP detachments received their peak number of calls for service in the six hours between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Detachments received the fewest calls in the six hours between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m., when the number of calls were 75% lower than during peak hours. However, the number of frontline constables on duty during this time was only 25% lower than during peak hours.
- Frontline constables took the most vacation time and worked the fewest hours in August, which was also the month with the greatest number of calls for service. In contrast, hours worked in January by frontline constables were 4% greater than in August, even though the OPP received 30% fewer calls.

A 2019 report from the Ontario Internal Audit Division, which examined OPP shift scheduling in 2018, estimated that time of day misalignment between officer shifts and demand for service alone

represented \$55 million in frontline salaries and overtime that could be better used to meet service demands at other times.

The OPP developed its shift scheduling manual in partnership with the Ontario Provincial Police Association (OPPA), representing the majority of OPP uniformed and civilian staff. The manual lays out a significant number of factors to consider and criteria that a detachment commander must meet in order to make changes to shift schedules. The process is manually intensive and would require detachment commanders to put in significant effort and time. It does not provide any suggested alternative shift types that could be implemented.

Rather than individual detachment commanders attempting to change the standard 12-hour, five-five-four shift rotation, an organization-wide approach to adjusting shift schedules is likely required in order to have officers accept the change. While OPP management must consult with the OPPA, and follow the shift scheduling manual when making changes, there is nothing in the collective agreement that would prevent the OPP from moving away from current scheduling practices, other than its popularity among frontline officers.

In February 2020, the OPP established a multi-phase scheduling project with the goal of creating an organization-wide scheduling platform that would increase scheduling effectiveness and efficiencies based on demand for service, and allow centralized monitoring of how shifts are being scheduled across the organization. During our audit, the project was in its first phase. As part of the first phase of the project, the OPP indicated that it is moving toward using a centralized software application that is intended to provide supervisors and commanders more information about officers working at any given time, including scheduling information at neighbouring detachments and regions, and at the provincial level. However, we noted that not all detachments were using the scheduling application tool at the time of our audit.

RECOMMENDATION 6

In order to reduce operating costs and make the best use of available officers' time to more effectively respond to calls for service from Ontarians, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- utilize the work of its current scheduling project to develop alternative shift rotations that better align with demand for services; and
- develop a strategy, in consultation with the Ontario Provincial Police Association, for implementing these alternative rotations at detachments that can most benefit from them.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees to this recommendation. To most effectively make use of available officers' time, the OPP's scheduling project team will continue to consult with the Ontario Provincial Police Association (OPPA) to examine alternative shift rotations with an initial focus on developing and implementing flexible start times to better align the frontline schedule with peak workload hours. Through the development and implementation of alternative shift rotations, the OPP is also planning to enhance officer wellness and work life balance.

4.3 Oversight

4.3.1 Detachment Inspections Lack Authority to Drive Improvement

We found that detachment inspections often showed recurring compliance violations by OPP officers, and the number of violations identified during inspections appeared to be increasing. We also found there were no consequences for officers responsible for violations that posed a significant safety or liability risk.

As described in **Section 2.5.5**, the OPP's Quality Assurance (QA) Unit is responsible for detachment inspections of high-risk areas to ensure compliance with requirements under the *Police Services Act*, OPP

and OPS policies. Detachment commanders are responsible for taking corrective action based on issues identified during an inspection, and the QA Unit is responsible for confirming that violations identified during inspections have been addressed in a timely manner.

We found several details of the inspection and follow-up process that appeared to limit its effectiveness as a quality improvement tool, including that:

- There is no central trend analysis of the results of inspections or issues identified.
- The QA Unit contacts the detachment commander in advance to confirm that the date planned for an inspection is convenient for all parties; the QA Unit does not conduct surprise visits to detachments.
- The QA Unit does not issue penalties or impose consequences on detachments or officers for violations identified during an inspection. Consequences, if any, are at the discretion of detachment or regional commanders.

While the OPP advised us that there are multiple actions detachment commanders may take when violations are found during inspections, in our sample we observed that the QA Unit does not consistently attempt to compare a detachment's previous inspection results to determine improvement or regression, or to identify trends. In addition, there is no scoring of inspections, limited analysis of a detachment's overall performance on inspection, and no comparison of inspection results to other detachments. We selected a sample of 10 detachments and compared their most recent inspection results conducted between 2018 and 2020 with the results from their previous inspection. We found that:

- One of the detachments inspected in 2012 (followed up in 2013) was not inspected again until 2019, six years after the follow-up to the inspection was completed. The OPP could not provide a reason for why this detachment had not been inspected for such a long time. However, we did note that in 2019, the OPP implemented a policy change that requires every detachment to be inspected at least once every two calendar years.

- In previous inspections, conducted between 2012 and 2017, inspectors found 233 violations across the 10 detachments. In the most recent inspections they found 422, an increase of 81%. Although the OPP advised us that due to improvements to its QA inspection process it expected to identify additional violations, this is nevertheless a substantial increase.
- Nine of the 10 detachments had more violations identified in their most recent inspection than in their previous inspection.

In addition, nine of 10 detachments had recurring violations across both inspections. While some recurring violations are expected when inspecting a large sample of officer lockers, weapons, vaults and cells, some of these violations posed a significant risk, such as:

- Nine of 10 detachments had recurring violations with prisoner reports, such as failing to document whether the prisoner had medical conditions, injuries or illnesses. Incomplete prisoner reports could put the OPP at risk of liability, affect the prosecution of cases, and compromise the safety of those in custody.
- Two detachments had multiple guns in operable condition stored in gun lockers in both their most recent and previous inspections. Guns are required to be stored unloaded and rendered inoperable with a secure locking device.
- Use-of-force equipment such as handcuffs, batons and pepper spray were found in the personal lockers of police officers (these are separate from gun lockers) at six detachments in both their most recent and previous inspections. In one case, a loaded gun was found in an officer's personal locker. Use-of-force equipment is required to be stored securely in gun lockers.
- Evidence that is required to be stored in evidence vaults was instead found in the personal lockers of police officers at four detachments in both their most recent and previous inspections. Improper storage can violate chain of custody requirements, jeopardizing the ability of prosecutors to secure a conviction in criminal cases.

