



# SHARING COMMON GROUND

Review of Yukon's  
Police Force

**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**



Authors: Simone Arnold, Peter Clark and Dennis Cooley

A Final Report is also available.

*Ce document est également disponible en français.*

## Executive Summary

The public expects that police officers will act with integrity and that their conduct will be above reproach at all times. From time to time, police services fall short of this expectation. This can be due to the result of a single act by a police officer that offends public sensibility or through a more general decline in the quality of service over time. When either or both occurs, it erodes the public's trust in its policing service. In these situations, there must be independent, transparent and accessible processes that hold individual members and the organization accountable.

During this Review, the Co-Chairs and members of the Advisory Committee heard that some Yukon citizens do not have trust and confidence in "M" Division. This is particularly the case in First Nation communities, and with vulnerable citizens and individuals leading high-risk lifestyles. High profile incidents at the Vancouver International Airport and in other communities in British Columbia, and incidents that took place in Yukon, have shaken the public's confidence in the RCMP. In Yukon, two incidents have focussed public attention on the RCMP: a situation where two off-duty RCMP members were charged and later found not guilty of sexual assault; and the circumstances experienced by Raymond Silverfox in the holding cells at the Whitehorse detachment in the hours prior to his death.

While these high-profile incidents have caused many citizens to question how the RCMP operates in the territory, Yukon First Nations citizens in particular have concerns rooted in their relationship with the RCMP and based on personal experience or hearsay. These concerns did not arise or develop recently, but they have been heightened by recent events.

We have heard many accounts of policing excellence, including stories of RCMP members going above and beyond their normal duties. The purpose of the Review is to improve the quality of policing services for all citizens in the territory.

First Nations and non-First Nations citizens raised concerns that some members of the community have been subject to discrimination and cultural insensitivity. Citizens, particularly those who work directly with women in crisis, raised concerns about the RCMP's response to calls for assistance in situations involving domestic violence and sexualized assault. Citizens brought forward concerns about being treated with indifference or disrespect when interacting with the RCMP. This was particularly evident in submissions from individuals in vulnerable situations — acutely intoxicated persons and offenders with mental health and cognitive disorders such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

A number of citizens also noted their frustrations, suspicions and lack of knowledge about the process for making a complaint against the RCMP. Even some individuals who work in the justice system were unaware of the complaint process.

## Terms of Reference and process

It was within this context that the Yukon Minister of Justice established the Review of Yukon's Police Force. The Review was Co-Chaired by a representative of the Council of Yukon First Nations; the Commanding Officer of RCMP "M" Division; and the Deputy Minister, Department of Justice, Government of Yukon.

With the assistance of members of an Advisory Committee, the Co-Chairs spoke directly with over one thousand citizens of the territory to gain a better appreciation of their concerns with the RCMP and to build a process for restoring and maintaining public confidence in Yukon's police force.

### Terms of Reference

- **Terms of Reference 1:** Consider measures and make recommendations to better ensure that Yukon's police force is responsive and accountable to the needs of Yukon citizens;
- **Terms of Reference 2:** Review how public complaints relating to the RCMP in Yukon are currently dealt with and to make recommendations on any required improvements;
- **Terms of Reference 3:** Determine the skills that Yukon officers require in order to provide policing services in Yukon communities and make recommendations to enhance training, including the potential for Yukon-based training;
- **Terms of Reference 4:** Review the services provided by the RCMP to citizens who are in vulnerable positions, including victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as individuals who are arrested and detained in custody;
- **Terms of Reference 5:** Identify and build upon successes and best practices in the delivery of policing services to Yukon; and
- **Terms of Reference 6:** Review and make recommendations on how best to implement in Yukon the existing RCMP policy on external investigations and reviews.

The Co-Chairs and Advisory Committee members participated in public meetings across the territory. Meetings were also held with justice workers and social service providers who have regular contact with the RCMP. A special effort was made to engage First Nation citizens in the Review process. We recognized that many individuals might be reluctant to speak openly in a public forum about their experiences so we relied on third parties to arrange meetings and provide comments to us in writing. We also reached out to RCMP members, staff and volunteers, as well as former RCMP members living in the territory, to ensure that they had the opportunity to provide their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of living and working in the north and their recommendations for moving forward.

