

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

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Executive Digest

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VANCOUVER - Entrenching victims' rights in legislation will help those affected by crime get on with their lives, says Canada's new justice minister.

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BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Police reported crime rate lowest since 1972



Jul 25 2013

OTTAWA - Canada's police services are once again reporting fewer crimes, a continuing trend that has cut the national crime rate to its lowest level since 1972.

Statistics Canada says the police-reported crime rate fell by three per cent in 2012 compared with the previous year.

The severity of crimes committed was also down by three per cent in 2012, according to StatsCan's Crime Severity Index (CSI).

Police-reported crime has been on a steady decline since peaking in 1991.

Police services reported nearly two million incidents involving criminal activity in 2012, roughly 36,000 fewer than in the previous year.

"The police-reported crime rate has followed a downward trend, and, in 2012, reached its lowest level since 1972," Statistics Canada said in its latest report.

"The CSI was down 28 per cent over the 10 years since 2002."

GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS . . . and we'll keep giving our best



Blue Line Magazine has been the information source for Canadian law enforcement for 25 years. Our first rookie readers have now reached retirement eligibility so we decided to give our readers an opportunity to tell us what they think of the magazine and how it may have helped them during their career. We will dedicate space in the December edition for these letters and stories.

Send your comments to
Publisher@Blueline.ca

Although there has been a trend toward a reduced crime rate and fewer severe crimes, spending on criminal justice continues to rise.

Per capita spending on criminal justice - including federal and provincial jails, court costs and policing - climbed 23 per cent over the last decade, the Parliamentary budget office reported in March.

The report put the price tag at \$20.3 billion in 2011-12, with roughly three quarters of that total carried by the provinces and municipalities.

Both the police-reported crime rate and the CSI fell in most provinces last year, although rates increased in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the territories.

Saskatchewan reported the biggest decline in its crime rate, but still had the highest rate and CSI among the provinces.

Crime rates, and the severity of crimes as in previous years, were higher in the territories and the western provinces.

Ontario police services reported the lowest crime rate and CSI.

Having reported a seven per cent drop in its police-reported crime rate in 2012, Toronto, Canada's biggest city, can boast the lowest rate among the country's municipalities for the sixth consecutive year.

Quebec City had the second lowest crime rate while also recording the lowest CSI.

Kelowna, B.C., had the highest crime rate in 2012, the result of a six per cent jump in its police-reported rate from the previous year.

Regina, which had the highest crime rate in 2011, dropped to second spot as its 2012 rate fell by 10 per cent. However, it retained the highest CSI in the country.

Crime severity was also up in 2012 in Windsor, Guelph, Brantford and St. Catharines-Niagara in Ontario, as well as in Gatineau, Que., and Moncton, N.B.

Jul 25 2013

OTTAWA - Statistics Canada reports that Canada's police-reported crime rate was at its lowest level last year since 1972.

Here is a list of crime rates for the country's census metropolitan areas, from highest rate to lowest, per 100,000 population, with percentage change from 2011 in brackets. The figures for the metropolitan areas are preceded by the national rate.

- Canada - 5,588 (-3)
- Kelowna - 8,875 (6)
- Regina - 8,755 (-10)
- Saskatoon - 8,512 (-10)
- St. John's - 7,056 (-3)
- Thunder Bay - 7,050 (-15)
- Moncton - 7,039 (17)
- Vancouver - 6,958 (-2)
- Brantford - 6,921 (1)
- Edmonton - 6,796 (-2)
- Winnipeg - 6,222 (-3)
- Abbotsford-Mission - 6,148 (-7)
- Victoria - 5,958 (-7)
- Halifax - 5,810 (-10)
- Saint John - 5,646 (1)
- London - 5,639 (-3)
- Kingston - 5,166 (3)
- Greater Sudbury - 5,061 (-6)
- Windsor - 4,768 (4)
- Peterborough - 4,648 (2)
- Gatineau - 4,621 (0)
- Barrie - 4,555 (-5)
- Montreal - 4,541 (-5)
- Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo - 4,524 (-4)
- St. Catharines-Niagara - 4,490 (3)
- Calgary - 4,330 (-6)
- Hamilton - 4,241 (-7)
- Trois-Rivieres - 4,192 (-6)
- Ottawa - 4,102 (-1)
- Saguenay - 4,101 (-3)
- Guelph - 4,084 (3)
- Sherbrooke - 3,925 (3)
- Quebec - 3,216 (-11)
- Toronto - 3,131 (-7)

confinement and is scheduled to appear in court Sept. 9.