While the OPP advised us that there are multiple actions detachment commanders may take when violations are found during inspections, in our sample we found that generally, there were limited consequences for officers at detachments who were found with significant violations. In the majority of cases, the action taken was simply for the supervisor to “remind” the officer of policy requirements. For example:

- A 2020 detachment inspection found that an officer had ammunition and various types of weapons such as a baton, brass knuckles, a hatchet and a knife in their personal locker, which was unlocked. The officer subsequently removed the items, and the only action taken by the detachment was to advise the officer to follow standard operating procedures.
- A 2019 detachment inspection found that an officer had five pieces of marked evidence in their personal locker. The only action taken by the detachment was to review with all members the policy regarding seizure, storage and retention of evidence.

In our sample of 10 detachments, only one indicated it had disciplined an officer based on the results of the inspection, and only two detachments indicated they had annotated officer personnel files documenting a violation.

The QA Unit also administers the Management Inspection Program questionnaire, as discussed in **Section 2.5.5**. The QA Unit has not conducted a Management Inspection Program questionnaire since 2016, citing issues with the survey company it was using. The OPP informed us that it is relaunching the program in 2021. However, at the time of our audit, questionnaires had yet to be completed. Additionally, the QA Unit reviews the physical property audits conducted by detachments. During our audit, we visited five detachments and conducted inventory testing of items in their vaults. Among other things, these items included guns, cash, drugs and ammunition. We found that all the items we selected to review were accounted for and present in the vaults.

RECOMMENDATION 7

To improve detachment and officer compliance with legislative requirements and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) policies, we recommend that the OPP:

- track, analyze and compare detachment inspections for trends and repeated incidents of non-compliance, and track and analyze best practices at high-performing detachments;
- standardize consequences for officers whose non-compliances pose a safety or liability risk, including warnings, documentation in personnel files and disciplinary actions; and
- conduct a portion of inspections without providing notice to detachments, and compare results to inspections where notice is provided, to determine if the results of surprise inspections are more representative of the day-to-day state of detachments.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with this recommendation. The OPP will update its monitoring to include analysis and comparison of detachment inspections, to identify trends that require corrective action, and to identify best practices at high-performing detachments.

The Quality Assurance Unit will bring any observed non-compliance to the immediate attention of the respective detachment commander for action. The OPP will also use standardized corrective action to ensure accountability appropriate to the non-compliance and with consideration given to previous conduct.

The OPP will also review the quality assurance inspection process to identify detachments where it will complete unscheduled inspections. Results from these unscheduled inspections will be compared to inspections where notice is provided, to assess which approach is more effective.

4.3.2 OPP Does Not Review Trends and Assess Quality of Investigations Completed by Specialized Investigation Units

We found that the OPP generally does not have processes in place to review the results of the investigations completed by its specialized investigation units to identify trends that may require follow-up and corrective action to ensure investigations are completed efficiently and effectively.

As described in **Section 2.5.4**, the OPP’s Investigations and Organized Crime Command contains four specialized criminal bureaus. We reviewed the confirmed incidents of crime handled by the Anti Rackets Branch (ARB), the Organized Crime Enforcement bureau (OCEB), and the Investigation and Enforcement bureau (IEB), which is embedded within the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) and conducts investigations across the AGCO’s business lines.

We found that between 2016 and 2019, the confirmed incidents of crime handled by these units were stable, increasing by just 2%. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the confirmed incidents of crime handled by these units decreased by 57% in 2020 compared to the number of incidents in 2019. We further observed that for this period, with

significantly fewer incidents of crime, the proportion of incidents in which the OPP cleared the incident by laying charges increased by 51%, from 6.9% in 2019 to 10.4% in 2020, as shown in **Figure 18**—this increase was driven by the IEB and ARB.

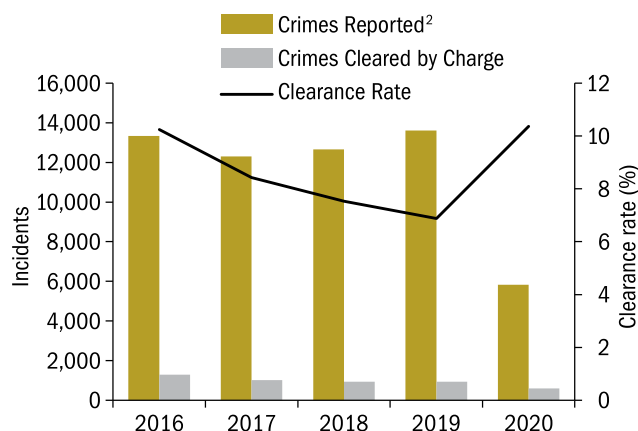
We also found that between 2016 and 2019, the average time (in days) it took these three units to clear incidents of crime decreased by 58%, from approximately 36 days in 2016 to 15 days in 2019, as shown in **Figure 19**, before increasing slightly to 18 days in 2020. However, between 2017 and 2019, the crime clearance rate decreased from 98.3% in 2017 to 87.8% in 2019, before increasing to 91% in 2020.

We found that the OPP and these three units did not have a process in place to review such trends to assess whether the differences from year to year are reasonable, or whether follow-up and/or corrective action is necessary. For example, they had not analyzed why the crime clearance rate had declined while at the same time they had drastically reduced the time it takes to clear cases.

We also observed that the IEB and OCEB did not have a post-investigation quality assurance process to review—for example, on a sample basis—whether the conclusions reached in investigations were appropriate, and the rationale sufficiently documented. In

Figure 18: Percentage of Reported Incidents Cleared by Charge in Specialized Units, 2016–2020¹

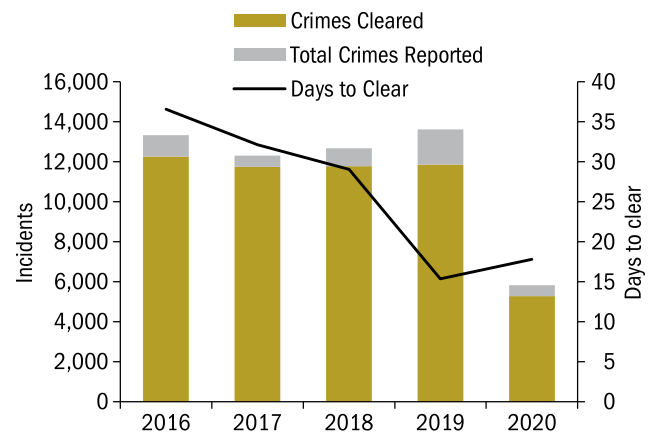
Source: Ontario Provincial Police



1. Data is based on the date/year in which the incident was reported, not cleared.
2. Crimes reported refers to "founded incidents" and is equal to total reported incidents minus unfounded incidents.