The Review has a website ([www.policereview2010.gov.yk.ca](http://www.policereview2010.gov.yk.ca)) with useful links to policing resources and meeting summaries.

## The structure of policing in Yukon

The RCMP provides police services to the territory under the *Territorial Police Service Agreement* between the Governments of Canada and Yukon. The Agreement establishes that 70 percent of policing costs will be paid by the Government of Yukon and 30 percent will be paid by Canada. The RCMP refer to Yukon as “M” Division. There are currently 130 regular members, 23 civilian members and 37 support staff who work in “M” Division.

The Commanding Officer of “M” Division has the authority to deploy police resources throughout the territory as required. RCMP personnel work in a variety of capacities, which include crime prevention and drug awareness, staff relations, general investigation units, serious/major crime investigation units, relief duties, school resource officers, media and public information, traffic enforcement and collision reconstruction, air services, telecommunication technicians, computer specialists, operational communications, explosive disposal, police dog services, emergency response unit, search and rescue, forensic crime scene specialists, crime reduction, First Nations and youth coordinators and analytical and planning duties.

The Commanding Officer and the Yukon Minister of Justice work in partnership to establish standards and levels of policing in the territory. Any increase or decrease in the number of RCMP members attached to policing agreements is determined by the contracting government through an established annual process.

## Report themes

This report attempts to capture the comments that Yukon citizens and members of the RCMP expressed during their discussions with the Co-Chairs and the Advisory Committee members and to bring forward recommendations that came out of these discussions. It is not possible within the confines of this report to fully describe the range of emotions and passion expressed during the course of our meetings. Many citizens and RCMP contributors alike were not shy to bring forward their concerns. We heard concerns about gender-biased policing; citizens reluctant to engage with police; allegations of abuse of and/or indifference to vulnerable citizens, including acutely intoxicated persons; and concerns that some youth were mistreated or targeted by police officers. Some First Nations citizens characterized their negative experience with the RCMP as evidence of racism.

The common theme that ran through our discussions with citizens was *trust*.

Many citizens, particularly those in frequent contact with the police, have lost trust in the RCMP to uphold the force’s core values. We, as Co-Chairs of the Review, believe that restoring the trust in the RCMP in First Nation communities and with vulnerable and at-risk citizens is absolutely essential. We believe that the recommendations in this report will begin the process of building a new relationship between the public and the police to ensure that citizens of the territory receive high-quality policing services. The process will take time and effort on the

part of governments, the RCMP and citizens alike. But if we find ways to continue the honest and open dialogue that we have started between citizens and their police with this Review, we can move towards a stronger, healthier and positive relationship for the benefit of all Yukon citizens.

## **The concerns of First Nations citizens, women and vulnerable people**

### **First Nations citizens**

The Co-Chairs were privileged to spend a considerable amount of time in First Nations communities throughout the territory. Despite the anger and disillusionment that some First Nations citizens felt towards the RCMP and the justice system, they welcomed us into their communities and treated us with respect and dignity. Indeed, the grace with which First Nations governments, citizens and communities welcomed us was remarkable.

We met with First Nations Elders, Chiefs and Council members, community leaders, service providers and citizens and heard a range of opinions. A common theme ran through our meetings, however: the need to build and maintain trust with the RCMP.

The discussions we had with First Nations citizens reflected their complex relationship with the RCMP in the territory. First Nations people expressed sincere admiration for the work that RCMP members have done, and continue to do, in First Nations communities. They acknowledged that RCMP members contribute to the growth and development of their communities. At the same time, however, they had concerns about the police service they receive.