Smith, a four-year veteran, has been relieved from duty with pay pending the outcome of the case.

Lethbridge police say the investigation was completed by their professional standards unit and was forwarded to the Crown for review before the charges were laid.

Jul 18 2013

TORONTO - Toronto police are planning to repair a community basketball court that was damaged during the pursuit of a suspect.

Const. Wendy Drummond said that on late Tuesday night police officers were patrolling the Jamestown neighbourhood when they decided to investigate a person riding a bicycle.

She said two officers in a police cruiser followed the suspect onto the court, where the car ripped up tiles from the floor.

Officers, community members and representatives of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment are going to the court on Friday morning to start repairs.

Jul 18 2013

A judge in Saskatchewan says an RCMP detachment needs to take a "fresh look" at its procedures after officers forcibly removed a bra from a woman arrested for impaired driving.

Wanda Deschambault was arrested in July 2012 after a truck hit a monument in Lebert, about 80 kilometres northeast of Regina.

Deschambault refused to take off her bra when she was put in a cell, so one officer held her arms behind her back while another reached under her shirt to unclasp the bra.

One officer testified it was not policy, but standing operating procedure for women in Fort Qu'Appelle cells to remove their bras for safety reasons.

But provincial court Judge Barbara Tomkins said in a decision recently posted online that taking the bra by force was unreasonable and breached Deschambault's charter rights.

Deschambault was acquitted, not on the charter breach, but because Tomkins said she wasn't satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that Deschambault was in, or was driving, the truck that hit the monument.

Jul 18 2013

EDMONTON - Edmonton Police have quietly dismantled a phone line that allowed callers to report suspected drug houses in their neighbourhoods.

The "Report a Drug House" program ended in February.

"It was determined the call volume wasn't high enough to substantiate having a full unit for that and so there was a reallocation of resources," said police spokeswoman Patricia Thenu.

Police suggest complainants call a toll-free

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THURSDAY
JULY 18, 2013

Jul 18 2013

LETHBRIDGE, Alta. - A police constable in southern Alberta has been charged after a teenage boy suffered chipped teeth as he was being put in the back of a cruiser.

Lethbridge police say the officer had been investigating a hit-and-run complaint in December and began speaking with the 16-year-old youth.

The officer believed the teen had been drinking and arrested him for public intoxication, but they say there was a struggle.

Cst. Norman Smith, 33, is charged with assault causing bodily harm and unlawful

line run by the province.
(CBC News)

FRIDAY JULY 19, 2013

Jul 19 2013

CALGARY - Charges against five men in six gang-related Calgary killings is a milestone in a long-running war between two criminal factions, but police and prosecutors still have a long legal journey ahead.

With the arrests this week in an investigation code-named Desino — Latin for “de-sist” — authorities have now laid charges or secured convictions in eight of the 25 homicides with known connections to the conflict between FOB and the FOB Killers.

The violence stretches back to 2002, but police Chief Rick Hanson vowed investigators will keep up their efforts to crack the unsolved cases that remain.

Operation Desino resulted in murder and organized-crime-related charges against five FOB figures in connection with three killings that took place at the gang war’s height, in 2008 and 2009.

(Calgary Herald)

Jul 19 2013

BOSTON - A police photographer, furious with a Rolling Stone magazine cover photo he says glamorizes the surviving Boston Marathon suspect, has released gritty images from the night Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was captured.

The photos released to Boston Magazine on Thursday by Massachusetts State Police tactical photographer Sgt. Sean Murphy show a bloody, dishevelled Tsarnaev with the red dot of a sniper’s rifle laser sight on his forehead.

Murphy said in a statement to the magazine that Tsarnaev is evil and his photos show the “real Boston bomber, not someone fluffed and buffed for the cover of Rolling Stone magazine.” The music magazine hits the shelves this week, and some retailers have said they won’t sell it.

The newly released photos were taken when Tsarnaev was captured April 19, bleeding and hiding in a boat in a suburban backyard.

The April 15 bombing near the finish line of the most famous marathon in the country killed three people and injured more than 260. A police officer was allegedly killed April 18 by Tsarnaev and his brother, Tamerlan, who died following a shootout with police later that evening.

State police spokesman David Procopio said in a statement that the agency did not authorize the release of the photos to Boston Magazine and will not release them to other media. “The State Police will have no further comment on this matter tonight,” he added.

Boston Magazine printed more than a dozen photos from the day Tsarnaev was captured.