Figure 19: Time to Clear Reported Incidents in Specialized Units (Days), 2016–2020*

Source: Ontario Provincial Police



- * Data is based on the date/year in which the incident was reported, not cleared.

contrast, we found that the ARB had a process to review each completed investigation for lessons learned.

We reviewed a sample of closed cases and noted instances where the OPP had referred cases to another agency. We noted instances where it would have been beneficial for the OPP to follow up with the agency to ensure that action was being taken to address the case. For example, we noted an incident involving the death of a child that the OPP had referred to the Ministry of Health to look into whether medication prescribed by two doctors had led to the child's death. Although we were told that in severe instances, such as this example, the OPP would normally follow up with the party it had referred the case to, in this case it had not done so. After bringing this to the OPP's attention, we found that the OPP subsequently followed up with the Ministry to obtain an update.

RECOMMENDATION 8

To improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of its investigations, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP):

- implement a process to monitor and analyze investigative trends, such as changes in crime clearance rates, to identify if they are reasonable, and to take corrective action where necessary; and
- implement a post-investigation quality assurance process for all specialized units to review whether conclusions reached are appropriate and sufficiently documented, and to take corrective action where they are not.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with this recommendation and will develop a systematic approach to reviewing investigations conducted by specialized units. The OPP will examine existing processes, such as in the Anti-Rackets Bureau (ARB), for post-investigation

quality assurance and will apply lessons learned to the organization's specialized units.

The OPP will also implement a process to monitor and analyze investigative trends and patterns to assess their reasonability, and to take corrective action where necessary.

4.3.3 Ministry Oversight of the OPP Is Lacking

Under the Act, the Ministry is responsible for several functions related to oversight of police services in the province, including:

- monitoring police forces to ensure that adequate and effective police services are provided at the municipal and provincial levels; and
- conducting a system of inspections and reviews of police forces across Ontario.

We found that the Ministry did not have specific metrics or key performance indicators it was monitoring on an ongoing basis to ensure that the police services the OPP provides are adequate and effective.

We also found that the Ministry did not appear to be fulfilling its responsibility to inspect the OPP. In the last 20 years the Ministry has only inspected the OPP twice, once in 2017 regarding use-of-force investigations and reporting, and once in 2019 regarding major case management. These inspections were not specific to the OPP and included other police services. Given the size of the OPP, and the broad scope of the services it provides to Ontarians, two inspections with a narrow focus over the course of 20 years does not appear to fulfill the Ministry's responsibility to conduct a system of inspections.

When the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* (CSPA) comes into force, as discussed in **Section 2.3**, it will establish an Inspector General of Policing position under the Ministry of the Solicitor General. The Inspector General will be responsible for monitoring and conducting inspections of police services in Ontario, including the OPP, for compliance with the CSPA and its regulations. We noted that the CSPA includes provisions to protect the independence of the Inspector General, including that the Solicitor General shall not direct the Inspector General or

any inspector appointed by the Inspector General regarding the performance of their functions under the CSPA. Nevertheless, having both the Inspector General of Policing and the OPP within the Ministry of the Solicitor General and reporting to the same person could pose a risk to the independence, or the appearance of independence, of the Inspector General when monitoring and inspecting the OPP.

RECOMMENDATION 9

To provide effective oversight of the policing services delivered by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), we recommend that the Ministry of the Solicitor General:

- establish key performance indicators in consultation with the OPP for monitoring the adequate and effective delivery of policing services; and
- implement controls that ensure the independence of the Inspector General of Policing when monitoring and inspecting the OPP.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry of the Solicitor General agrees with this recommendation and will implement both recommended actions.

4.3.4 Officers Charged under the *Police Services Act* Cannot Be Prosecuted if Medically Unable to Participate in Their Hearing

OPP internal investigations into officer conduct can lead to charges against officers under the *Police Services Act* (Act). These are not criminal charges. The penalties they carry include demotion, suspension and termination. However, in cases where the officer successfully demonstrates with supportable medical evidence that they are unable to participate in their hearing, the OPP cannot legally advance with prosecuting an officer it has charged under the Act.

We found that as of July 31, 2021, the OPP's prosecutions office was unable to advance with

prosecuting 22 OPP officers it had charged between 2005 and 2021 in a timely manner because the officers had provided sufficient medical documentation indicating they were unable to fully participate in their hearing.

We also found that some of these 22 OPP officers had been on medical leave for several years and as a result, these officers may have avoided penalties that can be as severe as termination, while continuing to be paid. The 22 officers had been paid approximately \$4.2 million by the OPP since being charged, including one officer who retired and one who resigned in 2021 and as a result can no longer face any disciplinary action. The OPP's internal prosecutions office charged these 22 officers for serious incidents that included the following:

- One officer was charged with discreditable conduct in November 2016 for interfering with another police investigation.
- One officer was charged with discreditable conduct in September 2017 for reporting for duty while under the influence of alcohol.
- One officer was charged with discreditable conduct in September 2018 for failing to conduct a proper investigation into a motor vehicle collision involving another officer.
- One officer was charged with neglect of duty in January 2019 for making an improper arrest, making false statements under oath, and failing to make a report.
- One officer was charged for discreditable conduct in December 2016 following the officer's involvement in a motor vehicle collision while impaired.

RECOMMENDATION 10

So that police officers are held accountable for their actions on a timely basis, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police work with the Ministry of the Solicitor General to review the impact of delaying disciplinary hearings for officers who cannot participate due to medical reasons and to identify options to expedite such hearings.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees to this recommendation. The OPP will review its internal processes and work with the Ministry of the Solicitor General to identify options to expedite disciplinary hearings.

4.4 Procurement

4.4.1 Procurement Policies and Approvals Are Not Being Followed at the OPP

We found that the OPP does not have effective controls in place to prevent duplicate purchases and purchases that were not properly authorized. In addition, we found that the OPP does not always have effective strategies in place for the timely purchase of needed equipment, and many OPP staff with procurement responsibilities had received very little training to execute such responsibilities.

In some cases, linked to its inventory management practices, when the OPP decides to purchase a product, service or equipment, it generates a purchase order in its own internal systems. If a purchase order exceeds \$5,000, it must be sent to Ontario Shared Services, who then recreate the purchase order in the government's Integrated Financial Information System (IFIS) with all required terms and conditions—such as on the delivery of goods, confidentiality and conditions under which the purchase order can be terminated. Ontario Shared Services also ensures that all appropriate levels of approval have been obtained. Only the IFIS order is to be sent to the vendor. However, we found that there are no controls in place to prevent an internal purchase order from also being sent to the vendor. Due to the lack of controls, there is a risk of duplicate purchase orders being issued, and the opportunity exists to issue purchase orders without obtaining the required level of approval needed when processing a transaction in IFIS.