Elders spoke about how some of the “new generation” of RCMP members no longer valued First Nation cultures. Women talked about how their calls for service were sometimes treated with suspicion or ignored. Men talked about feeling intimidated. Mothers and fathers spoke about how their children experienced unfair treatment from the RCMP. Chiefs and Council members expressed frustration that citizens of their communities sometimes received second-class justice. What was most disconcerting is that First Nations citizens consistently did not report incidents in which they felt they were subject to mistreatment.

The Co-Chairs believe that the perception of racism expressed during the Review by Yukon aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons in communities across Yukon is an underlying issue that contributes to the atmosphere of mistrust that First Nations citizens have towards the RCMP and the entire justice system. This pervasive social issue needs to be confronted head on. We believe that this report and recommendations can help address this important issue.

We bring forward a number of recommendations that specifically address the concerns raised by First Nations leaders and citizens:

- the establishment of a Yukon Police Council, with a mandate to ensure that community needs and values are reflected in territorial policing policies and practices and that the Council be composed of six members, three of whom will be nominated by First Nations;

- that “M” Division review the mandate of the Commanding Officer’s First Nations Advisory Committee;
- that “M” Division establish a First Nation’s Relations Advisor who reports directly to the Commanding Officer;
- that the Commanding Officer meet with the leadership of each First Nation annually, as well as meet annually with all First Nations leaders together;
- that the Commanding Officer ensure that First Nations and municipal leaders are offered the opportunity to participate in the selection of Detachment Commanders;
- that a comprehensive training and development framework be developed that includes information on Yukon history and First Nations culture;
- that processes are established to ensure that RCMP members who are new to a community are provided with a proper orientation, including an understanding of the community’s history and First Nations culture; and
- the development of a recruitment to attract First Nations citizens to a career in law enforcement, as well as examine the feasibility of special constable programs.

As we indicate in our report and in our recommendations, we encourage the Minister to meet with the First Nation leadership to develop a strategy for how to implement the recommendations in this report.

### Women’s concerns

Our meetings with the women’s community were widely attended, although the subject matter was sometimes painful. Many women shared stories about their experience with the RCMP and the larger justice system. These stories were difficult for the Co-Chairs to listen to, and they were no doubt difficult for the women to talk about. The Co-Chairs acknowledge the strength of the women who met with us and thank them for their courage in relating their experiences.

Women’s groups in Yukon are deeply concerned about shortcomings across the criminal justice system, social services and community dynamics that make women fearful of reporting physical or sexualized violence to the police. In many of the situations where police are involved, women are in vulnerable family situations and dealing with child custody, welfare, domestic violence and the dynamics of social isolation in small and remote communities. Some women do not feel safe in reporting their abuse and do not trust that they will be safe after making a disclosure. They worry that they will not be taken seriously, that they will not be heard, that their situation will not improve, or that they will not receive the assistance that they require. Most distressing is that we heard from some women who fear reporting crimes against them to the RCMP.

First Nations women are in a particularly vulnerable position — first, in relation to the gender bias that they frequently face when dealing with the justice system, and second, with respect to racism they often feel as a result of being First Nations. Many First Nations women do

not trust the RCMP. The struggles of aboriginal women with the police have been strongly associated with the denial of their rights, destruction of family structures and traditions, poverty, addiction and violence.

In cases of domestic violence, women reported being questioned by police officers as they were being driven to shelters for the choices they had made, for staying in an abusive relationship or for exposing their children to violence. These women feel some investigators do not understand that women may not be able to leave a relationship for many reasons, including economic dependence, fear of family or community reprisals, or the belief that the perpetrator will change and the violence will end.

The issues raised by the women's community in the territory are serious and the Co-Chairs recommend that the Minister acknowledge this in her prioritization of the recommendations.

We bring forward a number of recommendations that were specifically raised by representatives from the women's community:

- the establishment of an interagency group to develop a comprehensive framework for responding to domestic violence and sexualized assault, including the creation of a domestic violence/abuse team;
- specialized training for "M" Division members and other front-line responders on sexualized assault and domestic violence that addresses child custody issues and the enforcement of civil order and other regulatory remedies;
- the establishment of a working group to ensure that citizens in Yukon have access to emergency victim support and social services on a 24-hour basis;
- the development of a recruitment strategy to attract women to a career in law enforcement; and
- assessing the feasibility of equipping members with a lapel video/audio device to record interactions with citizens.

