

## 9 Policing

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### Police

Under the BC *Police Act*, the provincial government is responsible for providing policing and law enforcement to unincorporated/rural areas and municipalities under 5,000 in population. Also under the *Act*, a municipality with a population of over 5,000 is responsible for providing, and bearing the necessary expenses of, policing and law enforcement within its municipal boundaries. These municipalities may do so by forming their own municipal department, contracting with the provincial government for Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) municipal police services, or contracting with another municipality that has a municipal police department. The federal Canada Census is used for the purposes of determining when municipalities have crossed this population threshold.

There are currently 80 municipalities in BC responsible for providing police services within their municipal boundaries. Twelve (12) of these municipalities are policed by a municipal police department and sixty eight (68) are policed by the RCMP. The rest of the province is policed by the RCMP through the Provincial Police Service.

### RCMP Federal Policing

The RCMP is Canada's national police service. Established under the *RCMP Act*, the RCMP serves as the federal police service, as well as provincial and municipal police services, where contracted to provide these services. The RCMP falls within the portfolio of the federal Minister of Public Safety, and operates under the direction of the RCMP Commissioner. As the federal police service, the RCMP enforces federal statutes across the province and is responsible for border integrity, national security, drugs and organized crime, financial crime and international policing.

### Policing Agreements

The following policing agreements provide for the provision of RCMP provincial and municipal policing in British Columbia:

1. In 2012, the provincial government signed a 20-year Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA) with the federal government to contract the RCMP as BC's Provincial Police Service. Under the terms of the PPSA and the *Police Act*, municipalities with a population under 5,000, rural and unincorporated areas of BC are policed by the RCMP Provincial Police Service, with the provincial government paying 70% of the cost-base described in the PPSA; the federal government pays the remaining 30%.
2. In addition to the PPSA, the provincial and federal governments signed a 20-year master agreement, the Municipal Police Service Agreement (MPSA), which enables the provincial government to sub-contract the RCMP Provincial Police Service to municipalities with populations over 5,000. The MPSA describes the terms and conditions for the provision of RCMP municipal police services.
3. To contract RCMP municipal police services, each municipality must sign a Municipal Police Unit Agreement (MPUA) with the Province.

The terms of the MPSA and the MPUA require that municipalities between 5,000 and 14,999 in population pay 70% of the RCMP cost-base, with the federal government paying 30% of the cost-base; municipalities with 15,000 in population and over pay 90% of the cost-base, with the federal government paying 10% of the cost-base. Municipalities are responsible for 100% of certain costs, such as accommodation (i.e. the detachment) and support staff.

### Police Agreements Governance

These agreements are governed by a national Contract Management Committee (CMC), and in BC a Local Government Contract Management Committee (LGCMC), to manage and administer the policing agreements. Collectively, these committees ensure information sharing processes to support communication and consultation on changes that may impact RCMP policing cost, quality, governance, or services.

### CMC

The national CMC meets biannually and acts as a steering committee that brings collaboration, informed decision-making and planning to the management of the police services agreements (PSAs) across contract policing jurisdictions. BC representatives, including a local government representative appointed by UBCM, communicate decisions and share information with local governments through the LGCMC.

### LGCMC

The LGCMC is comprised of representatives from throughout BC. This Committee serves as a forum for consultation, analysis, and communication between local governments and the Province regarding the management of the PSAs, under which the RCMP provide local police services in BC. The LGCMC distributes information to local governments about issues that may impact the cost, quality, governance, or capacity of the RCMP to deliver local police services. UBCM maintains a [webpage](#) that is dedicated to communicating RCMP contract policing issues that are relevant to local governments.

### Provincial Policing

BC has entered into a PPSA with the Government of Canada to contract the RCMP to act as BC's Provincial Police Service. The BC RCMP Provincial Police Service can be separated into two main categories: detachment policing and the provincial police infrastructure. Detachment policing provides local police services to municipalities under 5,000 in population, rural and unincorporated areas throughout the province by means of uniformed patrols, response-to-call duties, investigative services, community-based policing, traffic enforcement, and administrative support to provincial detachments. As of 2020, there were a total of 801 General Duty/General Investigative Service positions directly assigned to individual provincial policing jurisdictions.

In addition to detachment policing, the BC RCMP Provincial Service maintains the provincial police infrastructure which has the capacity and expertise to resolve high risk incidents; target organized crime, gang violence, and serial crimes; respond to existing and emerging crime trends; as well as provide security and policing services for large scale community events and emergencies. Under the umbrella of the BC RCMP Provincial Service, the provincial police infrastructure generally provides services to the entire province, including RCMP policed municipalities and municipalities with municipal police departments.