We reviewed a selection of purchase orders, including purchases that had not been subject to competitive procurement, and large value

purchases that required higher levels of authorization to process, and found multiple examples where OPP staff did not follow the procurement process. For example:

- On July 27, 2017, the OPP ordered \$287,448 worth of identification scanners (used to scan documents such as drivers' licences and passports) just one day before the contract with the vendor who supplies them was set to expire. OPP staff issued the purchase order from their own internal system to the vendor, rather than waiting for the order to be issued through IFIS with all required terms and conditions. The OPP advised the vendor that if an IFIS purchase order was received, it was for administrative purposes only and was not a duplicate order. However, two separate purchase orders totalling \$287,448 (\$165,200 and \$122,248) were later processed and issued to the vendor through IFIS on August 2, 2017. However, the vendor indicated that they misinterpreted one of these IFIS purchase orders as a separate order, and delivered and charged the OPP for an additional 400 scanners at a cost of \$165,200. The OPP could not obtain a refund because the scanners are specialized equipment. Furthermore, we found that by issuing these purchase orders, the OPP substantially exceeded the maximum contract value and maximum quantity of scanners that it could order based on the terms stipulated in the contract with the vendor.
- On March 9, 2019, a significant contract with a vendor to provide the OPP with laptop mounting stations for OPP vehicles was set to expire. On March 8, 2019, one day before the contract expired, OPP staff decided to issue a \$1.89 million purchase order to the vendor. The purchase order was sent from the OPP's internal systems, rather than from IFIS. The purchase order did not have the required terms and conditions that are included with IFIS purchase orders, and did not include the approval of the Deputy Solicitor General, which is required for purchases greater than \$1 million. Although an IFIS purchase order was subsequently approved by the Deputy

Solicitor General and sent to the vendor with the required terms and conditions, this was done after the contract with the vendor had expired and the commitment to purchase the mounting stations had already been made.

- As part of a lengthy operation, the OPP hired a vendor under a non-competitive procurement process to provide daily meals for as many as 160 officers over a period of eight months at a cost of over \$444,000. While the Ontario Public Service Procurement directive allows for non-competitive procurement in urgent situations, an exemption must be sought and the reasons documented. We found that the OPP had not sought an exemption or documented why they had not conducted a competitive procurement.

Procurement Planning and Training

As the above examples illustrate, one of the reasons OPP staff did not follow procurement policies and procedures appears to be the last-minute purchase of items before contracts expire—this suggests a lack of proper planning.

Consistent with a lack of proper planning, we found that the OPP did not submit its 2019/20 to 2021/22 Fleet Strategy to Treasury Board until January 2020, nine months after the previous strategy expired on March 31, 2019. Because of this delay, the OPP was not able to purchase any new frontline enforcement vehicles, including cruisers, in the 2019/20 fiscal year. While the OPP has since submitted a fleet strategy for 2020/21 to 2022/23 valued at \$96.88 million, new vehicles take several months to be delivered and outfitted before they are ready for duty – a process that we were advised took even longer with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the OPP advised us that due to the pandemic, it held on to some vehicles beyond their normal useful life, we were nevertheless concerned that at the time of our audit, over 39% of OPP road vehicles had exceeded their useful lives. According to the OPP's records, the majority of its vehicles have a useful life of between 60 and 72 months.

One of the detachments we spoke with said that due to the delay in replacing vehicles, older vehicles were spending more time out of service for repairs, requiring the detachment to sometimes put two officers in a single vehicle for a shift. Consistent with this, we found that the OPP was spending an average of over \$9,800 annually per vehicle on those that had exceeded their useful life and kilometric travel threshold, almost 120% more than the approximately \$4,460 per vehicle it was spending on the newer vehicles in its fleet.

We also found that new managers and supervisors throughout the OPP who have procurement responsibilities receive only one hour of procurement-specific training. Procurement staff in the OPP's Business Management Bureau, who are ultimately responsible for ensuring procurements are executed effectively and assisting other areas of the OPP with their procurements, stressed the need for additional procurement training for managers and supervisors throughout the organization.

RECOMMENDATION 11

So that procurement policies are followed, and essential services, goods and equipment are procured efficiently and without delay, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP):

- develop controls that eliminate the ability of OPP staff to send purchase orders over \$5,000 to vendors through internal systems rather than IFIS, as required by OPP policy;
- provide sufficient procurement training to managers and supervisors throughout the organization who are responsible for procurement; and
- put in place an ongoing process to monitor and confirm that staff involved in procurement follow the OPP's procurement rules, including that required levels of approval are obtained before purchase orders are sent to vendors.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with the recommendations regarding Procurement Directive adherence, training and effective controls. In April 2021, the OPP established a centralized Procurement Services department in order to achieve these objectives.

The OPP will develop controls to ensure that the Procurement Directive is adhered to. In particular, the OPP will implement controls to prevent staff from being able to send purchase orders over \$5,000 to vendors through its internal systems rather than IFIS. The OPP will also provide training throughout to those responsible for procurement. Finally, the OPP will put in place a process to monitor and confirm that staff involved in procurement follow the OPP's rules, including that required levels of approval are obtained before purchase orders are sent to vendors.

4.4.2 Many OPP Vehicles Are Underutilized

We found that a significant portion of the OPP's fleet of frontline road vehicles is underutilized, resulting in unnecessary capital and operational costs.

The OPP owns and manages nearly 4,100 road vehicles. These vehicles have a variety of functions, the most significant of which is patrolling and responding to calls by frontline officers. The OPP also uses vehicles for activities such as emergency response, investigations and administrative travel.

We found that the OPP does not consider minimum vehicle utilization levels and actual staffing levels to determine its fleet strategy and vehicle procurement decisions. While the OPP does not have

a guideline or benchmark for its road vehicles related to minimum annual kilometric use, we found that the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) publishes a utilization guideline for both directly assigned and shared enforcement vehicles within the Ontario Public Service. MTO's guideline states that shared vehicles (such as frontline vehicles), which account for nearly 40% of the OPP's fleet, should be driven at least 1,200 kilometres per month (1,600 for directly assigned vehicles), or 14,400 kilometres per year.