### Vulnerable citizens

Often, police officers responding to a call for service in the territory will encounter a "vulnerable citizen" — an individual who has one or more conditions or social circumstances that result in social exclusion. Vulnerable citizens include acutely intoxicated persons and chronic inebriates, individuals with cognitive disorder such as FASD, and individuals in distress as a result of a mental illness.

The concept of "vulnerable citizens" helps to focus attention on the needs of the people that RCMP members typically encounter during the course of their duties. Policing in Yukon today is less about organized crime, gangs and guns, and violence from strangers and more about social order problems related to alcohol and drug abuse and domestic violence.

The Co-Chairs and Advisory Committee members were interested in understanding the views and experiences of vulnerable citizens — those most likely to come in contact with the police.



In order to receive their input, we asked a number of different groups to meet with their clients and report back to us. We heard that RCMP members might benefit from greater training and understanding in relation to specific issues like FASD and mental illness.

The death of Raymond Silverfox was one of the catalysts for this Review. Shortly after the Review commenced, Robert Stone died in the Health and Social Services detoxification unit. His death heightened the need to address how Yukon responds to acutely intoxicated persons.

Dealing with acutely intoxicated persons strains community resources, medical care and law enforcement. Individuals caught in the web of alcohol abuse usually follow a predictable cycle marked by ambulances, nursing stations, emergency wards, emergency shelters, police cells and the detoxification unit.

The Co-Chairs believe that a new approach to the care and custody of acutely intoxicated persons is required. This includes the possibility of establishing a different type of intervention team to respond to calls for service that involve acutely intoxicated persons. In addition, many of these individuals do not belong in cells. They require services that are not typically available in a police cell.

The Co-Chairs have met with the Chairs of the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk. We are in agreement that a comprehensive and medically-based approach is required to address this problem. As part of this approach, there will be a requirement to accommodate acutely intoxicated persons who are acting violently or aggressively, or who are subject to criminal charges.

We have included a number of recommendations that will address the concerns raised by vulnerable citizens, including these recommendations:

- construct a secure assessment centre with 24-hour medical support to accommodate individuals who are detained or arrested by the RCMP and require secure custody;
- examine the feasibility of creating an intervention team to respond to calls for service involving acutely intoxicated people;
- developing a comprehensive training and development framework that includes training on FASD and mental illness; and
- the development of a comprehensive strategy for managing high-risk individuals who are frequent users and common clients of government services.

### **The views of RCMP members, staff and volunteers**

Policing in northern communities is a “high-demand, high-expectation” occupation: there is a high demand on members’ resourcefulness and creativity and high expectations by citizens, who expect members to not only engage in law enforcement but also be visible and participate in community life.

The scarcity of government services, community capacity and specialized policing expertise in small detachments means that police officers must tend to a variety of duties. As in many smaller communities in southern Canada, members serving in Yukon community detachments may be on call 24 hours a day. They may be involved in an investigation from its initial stages through to court. Being on duty 24/7 can be stressful for officers and their families.

Officers posted to the North encounter challenges not typically experienced by their colleagues in larger centre. The process by which members become accepted by the community and establish relationships with community members is one of the most crucial aspects of policing in northern communities.

The issue of police resources arise in any discussions of police service delivery. There was a widespread view among the "M" Division officers who participated in the focus group sessions that the police in Yukon were under-resourced and unable to meet the expectations of the communities. Members also indicated that government services in the communities were under-funded and that additional resources should be provided to these agencies to reduce demands on the police.