Jul 19 2013

SURREY, B.C. - B.C.’s independent police watchdog has been called to a police-involved shooting in Surrey.

The incident occurred shortly after 10 on Thursday night as Surrey Mounties investigated a suspected arson in the Bridgeview neighbourhood.

An RCMP release says an officer was approached by a man with a knife.

According to police, the man ignored orders to drop the weapon and continued to walk toward the officer, who shot and injured the suspect.

The unidentified man is in hospital in serious condition, while the officer is unhurt.

Jul 19 2013

ORILLIA - A war of words has erupted over figures used in Orillia’s policing debate.

City CAO Roman Martiuk is accusing the OPP of misleading council as it contemplates a possible move to a municipal force.

“Based on the analysis, the OPP’s depiction of workload and financial impact is not based on fact and is misleading,” Martiuk wrote in a rebuttal to OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis’ allegation that the police services board is spreading “misinformation” and city consultants had provided inaccurate figures.

Lewis stands behind his statements.

“Public safety is always the first priority of the OPP,” he said. “We strive to be factual and the goal is always to clarify, never mislead. I stand by the information in my letter. It is time for the people of Orillia and their civic leaders to decide how they want to be policed.”

Martiuk takes issue with numerous statements in Lewis’s letter, including the claim that workloads at the local detachment rose 280 per cent since the mid-1990s.

“Based on numerous documents and the conduct of the OPP in contract discussions, staff are forced to conclude that workloads did not in fact increase by 280 per cent,” he added.

However, any suggestion that the workload at the local detachment has remained relatively stable is “a total fabrication” said Lewis.

Annual calls for service have risen from 4,700 in the mid-90s to more than 17,000 today, he said.

“If that doesn’t increase policing costs, then I’m living on another planet,” he added.

Martiuk additionally addresses claims that a consultant’s report on the cost of moving to a municipal force was inaccurate and flawed, providing a response from the consultant who stands by the information.

The decision by the OPP to argue its case through the media during a press conference this week is “not productive nor conducive to an open and transparent process,” Martiuk adds.

Ontario’s top cop warned Orillia is on its own if it leaves the OPP for a municipal police force.

“If there is an emergency, we will always be there to help, but we’re not going to do forensic identification and K9 and a variety of other things just because we’re good corporate citizens,” Lewis said. “That’s just not reality.”

Councillors this week voted to give the OPP two weeks to match a consultant’s price quote for a standalone force. That direction, as recommended by the police services board, must be ratified at a Thursday council meeting.

However, as reported in Orillia Today, a senior OPP official bluntly stated his organization has no intention of reducing its price for a standalone force.

Lewis echoed that message, adding the current integrated force serving Orillia and the townships is more cost effective and ensures the necessary number of officers for the city.

“Public and officer safety is of the utmost importance to the OPP, and we do not support reducing staff complement to achieve financial targets that compromise provincially-legislated policing standards,” he added in a letter to mayor and council.

Lewis said a city consultant’s report outlining cost options for a standalone force is “not accurate, as there are many flaws in the calculation of services and costs.”

Lewis additionally alleged individuals with “agendas” were spreading “misinformation” in the hope of securing a municipal force.

Asked whether the community would be as safe under the standalone model, with fewer officers and less resources, OPP Association president and CEO Jim Christie offered a

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blunt, "No," to which Lewis agreed.

"That model that is being proposed by the city's consultant, you would not be as safe in the city of Orillia as you are today," Christie added.

Supt. Rick Philbin said Orillia would be the first community to leave the OPP in more than a decade.

(Orillia Today)

Jul 19 2013

REGINA - An 11-year veteran of the Regina Police Service has been charged in the theft of a gift card that was part of evidence in a fraud case against three men.

Police say the card was seized by officers - along with property, electronics and cash - when they searched a Regina hotel room as part of an investigation in September 2010.

Police became suspicious when the gift card was redeemed at a Regina retailer in June.

They allege it was stolen from the evidence sometime between September 2010 and November of last year.

Officer Darryl Blampied, who is 44, faces five theft-related charges and is to make his first appearance in provincial court on Sept. 9.

He has been suspended with pay while a hearing is held on his status.

Jul 19 2013

CALGARY - A judge says a Calgary man shot dead by police four years ago is the only person who can be blamed for the killing.

Melvin Vanhouwe took a neighbour hostage with a sawed-off shotgun in May 2009.

After the police tactical unit arrived, he pointed the weapon at an officer and was shot three times.