We analyzed OPP vehicle data from 2018/19 to 2020/21 to determine how many of the OPP's frontline road vehicles were meeting these guidelines. As shown in **Figure 20**, we found that where the OPP had recorded the kilometric travel of its frontline road vehicles, between 16% and 34% of them had been underutilized relative to MTO's guideline of 14,400 annual kilometres. We noted that because the OPP relies on human entry to input the kilometric travel of its vehicles, not all vehicles had kilometric travel recorded for each fiscal year.

Due to operational requirements, the OPP will always need to have on hand vehicles that are utilized less than MTO's benchmark guideline. For instance, vehicles used strictly for specialized services such as prisoner transportation are often sitting on standby, but are essential to have available in case a need arises. However, given that a significant portion of the OPP fleet is made up of frontline patrol vehicles, there appears to be room for significant improvement in vehicle utilization. We estimated that the cost to the OPP to purchase the 241 vehicles identified as underutilized in 2019/20 was over \$9 million, and the cost to repair and maintain these 241 underutilized vehicles was nearly \$640,000 in

Figure 20: Utilization of OPP Vehicles, 2018/19–2020/21

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Year	Vehicles with Kilometric Travel Recorded	Vehicles with <14,400 Kilometres Travelled	Vehicles Underutilized (%)
2018/19	1,189	399	34
2019/20	1,289	241	19
2020/21	1,451	237	16

2019 alone. Given these costs, even a modest reduction in vehicles owned and operated by the OPP based on actual utilization data could result in significant savings in capital and operating costs.

We noted that a 2016 review of OPP fleet management conducted by the Ontario Internal Audit Division also found that a significant number of OPP vehicles were underutilized, and recommended the OPP critically examine underutilized vehicles “with a view to more effective use of capital funding and overall operational spending.” However, we found that the OPP had not conducted any significant analysis of underutilized vehicles, and that in its latest fleet management strategy, it continued to procure and allocate vehicles primarily based on the number of officers it was authorized to employ. The OPP fleet management and procurement strategy did not consider the historic utilization of vehicles, or the significant vacancies in frontline policing the OPP has been experiencing (discussed in **Section 4.1.1**). Rather than reducing the number of vehicles in accordance with their utilization, from 2016 to 2020 the OPP increased the number of road vehicles in its fleet from 4,035 to approximately 4,090, even though the number of police officers employed by the OPP decreased from 5,785 in 2016 to 5,577 in 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 12

To maximize the capital and operational cost effectiveness of its vehicle fleet, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- establish an internal benchmark for vehicle utilization;
- using this benchmark, conduct a review of fleet utilization, with the goal of maximizing cost-effectiveness while maintaining operational readiness; and
- consider historical utilization, actual staffing levels and projected staffing, rather than authorized staffing, in its fleet strategy and procurement of vehicles.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with this recommendation and will begin by exploring more efficient processes to collect fleet utilization data and build an accountability framework which will allow the OPP to make assessments based on OPP vehicle type, purpose or function. The OPP will establish fleet utilization benchmarks where appropriate.

The OPP will undertake to develop parameters within the proposed Service Delivery Model to review all detachment fleet allocations.

4.5 Performance Measurement

4.5.1 OPP Does Not Use Performance Indicators With Targets to Measure Its Effectiveness

Although the OPP collects and reports on information related to its policing operations, we found that it has not identified key performance indicators with targets, and does not use such indicators to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations.

The OPP reports information on its workforce, policing activities, crime and motor vehicle accidents in its annual report such as:

- workforce breakdown by gender, age, officer versus civilian, and rank;
- calls received, calls dispatched and top reasons for calls;
- incidents of crime by type; and
- injuries and fatalities in motor vehicle collisions on OPP-patrolled roads.

Our 2012 audit noted that the OPP was not reporting information that measured the organization’s efficiency or cost-effectiveness. The OPP’s annual reports now provide some additional information that may help measure efficiency, such as frontline officer hours allocated to administration, and municipal policing costs per household served. However, the OPP has not set targets for these measures, nor does it use the results to assess its efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The OPP also does not report publicly on other potential efficiency and effectiveness indicators that

can provide valuable insight into its operations, such as time taken to respond to calls, and officer time lost to illness.

Prior to 2020, the OPP was using provincial reduction targets for violent and property crime, and motor vehicle collisions. The provincial target for 2017 to 2019 was a reduction of 2% in these areas. However, the OPP did not publicly report organization-wide results against these indicators, and had not performed an overall analysis on them to determine whether they were or were not met. The OPP decided to move away from these reduction targets for violent and property crime and motor vehicle collisions and indicated that the goals that were set were arbitrary. **Figure 3** shows that crime reported by the OPP actually increased significantly over this period. In its 2020–2022 Strategic Plan, the OPP identified nine long-term outcomes across three strategic organizational priorities, outlined in **Appendix 4**. However, we noted the OPP has not yet developed any specific measures with targets to assess whether these outcomes are actually being achieved.

In response to our inquiry, the OPP indicated that it would no longer be setting numeric targets or using key performance indicators to measure its performance, but would instead be relying on an array of data from across the organization in order to monitor organizational performance and priorities until such time as meaningful performance indicators can be developed. OPP staff also indicated that the scope and mandate of the OPP is unique and unlike that of any other police service in Ontario, limiting comparability across the province’s policing sector.

We found that the OPP’s stance on targets and key performance indicators, and comparability across jurisdictions, did not align with contributions it had made in developing a national performance framework for policing. In 2014, Statistics Canada, in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police undertook a review of current performance measures being used by police services in Canada, including the OPP. The review found that:

- there was no common model or framework for measuring police performance in Canada;
- overall, reporting by police services did not reflect the complexities of contemporary policing functions outside of strictly law enforcement activities; and
- very few measurement frameworks had been developed with an emphasis on policing outcomes and quality of service.

The review led to the development of the Canadian Police Performance Metrics Framework (framework) in 2017, which was contributed to and endorsed by the OPP. The framework outlines 47 performance indicators across four general categories, some requiring targets, reflecting the strategic priorities and policing responsibilities in Canada, and designed to be nationally comparable. Examples of performance indicators from the framework are provided in **Figure 21**.

While the OPP has not selected any performance indicators from the framework for use in measuring progress toward its priorities and outcomes, we noted it is reporting to the public results related to some of these indicators through its annual reports. The OPP also indicated it is committed to reporting under this framework once Statistics Canada develops tools and targets for national reporting under the framework for all Canadian police agencies, anticipated in 2023.