We bring forward a number of recommendations to address the concerns of RCMP members and employees:

- conduct a resource review to assess whether the division has adequate resources to meet its priorities;
- review human resources policy related to recruitment of members interested in serving in Yukon, including suitability of cadets for service in Yukon;
- develop a comprehensive training and development framework to prepare members to provide policing services to Yukon citizens establishing skills and attributes of RCMP officers being considered for selection to Yukon;
- explore the feasibility of creating specialized Northern duty qualifications, and investing in members who are interested in long-term service in the North;
- develop community orientation processes to ensure members are introduced to community leaders and have an understanding of the community's history, First Nation culture and language, and social context; and
- ensure that members have access to the professional services and support they require, particularly with respect to compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.

### **A new relationship for policing in the territory**

The Co-Chairs have heard that many Yukoners view the RCMP as their police service of choice for the territory. Although citizens have expressed concerns about particular incidents that have occurred in the territory, they have also expressed their genuine appreciation for the work undertaken by members of "M" Division. First Nations leaders, municipal representatives, service providers and citizens expressed their commitment to work with "M" Division to build relationships of trust that are the foundation of effective policing in any community.

It is the view of the Co-Chairs that a key component of establishing trust in the police in Yukon will be a strong focus on building relationships with community members. This was a common theme of the meetings with various stakeholder groups over the past several months.

We believe that building relationships of trust needs to take place on two levels. First, structural reforms need to be made to respond to some of the issues raised by citizens. We need to establish a framework to ensure that citizens in the territory participate and have input into establishing police priorities, goals and objectives; a more formal process is also needed for citizens to bring forward their questions and concerns about the RCMP. Citizens expressed significant support for a local and responsive complaint process, and had considerable interest in the issue of “police investigating police.”

Second, relationships of trust also operate at a community level. Citizens who have positive encounters with the police tend to have more positive attitudes toward them, but that negative encounters with the police have a much greater impact on community attitudes towards the police. Our goal ought to be to develop stronger relationships between the RCMP and community members.

Citizens want greater input into establishing the policing priorities for “M” Division, they want an effective complaints process and they want to ensure that an independent investigation will be undertaken when the RCMP is involved in a death or serious injury investigation.

We bring forward recommendations that provide meaningful responses to these concerns:

- the creation of Yukon Police Council, as well as the possibility of local community advisory boards, to allow citizens to participate in establishing policing priorities;
- the establishment of an independent civilian police complaint coordinator to assist citizens who have concerns with the RCMP;
- that when undertaking investigations of M Division members or employees who are involved in a serious incident, the Commanding Officer follow the RCMP External Investigation and Review policy and first contact a civilian police investigation agency to conduct the review;
- that the Department of Justice enter into an agreement with an existing civilian police investigation agency to provide external investigations as required by “M” Division; and
- the development of a roster of Yukon citizens who would be available to act as Independent Observers when the Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP is requested to monitor an investigation.

## **Implementation and monitoring**

The Co-Chairs and Advisory Committee have had positive and productive discussions during the Review of Yukon’s Police Force. A process has started that will build stronger, more meaningful relationships between the RCMP, Government of Yukon, First Nations governments, municipal governments and citizens.

As we travelled across the territory, citizens welcomed us into their communities to share their experiences. They did so in a respectful manner. Citizens recognize and value the contribution that "M" Division members make to their communities and they are optimistic about the future.

We believe that this report reflects the concerns that have been expressed to us, that it provides meaningful responses to those concerns and that it includes recommendations that will start us down the path to a renewed relationship.

The Co-Chairs acknowledge that the recommendations provided to the Minister are extensive and that they involve a number of Government of Yukon departments, First Nations and NGOs. They have implications for both human resources and financial resources. They will also take time to implement; it may be years before we see the impact of some of these recommendations. Nevertheless, we believe that this Review has started the process of change. We therefore recommend that the Minister capitalize on this momentum and begin to implement the recommendations as soon as possible.

Accordingly, we bring forward recommendations for how to prepare a strategy for implementing the recommendations:

- that the Minister of Justice meets with Yukon First Nation leaders to review the recommendations and receive their input into the development of the implementation strategy.
- that the Minister of Justice lead a multi-party process to prepare an implementation strategy for how to respond to the recommendations in the Report; and
- that the Minister of Justice table a report annually in the Yukon Legislative Assembly and with Yukon First Nation leadership on progress in implementation of the recommendations.