## Small Municipalities & Rural Area Costs

The Province provides police services in the 80 municipalities of less than 5,000 population, and in the rural/unincorporated areas. Both small municipalities and rural/unincorporated areas pay the *Police Tax*, which contributes to the costs of the provincial police services provided (i.e. a portion of General Duty [GD] and General Investigative Services [GIS] costs), but is not intended to cover the full cost of the service. In 2020, the Police Tax recovered 32% of the Province's estimated 70% share of rural and small community GD and GIS costs.

There are a number of ways in which the net *Police Tax* levied on local governments is reduced:

- Grants in lieu of taxes on properties that are owned by federal and provincial crown agencies.
- Traffic fine revenue (the current Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing Agreement between the Province and local governments sees 100% of all net traffic fine revenue transferred to local governments).
- If the Surveyor of Taxes or a local government has received payments in lieu of police taxes from the federal government and turned that money over to the provincial government, that amount is subtracted from the target requisition for that contributing area.

The final rural *Police Tax* rate is reduced by \$0.10 per \$1000 to compensate nationally for policing paid for through rural area tax revenues.

## Municipal Policing

### RCMP Municipal Policing

Sixty eight (68) municipalities have entered into an MPUA with the Province to sub-contract the RCMP Provincial Service to provide police services in their municipalities. As part of this Agreement, the RCMP operates regional and integrated detachments across the province. Integrated detachments are comprised of two or more provincial and/or municipal police units working from the same detachment building. A regional detachment structure allows for increased police integration, and for specialized and/or administrative police services to be delivered regionally.

### Municipal Police Departments

Currently, twelve (12) municipalities in BC receive their policing services from eleven (11) municipal police departments. The municipal police departments are: Vancouver, Victoria (polices Victoria and Esquimalt), Saanich, Central Saanich, Oak Bay, Delta, Abbotsford, New Westminster, West Vancouver, Nelson, and Port Moody. The City of Surrey is in the process of transitioning to its own municipal police department.

Municipal police departments are governed by the municipality's police board. The role of the police board is to provide general direction to the department, in accordance with relevant legislation and in response to community needs. Each police board is chaired by the municipality's mayor and consists of one person appointed by the municipal council and up to seven people appointed by the Minister responsible for ensuring an adequate and effective level of policing and law enforcement throughout BC. Board members are civilians. Municipal police departments are responsible for 100% of their policing costs.

In the case of the Victoria/Esquimalt police department, Victoria's mayor acts as the Chair, and Esquimalt's mayor acts as the vice-chair. The Police Act stipulates that if a police department is responsible for more than one municipality, that the municipalities must come to an agreement on who will act as the chair, and who will act as the vice-chair.

## First Nations Policing

The First Nations and Inuit Policing Program (FNIPP) provides culturally appropriate and responsive policing services through two main types of policing agreements: Community Tripartite Agreements (CTA) and Self-Administered Police Services Agreements (SAPSA). A CTA provides an enhanced policing service over and on top of the core policing received through the police of jurisdiction, while the SAPSA provides comprehensive policing to the community. To participate in the program, a First Nations community must enter into an agreement with Canada and the Province who jointly fund the program (Canada 52% and BC 48%).

The RCMP Indigenous Policing Services (IPS) provides enhanced policing services, in addition to core policing provided under the PPSA, to the 133 signatory First Nations communities in BC through 59 CTAs.

There is one SAPSA service in British Columbia, the St'atl'imx Tribal Police Service. This police service is a Designated Policing Unit under the *Police Act*, and is modeled after the structure of a municipal police department, with governance provided by a police board comprised of members selected from the St'at'imc communities served.

There are two additional Agreements that fall outside of the standard FNIPP CTA, and those are the Quadripartite Agreement and the First Nations Enhanced Policing Agreement.

The Quadripartite Agreement in British Columbia is a unique agreement where one Delta police officer is assigned to the Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN). The Delta officer provides dedicated support to TFN's policing needs, and often works closely with TFN staff members to ensure that police support is effective. The agreement includes the Province, the City of Delta, Delta Police Board, and TFN.

Lastly, there is the First Nations Enhanced Policing Agreement between the Province, Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and the West Vancouver Police Board, to establish the Integrated First Nations Policing Unit (IFNU). The IFNU's purpose is to provide culturally sensitive enhanced policing services to both Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and is an integrated unit comprised of RCMP officers from North Vancouver and Squamish Detachments, as well as members of the West Vancouver Police Department.

**Further  
Information**

For details on the most recent RCMP contract, signed in 2012, see:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/policing-in-bc/publications-statistics-legislation/publications/policing-agreements>

For a copy of the most recent Police Resources in British Columbia publication, see:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/police/publications/statistics/bc-police-resources-2020.pdf>

For details on the Local Government Contract Management Committee, see:  
<https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/resolutions/policy-areas/community-safety/local-government-contract-management-committee.html>

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