A fatality inquiry heard the 49-year-old was incredibly drunk - four times the legal driving limit - and had a stockpile of guns in his home.

Vanhouwe also had a criminal record and had been banned by the courts from possessing weapons.

Provincial court Judge Sean Dunnigan made no recommendations in his inquiry report.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team also investigated the shooting and determined police were justified.

Jul 19 2013

OTTAWA - A new report commissioned after the suicide of a Nova Scotia teen says there should be a law against distributing intimate photos without someone's consent.

Rehtaeh Parsons hanged herself in April and was taken off life-support three days later.

Her family alleges the 17-year-old was sexually assaulted by four boys and a digital photograph of the incident was passed around her school.

Ottawa and the provinces and territories

released a report today that says the law as it now stands doesn't go far enough to protect victims of this type of online exploitation.

The report also recommends bringing the investigative powers of police into the digital age.

Newly appointed Justice Minister Peter MacKay says he'll consider the report's findings.

Jul 19 2013

SHAMATTAWA, Man. - A man has been charged after a shot was fired at a Mountie detachment on a reserve in northeastern Manitoba.

RCMP say the shot from a high-powered rifle was fired early Monday into the detachment building on the remote reserve.

Police say the bullet penetrated through the garage door of the prisoner loading bay as well as an interior wall before lodging in a wall in the lawyer-client telephone room.

There were several prisoners in cells and RCMP personnel working in the building at the time.

Police say no one was injured.

Ried Branford Hill, who is 32, of Shamat-tawa, has been charged with careless use of a firearm, possession of a dangerous weapon and possession of a prohibited weapon.

Jul 19 2013

LAC-MEGANTIC, Que. - Authorities have established a number of people they believe have been killed in the Lac-Megantic train disaster.

They place the number at 47.

The estimate has fluctuated since the July 6 crash, when authorities weren't clear on how many of the people declared missing might actually have been away on vacation.

Police say they didn't recover any more bodies in their search today.

They said that leaves the death toll at 42 bodies recovered, and five other people missing and presumed dead. They base their new estimate on information drawn from different sources.

The estimate of total deaths, being cited in recent days, had been 50.

Jul 19 2013

SURREY, B.C. - A woman who disappeared from Surrey, B.C., more that 50 years ago has been found, but the fairy tale family reunion may never happen.

RCMP recently featured Lucy Johnson in their historic missing-persons file and Johnson's daughter used that information to advertise the disappearance where her mother once lived in Yukon.

RCMP spokesman Curtis Harling says the woman then received a call from what turned out to be her sister, saying she'd seen her mom's picture in the paper.

Johnson, who's now 77, disappeared in 1961 but her husband Marvin Johnson didn't report her missing until 1965, which raised

the suspicions of police to the point where they dug up the family's property in search of a body.

Marvin died in the late 1990s, but Harling says the man's family is pleased that any suspicions of murder have been cleared against him.

Harling says the sisters didn't know each other existed and are pleased to have found one another, but the mother has a lot of questions to answer and the reconciliation may take some time.

(The Canadian Press)

Jul 19 2013

EDMONTON - The Edmonton Police Service is halfway through its Body Worn Video (BWV) pilot project.



m.edmontonsun.ca

For the past several months about 51 officers have been wearing video cameras on their uniforms, to capture events first-hand.

"Video evidence is an impartial third eye, if you like," explained Dr. Mary Stratton, the coordinator of the pilot project. "The claims are that this can help investigations, reduce court time, make stronger reports, be useful for resolving internal complaints."

Stratton says there are some privacy concerns surrounding the cameras, though, which they are addressing.

"We are very aware that there are some situations where privacy would be a consideration and the operational procedures reflect that.

"Sometimes it just isn't appropriate to be filming random people," she said. "They also might be taking sensitive witness statements or it might be a complainant who doesn't really want to be videoed and they have that right."

So far, Stratton says reviews from police officers who have been wearing the devices have been mixed.

"So far the feed back is they think it's a tool that has potential to be very beneficial, but the equipment has its limitations and we also hear that."

Concerns have also been raised over the fact the video cameras have SD cards in them, which "even if it's screwed in, technically could come out and that's just the state of the art right now," Stratton added.

Six more Edmonton officers will be wearing the devices by the fall. The devices are clearly visible and officers recording on a BWV camera will inform citizens in the vicinity that an interaction is being recorded, according to EPS.

The technology is not used anywhere in Canada right now. A few small police forces in the US and UK use BWV.