## **A final word**

We have been privileged to participate in this Review of Yukon's Police Force. For eight months, we had the opportunity to meet with citizens with the singular purpose of finding ways to improve the quality of policing services in the territory. Our discussions were honest, forthright and genuine. On many occasions, our meetings became highly emotional as citizens told of their positive and negative experiences with the justice system.

Despite the painful and tragic events that gave rise to this Review, the process has been marked by optimism. Time and again, the people we talked with during this Review looked for and found common ground on which to build new and lasting relationships. What unites First Nations and municipal leaders, RCMP members, staff and volunteers, those who work in the justice system and their clients, women in crisis and those who offer them support is the desire for healthy relationships and peaceful communities.

This is the common ground that we all share.

## Recommendations

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**Term of Reference 1:** Consider measures and make recommendations to better ensure that Yukon's police force is responsive and accountable to the needs of Yukon citizens.

**Recommendation 1.1:** That the Minister of Justice establish a Yukon Police Council. The council will be chaired by the Deputy Minister, Yukon Department of Justice, and composed of six members appointed by the Minister, three of whom will be nominated by First Nations.

The role of the council is to make written recommendations to the Minister and the Commanding officer of "M" Division on issues relating to the delivery of policing services in Yukon, including these:

- establishing core policing values that reflect Yukon's history and cultural heritage;
- ensuring that community needs and values are reflected in the policing priorities, objectives, programs and strategies of "M" Division;
- establishing policing practices and standards for "M" Division;
- ensuring that police services are delivered in a manner consistent with community needs, values and expectations;
- acting as a liaison between the community and "M" Division;
- participating in the selection of the "M" Division Commanding Officer; and
- receiving reports on matters that affect the administration of justice, including Annual Performance Plan updates, public complaints, use of conducted energy weapons, and updates on high profile matters.

The Yukon Police Council may meet with First Nations, municipalities, non-government organizations, or others in carrying out its duties, and will coordinate activities with national organizations such as Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP and the Canadian Association of Police Boards.

The council shall meet quarterly or as required to complete its mandate. The council shall report annually to the Yukon Legislature and Yukon First Nation leaders.

**Recommendation 1.2:** That First Nations, municipalities and "M" Division establish community-based processes — which may include creating a local community Advisory Committee or inclusion of this function in the mandate of an existing community body — to provide opportunity for community input into developing detachment Annual Performance Plans that reflect local priorities, and to provide a mechanism to coordinate policing and related services within the community and deal with other community policing matters, as appropriate.

**Recommendation 1.3:** That "M" Division undertake a review of the Commanding Officer's First Nation Advisory Committee. This review should consider the committee's composition, member selection process and terms of reference and ensure that the work of the committee is coordinated with the Yukon Police Council.

**Recommendation 1.4:** That the Department of Justice and "M" Division develop a communication strategy in consultation with the Yukon Police Council to improve citizens' understanding of the role of the RCMP, citizens' rights and responsibilities with respect to law enforcement, how the public complaints process works.

**Recommendation 1.5:** That "M" Division establish a First Nations Relations Advisor who reports directly to the Commanding Officer "M" Division.

**Recommendation 1.6:** That the "M" Division Commanding Officer meets with leadership of each Yukon First Nation at least once per year and with all Yukon First Nation leaders together as practicable.

**Recommendation 1.7:** That "M" Division ensures that First Nations and municipal leaders are offered the opportunity to participate in the selection of Detachment Commanders, and are informed and consulted when members are transferred in and out of a community.

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**Term of Reference 2:** Review how public complaints relating to the RCMP in Yukon are currently dealt with and to make recommendations on any required improvements.

**Recommendation 2.1:** That the Minister of Justice establish an independent civilian police complaint coordinator, who shall report to the Yukon Police Council and help citizens who have concerns with the RCMP to navigate through the Commission for Public Complaints process and to provide public education on formal and informal complaint processes.

