



NWT Policing Priorities 2022/2023

PREAMBLE

The 2022/2023 NWT Policing Priorities are reflective of relationships with NWT communities, and the need for service-delivery that is consistent with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The 2022/2023 NWT Policing Priorities were developed with information gathered from consultation with local and Indigenous communities, direct engagement with community leadership, and a review of 2021/2022 Community Policing Action Plans developed with community leadership within each community in the NWT.

The broad priority areas for 2022/2023 are:

- 1) Promote Trust and Confidence in Policing Services
- 2) Effective Response to Illegal Drugs and Alcohol
- 3) Operational and Fiscal Innovation

PRIORITY #1: PROMOTE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN POLICING SERVICES

Findings from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are foundational to validating the importance of positive working relationships that strengthen information sharing and collaboration between RCMP, Inuit, First Nations and Métis communities. This is key to efforts to carefully try and repair historical harms and build and maintain trusting relationships.

As dialogue about the role of police in NWT communities evolve, it is critical that we reflect on the past, as we build toward the future, and ensure NWT residents feel safe and respected when interacting with police. The following key priority areas will support this continued approach by RCMP G Division and the GNWT.

Transparency and Accountability

While respecting privacy laws and investigative integrity, it is expected that the activities of the RCMP be accessible to the public and open to scrutiny. The Sexual Assault Investigation Review Committee that G Division supports is an example of a best practice that speaks to this priority.

As internet use and social media evolve in the NWT, the RCMP should challenge itself to develop new opportunities by collaborating with the GNWT and local community governments to remain open, transparent, and accountable to the public. The online publication of community policing reports and a statistical dashboard are best practices that would further enhance transparency and accountability to the public.

RCMP Member Training and Recruitment

The NWT has the largest proportionate Indigenous population in Canada second to Nunavut, and some of the highest number of residential school survivors in Canada. As such, policing policy, practices and service provision should be consistent with the principles of cultural safety, self-determination, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Policing in the NWT provides a diverse experience for RCMP officers and can be a much different experience than working in less remote, larger city centers in southern Canada. The RCMP must continue to ensure that police officers have had the appropriate cultural and traditional training, respect, aptitude and disposition to embrace life in our Territory.

Practically applied, this ensures RCMP are embracing a community-oriented policing model that includes incorporating wisdom from the Commanding Officer's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, active participation by RCMP members in community orientation and cultural activities, and engaging with local leaders, elders, and service providers.

Community Collaboration

The NWT is geographically vast, spread out over 1.2 million square kilometers of mountains, forests, tundra and pristine lakes and rivers. Many of the communities that exist in the NWT today are directly related to the legacy of colonization and government expansion efforts. These expansion efforts influenced Indigenous people, many of whom were living land-based lifestyles, to move into permanent settlements to receive health care, education, and employment that was only offered there. This is in addition to other incredibly harmful institutional approaches like the Residential Schooling System. The cumulation of these impacts have resulted in negative impacts on communities, not the least of which are in the form of comparatively high rates of family violence, sexual assault, homelessness, and addictions.

It is imperative that RCMP members in the NWT are supported to respond to all survivors and community members using a community-oriented policing lens. Community-oriented policing includes

using culturally- and trauma-informed responses, and collaboration and planning with local leaders, service providers, families, and survivors.

Effective planning leads to increased support for policing initiatives at the local and territorial levels. Working strategically and collaboratively with the community to develop local community safety priorities will support trust and confidence in the RCMP members in the communities in which they live and serve. It is critical that RCMP members build on successful community collaborations and act on new opportunities to support community safety. This includes active and meaningful collaboration where there are new initiatives and existing interventions that support safer communities such as Community Safety Officer pilot programs, Community Justice Programs and diversions, Victim Services and community-driven crime prevention initiatives.

PRIORITY #2: EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT TO RESPOND TO ILLEGAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Bootlegging and the use of illicit drugs continues to be identified as a priority community safety concern by community leadership. The effect problematic drug and alcohol use have on NWT communities is tangible and continues to have a profound negative effect on the lives of NWT residents.

Although the response to the impacts of problematic drug and alcohol use must be a multi-agency, proactive effort and be undertaken by partners in the health, housing, income, mental health, and other stakeholder sectors, the RCMP is a critical partner in their enforcement response and awareness.

The RCMP must constantly look to improving their efforts to reduce the supply of illicit drugs and alcohol in NWT communities via rigorous investigations and enforcement activities to maintain pressure and disrupt the supply chains of illegal drugs and alcohol in the NWT.

PRIORITY #3: OPERATIONAL AND FISCAL INNOVATION

The 2022/2023 GNWT Budget emphasized the need for the GNWT to prioritize value-driven efficiencies in our stewardship of GNWT resources and our commitment to service NWT residents. This is especially true in areas such as policing, which not only make up a significant portion of the Department of Justice annual budget but are also experiencing significant increasing financial pressures. Although the GNWT acknowledges the importance of ensuring RCMP Members are compensated fairly and equitably, the ratification of the first RCMP Regular Member collective agreement in August 2021 is a significant financial impact to contract policing. This, along with other factors, emphasizes the critical importance that the Commanding Officer of RCMP G Division continues to show considerable stewardship by managing the budget prudently while maintaining operational effectiveness.

Cooperation and collaboration between the GNWT and RCMP to build business cases and explore alternative operational and funding models is essential as we move together toward long-term sustainability. The GNWT is committed to collaborating with communities to develop and deliver innovative safety initiatives and programs that are complementary to the RCMP's efforts and have the potential to reduce or slow the growth of enforcement resource needs. The RCMP's continued support of these programs is imperative as we move forward together with the common goal of building safe and resilient communities.

Innovation in operational planning and execution is also an inherent part of our fiscal reality. Fulsome analysis of data-trends, invoking best practice recommendations, and tailoring service delivery methods to those trends and recommendations, will optimize service delivery. It is expected that the RCMP use these tools to evolve outside of standard operational paradigms to ensure their finite resources are being used as efficiently as possible.