We also noted that in previous years, the OPP conducted a Community Satisfaction Survey annually to gauge public opinion on policing issues, perceptions of crime and satisfaction with OPP service delivery. The survey is also conducted at the detachment level once every three years. However, we were advised that as a result of a delay in completing an evaluation of the survey, the OPP has not conducted the survey since 2018. At the completion of our fieldwork, the OPP finalized an agreement with a survey provider to conduct provincial and detachment-level Community Satisfaction Surveys on behalf of the OPP over a three-year period, beginning in September 2021.

Figure 21: Canadian Police Performance Metrics Framework—Example Performance Indicators

Source of data: Statistics Canada

Category	Example Performance Indicators
Measures of the incidence of crime, victimization, and bringing offenders to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted reductions in crime rates and severity Violation-specific clearance rate benchmarks
Measures of police functions and activities that contribute to public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Median response time to high-priority calls Referrals to social services
Measures of police personnel and operating expenditures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police officers per 100,000 population Operating expenditures relative to measures of policing outcomes
Measures of Canadians' trust and confidence in police, and perceptions of police legitimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginalized populations' perceptions of police performance (survey)

RECOMMENDATION 13

To more effectively assess its performance in delivering adequate and effective policing services in Ontario, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- select key performance indicators from the Canadian Police Performance Metrics Framework, including indicators with targets, and report these publicly; and
- compare and benchmark indicators against other Canadian police services.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with this recommendation. The OPP will utilize a performance framework that considers the Canadian Police Performance Metrics Framework (CPPMF) and Statistics Canada. The OPP will select relevant indicators, establish goals, and report results publicly. The OPP will also identify suitable comparable police services against which it will compare its results.

4.5.2 OPP Does Not Accurately Track or Monitor Call Response Times

An important indicator related to public safety is how quickly a police service responds to calls, particularly high-priority, urgent calls. Communication devices in OPP vehicles have a button that officers use

specifically to report to the communications centre when they arrive at a scene, and officers are required to use this button. However, the OPP does not analyze information about how much time elapses between when a call is received by one of its regional communications centres and when the officer arrives on the scene. Consequently, the OPP does not know whether average response times are reasonable, particularly for more serious or higher-priority calls. This was of particular concern given the growing number of vacancies in the ranks of frontline police officers described in **Section 4.1.1**.

We attempted to conduct our own analysis of the OPP's call response data. Unexpectedly, we found that the highest priority calls requiring an immediate response, such as those that involve a catastrophic event, injury, threat of injury or death, had a significantly longer response time than non-urgent calls that only require the officer to respond as soon as practical. However, we found several clear indications these results were not accurate. For example, we found that the OPP's data included a large portion of calls that had a blank dispatch time, a large number of calls that could not be traced to the time the officer arrived, and many calls that listed the officer's arrival time at set times the next day rather than the specific time the officer arrived. The OPP also explained that an officer en route to a non-urgent call may also stop for traffic enforcement or to assist someone, and therefore when the "arrive" button is used, it is not

always associated with the same event the officer was dispatched to attend.

Accurate tracking of response times on a detachment-by-detachment basis would allow the OPP to evaluate the deployment and scheduling of officers throughout the province, and potentially identify areas where longer response times may pose a risk to public safety. We found examples of several jurisdictions that measure and publicly report response times to calls for service. For example, the Vancouver Police Department and the Ottawa Police Service both measure and publicly report response times for high-priority calls, and the Edmonton Police Service has set a target of responding to its highest priority calls (a person is at risk) of arriving on the scene in under seven minutes 80% of the time.

Similar to our 2012 audit, the OPP explained that it would be impractical to set a response-time standard for calls because of significant geographic differences in the areas of the province covered by each detachment. However, we found several international police services that are responsible for policing large territories similar to the OPP that measure and report on response times. For example, the New Zealand Police measure, report and have standards for response times to emergency events in both urban and rural areas. Similarly, the state police force of New South Wales, Australia, sets individual urgent call response-time targets for each district within the state, and publicly reports the percentage of calls responded to within those targets.

RECOMMENDATION 14

To help monitor response times to calls and to minimize detachment response times throughout the province, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police:

- identify the causes of issues with response-time data, and take steps to improve the accuracy and reliability of the data through controls and officer training;
- set individual response-time benchmarks for each detachment based on local variables;

- take corrective action when benchmarks are not met; and
- report response times to municipal police services boards.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees with the recommendation and agrees that there is an opportunity to enhance data quality to assist with information service delivery needs in this area.

With enhanced data quality on detachment response times, the OPP will be able to analyze and cross-compare this data with other similar police services in Ontario and Canada. Using this information, the OPP will establish response-time benchmarks for detachments, and monitor their achievement.

The OPP also agrees that sharing response time information with local police service boards, amongst other data and geographical, environmental, and situational considerations would be beneficial for our communities and will build greater awareness of the community-focused policing service delivered by the OPP.

4.5.3 OPP Does Not Compare Its Crime Clearance Rates to Other Police Services

Although crime clearance data from other Canadian jurisdictions is publicly available, we found that the OPP does not benchmark its incident clearance (crime clearance) results to other jurisdictions to assess its performance and identify areas where the OPP can set targets for improvement.

The crime clearance rate represents the number of crimes resolved in a given year as a percentage of the total incidents of crime reported. Police can clear an incident in a number of ways, as described in **Section 4.2.3**. We compared the OPP's crime clearance rates to those for similar police services in Canada from 2016 to 2020. We found that the OPP compared favourably with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in British Columbia and

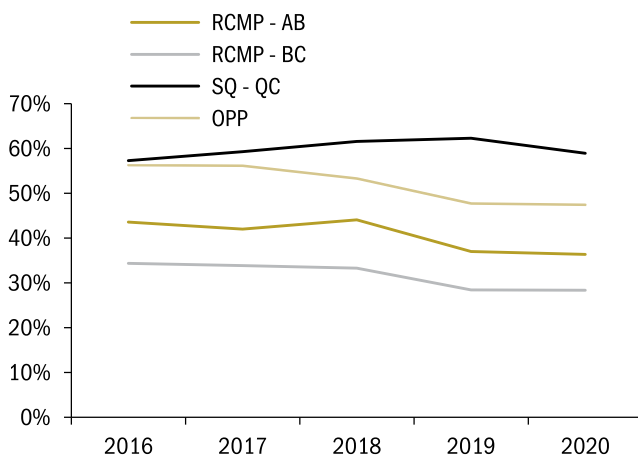
Alberta, but lagged behind the Sureté du Québec (SQ), Quebec’s provincial police service.