**Recommendation 2.2:** That "M" Division establish a dedicated regular RCMP member for Professional Standard duties who will assist the RCMP in providing consistent and thorough investigation of complaints that results in an improved response to complainants regarding the service provided by the RCMP.

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**Term of Reference 3:** Determine the skills that Yukon officers require in order to provide policing services in Yukon communities and make recommendations to enhance training, including the potential for Yukon-based training.

**Recommendation 3.1:** That the Department of Justice and "M" Division establish a working group that includes Yukon First Nations, municipalities and women's organizations, to review and make recommendations to the Yukon Police Council on:

- the desired skills and attributes of RCMP officers being considered for selection to Yukon;
- human resources policy related to recruitment of members interested in serving in Yukon, including suitability of cadets for service in Yukon;
- policies and practices related to retention of members in Yukon;
- policies around duration of postings to communities; and
- the feasibility of creating specialized Northern duty qualifications, and investing in members who are interested in long-term service in the North.

The review should consider issues such as officer suitability, gender and First Nation balance, and appropriate relief coverage.

**Recommendation 3.2:** That the Northern Institute of Social Justice (NISJ), in consultation with Government of Yukon, “M” Division, Yukon First Nations and women’s organizations, develop a training and development framework for RCMP members policing in Yukon. The framework should prepare members to provide policing services that are appropriate to Yukon citizens and should include information on:

- Yukon history and First Nation culture;
- dealing with vulnerable persons, including those who are acutely intoxicated, those with mental illness and those with FASD;
- responding to domestic violence and sexual assault;
- non-violent communication and de-escalation skills;
- respectful communications;
- how to work effectively in high-visibility, high-impact environments;
- supervisory and leadership training; and
- wilderness training.

The NISJ shall report back to the Yukon Police Council.

**Recommendation 3.3:** That First Nations and municipal leaders ensure that members are introduced to community leaders, service providers and provided with an orientation to the community. This orientation should include understanding of the community’s history, First Nation culture and language, and social context.

**Recommendation 3.4:** That “M” Division develop a community policing mentorship program to enable experienced members to support the development of others.

**Recommendation 3.5:** That “M” Division review its policies, practices and programs for identifying and responding to members who may suffer from compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma or other related psychological issues and to ensure that members have access to the professional services and support they require.

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**Term of Reference 4:** Review the services provided by the RCMP to citizens who are in vulnerable positions, including victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as individuals who are arrested and detained in custody.

**Recommendation 4.1:** That the Department of Justice and “M” Division establish an interagency working group including representatives from First Nations, women’s organizations and the Public Prosecutions Office, to develop a comprehensive framework for responding to domestic violence and sexualized assault.

The framework should include:

- the creation of an “M” Division domestic violence/abuse team with specialized training and skills;
- consideration of specialized prosecution services;
- clarification of the primary aggressor/dual charging protocols;
- an update of the role of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART);
- clarification of victim service responsibilities, including victim assistance volunteers;
- specialized training for “M” Division members and other front-line responders on sexualized assault and domestic violence that addresses child custody issues and the enforcement of civil order and other regulatory remedies; and
- consideration of a legal advocate position to support women and/or a Yukon Court Watch Program.

**Recommendation 4.2:** That the Department of Justice construct a secure assessment centre with appropriate 24-hour medical support in Whitehorse to accommodate individuals who are detained or arrested by the RCMP and require secure custody, including acutely intoxicated persons.

**Recommendation 4.3:** That the Department of Justice, Emergency Medical Services, “M” Division and First Nations examine the feasibility of creating an intervention team consisting of a peace officer and an emergency medical service provider that would respond to calls for service involving acutely intoxicated people.

**Recommendation 4.4:** That the Department of Justice and “M” Division establish an inter-agency working group consisting of representatives from the Women’s Directorate, the Department of Health and Social Service, Emergency Medical Services, First Nations, women’s organizations and Public Prosecutions Service of Canada to develop a comprehensive strategy for managing high-risk individuals who are frequent users and common clients of government services.