In British Columbia and Alberta, municipalities can contract with the RCMP, Canada’s federal police service, to provide policing in their communities. The Sureté du Québec has a mandate that is similar to the OPP’s mandate in Ontario. These police services are comparable to the OPP in size, mandate and geographic area covered. **Figure 22** provides overall crime clearance rates for each of these police services, and **Figures 23, 24** and **25** provide clearance rates for violent crime, property crime and other crimes, respectively. These types of crime are described in **Section 2.2.2**.

As these figures show, the OPP has maintained higher crime clearance rates than the RCMP in British Columbia and Alberta over the last five years for overall crime, and in almost all cases for the major types of crime including violent crime, property crime

Figure 22: Overall Crime Clearance Rates by Police Service, 2016–2020

Source of data: Statistics Canada

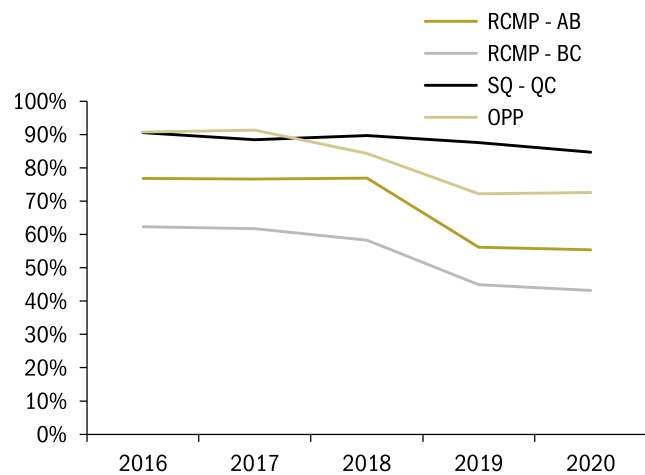


Note: Does not include crime committed under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* or Criminal Code traffic violations (such as impaired driving).

The trend between 2016 and 2020 is difficult to interpret. In 2017, the OPP along with many police agencies in Canada undertook a comprehensive data classification review. A number of issues related to inconsistent reporting were identified and revisions made on a go-forward basis.

Figure 23: Violent Crime Clearance Rates by Police Service, 2016–2020

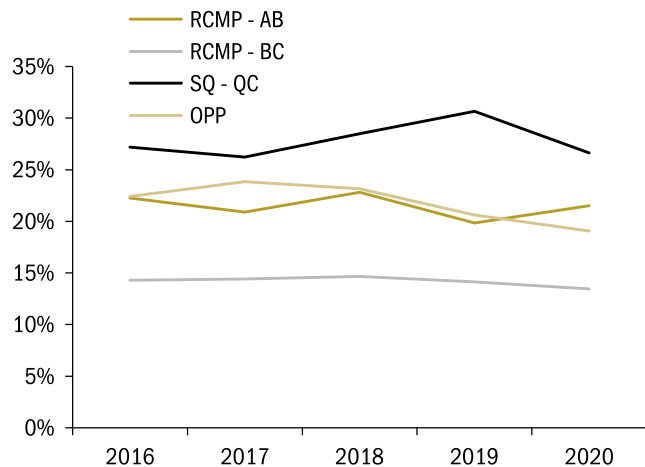
Source of data: Statistics Canada



Note: The trend between 2016 and 2020 is difficult to interpret. In 2017, the OPP along with many police agencies in Canada undertook a comprehensive data classification review. A number of issues related to inconsistent reporting were identified and revisions made on a go-forward basis.

Figure 24: Property Crime Clearance Rates by Police Service, 2016–2020

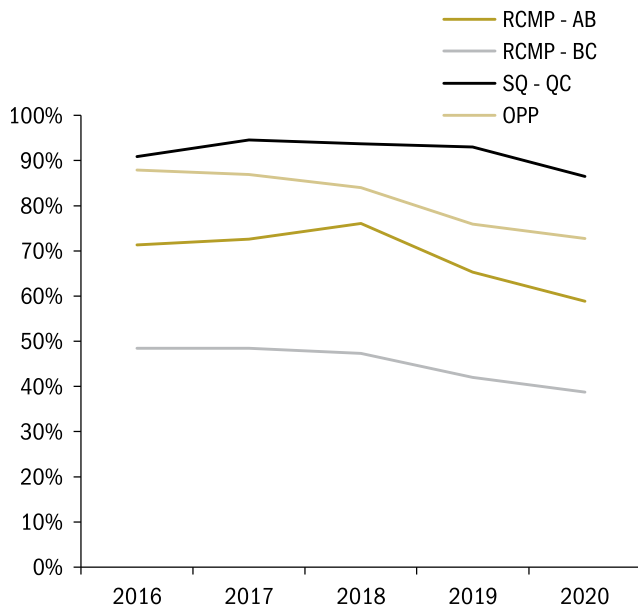
Source of data: Statistics Canada



Note: The trend between 2016 and 2020 is difficult to interpret. In 2017, the OPP along with many police agencies in Canada undertook a comprehensive data classification review. A number of issues related to inconsistent reporting were identified and revisions made on a go-forward basis.

Figure 25: Other Crime Clearance Rates by Police Service, 2016–2020

Source of data: Statistics Canada



Note: The trend between 2016 and 2020 is difficult to interpret. In 2017, the OPP along with many police agencies in Canada undertook a comprehensive data classification review. A number of issues related to inconsistent reporting were identified and revisions made on a go-forward basis.

and other Criminal Code violations. In contrast, we noted that the Sureté du Québec has consistently outperformed the OPP in clearing crime over this same period across each category, indicating there is still room for improvement. Despite the public availability of crime clearance data through Statistics Canada, the OPP was not benchmarking clearance rates against other jurisdictions to identify areas where it could improve or dedicate further resources.

RECOMMENDATION 15

To ensure it is identifying areas that require improvement and allocating resources appropriately, we recommend that the Ontario Provincial Police regularly compare its clearance rates against those for similar Canadian police services.

OPP RESPONSE

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) agrees and welcomes this recommendation. The OPP uses an established methodology for calculating incident clearance status, which has been approved by Statistics Canada and developed in consultation with Police Information and Statistics (POLIS). The new methodology was introduced in 2019 and provides new clearance statuses, allowing for a more detailed violation-specific analysis of the data. The OPP will examine opportunities to compare crime clearance rates and crime status analysis with other police jurisdictions in Ontario and Canada. The OPP will also explore opportunities to establish violation-specific benchmarks using the new clearance status reporting methodology.

Appendix 1: OPP Detachments by Region, as at September 2021

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

West Region – London Regional HQ	
Detachment	Satellite
Brant County	
Chatham Kent	Moravian (FN)
Huron (Clinton)	
Elgin County	
	Essex
	Kingsville
	Lakeshore
Essex County	Maidstone
	Harrow
	Pelee Island (seasonal)
	Tecumseh
	Grey Bruce (Wiaraton)
Grey Bruce (Chatsworth)	Markdale
	Meaford
	Neyaashiiningmiing (FN)
Haldimand County (Cayuga)	
	Corunna
	Grand Bend
Lambton	Point Edward (seasonal)
	Walpole Island (FN)
	Glencoe
	London
	Lucan
Middlesex	Chippewa of the Thames (FN)
	Munsee-Delaware (FN)
	Oneida (FN)
Norfolk County	
Oxford	
Perth Coutu	North Perth
South Bruce	Walkerton
	North Wellington
Wellington County	South Wellington

East Region - Smiths Falls Regional HQ	
Detachment	Satellite
Bancroft	
Central Hastings	
Frontenac	Sharbot Lake
Grenville County	Kemptville
Hawkesbury	
Killaloe	Whitney
Lanark County	Carleton Place
Leeds County	Rideau Lakes
	Thousand Islands
	L&A County East
Lennox & Addington County	L&A County North
	Tyendinaga (FN)
Ottawa	
Prince Edward	
Quinte West	
Renfrew	Arnprior
Russell County	Rockland
	Alexandria
Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	Lancaster
	Morrisburg
	Winchester
Upper Ottawa Valley	Pembroke

Highway Safety Division - Aurora Divisional HQ	
Detachment	Satellite
Aurora	Georgina Island (FN)
Burlington	Niagara
Mississauga	Cambridge
Highway 407	
Toronto	Whitby

Note: (FN) = OPP-administered First Nation Detachment.

North East Region—North Bay Regional HQ	
Detachment	Satellite
Almaguin Highlands	
	Elliot Lake
East Algoma	Thessalon
	Mississauga (FN)
James Bay	Cochrane
	Hearst
Kirkland Lake	
Manitoulin (Little Current)	
Moosonee	
North Bay	Mattawa
	Powassan
Sault Ste. Marie	Batchewana / Rankin (FN)
South Porcupine	Iroquois Falls
	Matheson
	Killarney
Sudbury	West Nipissing
	Atikameksheng (FN)
	Chapleau
	Foleyet
Superior East	Hornepayne
	Wawa
	White River
Temiskaming	Englehart
	Temagami
	Bear Island (FN)
West Parry Sound	

Central Region—Orillia Regional HQ	
Detachment	Satellite
Bracebridge	Bala
	Huntsville
Caledon	
Collingwood	
Dufferin	Orangeville
Haliburton Highlands	
Huron West	Springwater
City of Kawartha Lakes	
Nottawasaga	
Peterborough County	Hiawatha (FN)
	Brighton
Northumberland	Campbellford
Orillia	
Southern Georgian Bay	Midland

North West Region—Thunder Bay Regional HQ	
Detachment	Satellite
Dryden	Ignace
	New Saugeen (FN)
Greenstone	
Kenora	Kenora Municipal
	Sioux Narrows
Marathon	Manitouwadge
Nipigon	Schreiber
	Lake Helen (FN)
Rainy River District	Atikokan
Red Lake	Ear Falls
	Pikangikum (FN)
	Pickle Lake
Sioux Lookout	Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (FN)
	North Caribou Lake (FN)
	Wapekeka (FN)
Thunder Bay	Armstrong
	Shabaqua
	Kiashke Zaaging (FN)

Note: (FN) = OPP-administered First Nation Detachment.

Appendix 2: Map of OPP Regions

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police



Appendix 3: Audit Criteria

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

-
1. Effective oversight processes are in place to assess whether the OPP delivers police services in accordance with applicable legislative and OPP requirements. Where necessary, corrective action is taken on a timely basis.
-
2. Processes are in place to ensure that physical and human resources are acquired economically, and managed efficiently and effectively, to fulfill the OPP's responsibilities.
-
3. Police services are sufficient, equitable, cost-effective, and delivered in accordance with established contracts and legislative requirements.
-
4. OPP staff are appropriately trained and provided with sufficient supports to provide safe and effective policing services to all areas of the province the OPP is responsible for.
-
5. Meaningful performance measures and targets are established, monitored and compared against actual results, and publicly reported on. Corrective action is taken on a timely basis when issues are identified to ensure that intended outcomes are achieved.
-

Appendix 4: Strategic Priorities and Long-Term Outcomes, 2020–2022 OPP Strategic Plan

Source of data: Ontario Provincial Police

Strategic Priority	Long-Term Outcome	Change Initiative
People —strive to support all members in achieving their professional and personal best	Members are supported in developing the resiliency and capabilities necessary to mitigate the psychological and physical demands of their work.	Incorporate meaningful and people-centred solutions for workplace health and well-being.
	Sustainable people-centred processes, policies and programs are in place that are fair, equitable, transparent and inclusive.	Redesign people-centred processes, policies and programs to be values-based and meet emerging workplace needs.
	Members are valued and empowered with the skills essential to their work.	Deliver relevant and current training and education to promote the development of essential skills and leadership.
Work —empower members to ensure the best possible policing services are delivered to Ontarians	Modern and alternative scheduling, deployment, operational and service delivery models are developed that meet demands and balance operational and employee well-being benefits.	Modernize staffing, deployment and operations to optimize resources.
	Excellence in frontline operations and investigations is sustained and opportunities to enhance co-operation, information-sharing and decision-making are exercised.	Streamline the organization to support effective and timely decision-making.
	The best available evidence is at hand to inform program development; systems and processes are streamlined and the greatest possible efficiencies are realized.	Advance information, digital and technological solutions to support the front line and achieve optimum effectiveness.
Communities —partner and build relationships with a shared vision for safety and well-being	Public and private sectors and community stakeholders come together in a co-ordinated way and are increasingly effective at sharing information and devising solutions for positive outcomes.	Cultivate and preserve relationships and engagements that are inclusive, meaningful and valued.
	A decreased demand for police response to non-police/social disorder issues results as we build upon and expand new and existing partnerships to develop alternative approaches to service delivery.	Build and promote integrated response models for issues of operational and strategic importance.
	A trusted and victim-centric approach is entrenched in processes, policies and programs.	Enhance programs and service delivery to better understand and assist victims.



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