**Recommendation 4.5:** That the Departments of Justice and Health and Social Services and First Nations lead an initiative and collaborate with “M” Division to ensure that citizens in Yukon have access to emergency victim support and social services on a 24-hour basis.

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**Term of Reference 5:** Identify and build upon successes and best practices in the delivery of policing services to Yukon.

**Recommendation 5.1:** That the Yukon Police Council, Government of Yukon, “M” Division, First Nations governments, municipalities and citizens continue the dialogue on policing to foster positive relationships between the RCMP and citizens towards increasing public confidence in the police service and reducing crime, including but not limited to these activities:



- planned updates on high-profile and serious matters;
- creation of an annual gathering to honour citizens who contribute to public safety;
- recognition of RCMP members for outstanding performance in building and maintaining community relationships;
- invitations to community leaders to attend graduation ceremonies at depot; and
- support of youth programming in the community

**Recommendation 5.2:** That the Department of Justice, “M” Division and First Nations explore best practices and innovative methods of increasing the number of women and First Nations citizens involved in the delivery of policing services:

- developing a recruitment strategy to encourage female and First Nations citizens to enter the RCMP;
- working with the Northern Institute of Social Justice to develop a Yukon First Nations career orientation program to prepare citizens for RCMP training at Depot Division, or for other careers in the justice system; and
- examining the feasibility of establishing a renewed special constable program, community safety officer program or similar initiatives.

**Recommendation 5.3:** That “M” Division monitor the national pilot project on the use of personal video devices and, if the project is successful, adopt the technology for Yukon.

**Recommendation 5.4:** That “M” Division examine the operation of the police Operational Communications Centre as it relates to response to communities and consider any improvements to make it more responsive to communities.

**Recommendation 5.5:** That Justice Canada, the Department of Justice, “M” Division and First Nations review different approaches to community and aboriginal justice in order to ensure all communities are offered the opportunity to implement community and restorative justice processes.

**Recommendation 5.6:** That “M” Division conduct a resource review to assess whether the division has adequate resources to meet its priorities.

**Recommendation 5.7:** That the Northern Institute of Social Justice develops a special focus on northern policing that would provide research capacity to develop innovative approaches to policing in the north.

**Recommendation 5.8:** That “M” Division review its services to the Francophone community in order to ensure compliance with the federal *Official Languages Act*.

**Term of Reference 6:** Review and make recommendations on how best to implement in Yukon the existing RCMP policy on external investigations and reviews.

**Recommendation 6.1:** That in implementing the interim RCMP External Investigation and Review policy, "M" Division first contact a civilian police investigation agency. If investigators are not available, the "M" Division shall call upon a provincial or municipal police force, and only if an independent investigator or municipal or provincial police force is not available, "M" Division shall request assistance from another RCMP division.

In all cases where RCMP external investigators are used "M" Division shall request that the CPC assign an independent observer to monitor the investigation.

**Recommendation 6.2:** That the Department of Justice enter into an agreement with an existing civilian police investigation agency to provide external investigations as required by "M" Division.

**Recommendation 6.3:** That the Yukon Police Council work with the Commission for Public Complaints (CPC) to develop a roster of Yukon citizens who would be available to act as CPC observers when the CPC is called in.

### **Implementation recommendations**

**Recommendation 7.1:** That on receipt of the report the Minister of Justice shall meet with Yukon First Nation leaders to review its recommendations and receive their input into the development of the implementation strategy.

**Recommendation 7.2:** That the Minister of Justice, in consultation with "M" Division, Yukon First Nations, municipalities and women's organizations and service providers, prepare an implementation strategy for how to respond to the recommendations in the Report.

**Recommendation 7.3:** That one year following receipt of the report, the Minister of Justice table a report annually in the Yukon Legislative Assembly and with Yukon First Nation leadership on progress in implementation of the recommendations of the Report, and that this report also be submitted to the RCMP National Aboriginal Policing Services Branch and the Commissioner of the RCMP.





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