(Global News)

SATURDAY
JULY 20, 2013

Jul 20 2013

TORONTO - Toronto will soon be home to the world's most premiere forensic services and coroner's complex, experts said during a media tour of the building last week.



"I can tell you, from personal experience, I worked at the Scotland Yard laboratory in the U.K. for a number of years, I've spent time at the FBI laboratory in Quantico (Virginia) and this facility is better by far," Jonathan Newman, deputy director of the Centre of Forensic Sciences (CFS), said.

"It really is a world-class, a world-leading facility. We're very excited about moving."

Replacing the existing aging facilities on Grenville and Grosvenor streets downtown, the new Downsview complex will eventually also be home to the new Humber River Hospital and is expected to open in September.

Experts at the complex will conduct scientific investigations, such as toxicology and firearms tests, in criminal cases and sudden and unexpected deaths.

Easily accessible from Hwy. 401, the location will be key in the unfortunate event of a major disaster such as a plane crash or train derailment, Ontario's chief pathologist, Dr. Michael Pollanen, said.

"If you have, for example, a mass disaster and you're managing a large number of bodies, you need to be in part of the physical surroundings where you can transport bodies easily to a particular location so you can have a multi-disciplinary response to the event," he said.

The 50,000-square-metre (538,000-square-foot) complex, which costs \$1 billion financed over 30 years, will bring together the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service, the Office of the Chief Coroner and the Centre of Forensic Sciences under one roof.

The complex will also serve as a state-of-the-art training facility for future pathologists from Canada and developing countries.

The building contains two large courtrooms for coroner's inquests and a number of features to support excellence in investigations, research and training, officials said.

That includes a Containment Level 3 morgue, used for cases of highly infectious diseases such as SARS, the first of its kind in Canada for a forensic facility.

"The point of this building, at its most fundamental level, is a search for the truth. The truth about someone's death if it is sudden and unexpected," Pollanen said, adding loved ones, the justice system and the public deserve those answers.

He called the facility the best of its kind in the world.

The media tour started in one of the coro-

ner's courtrooms before moving downstairs to the basement, which holds a firing range and the Containment Level 3 morgue, which has a locked double-door entry system to prevent pathogens from escaping.

Also downstairs are vehicle examination bays, which have equipment for extricating bodies.

The autopsy area features 10 autopsy bays – more than double the four now at the existing forensic services and coroner's facilities – which have been built to allow experts from various disciplines to consult or learn from the procedures.

There are two special enclosed bays for homicides or for severely decomposed bodies.

An area down the hall can hold 200 bodies

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on metal carts and can accommodate another 100 in the event of a major disaster.

Upstairs, the family area will provide a private, discreet place for loved ones. Relatives will be able to identify the body of a victim either by video or through a glassed viewing area, eliminating the need to go to the morgue, said Dr. Dan Cass, interim chief coroner for Ontario.

The design of the building, including a very large lecture hall and an atrium, will promote collaboration between experts of different fields, Pollanen said.

"It (the complex) is really, I like to say, coordination of public service and research," he said.

"This is a great thing for forensic science and forensic medicine in Ontario."

A vast improvement over the present facilities, the complex will put Ontario's forensic sciences in the spotlight on the world stage, Dr. Toby Rose, Ontario's deputy chief forensic pathologist, said.

"Our old building is 35 years old and it looks it. In our present facility, we don't have enough plugs for computers because it was built before computers," she said.

"I think this facility has been built for today and with a real view to the future...It will allow people to work in a very inspiring environment and it will allow us all to do our best work for our services and for the service of the province of Ontario. There is no facility exactly like it in the world."

(North York Mirror)

MONDAY
JULY 22, 2013

Jul 22 2013

LONDON - Internet service providers in Britain will be asked to automatically block access to pornography sites unless customers opt in, Prime Minister David Cameron announced Monday.

Cameron announced the move as part of measures to stop extreme sexual images he said were "corroding childhood." Critics, however, said the measures were at best hard to implement and at worst a form of censorship.

In a speech to a children's charity, Cameron said that "family-friendly" filters would become the default setting for new customers by the end of the year, and only account-holders would be able to change them.

He also announced a proposal to make it a crime to possess violent pornography containing simulated rape scenes, and said Google and other search engines would be asked to block searches based on certain phrases.

Cameron said it was not entirely clear how the measures would work, but service providers should be able to come up with solutions.

"If there are technical obstacles to acting

on this, don't just stand by and say nothing can be done; use your great brains to overcome them," he said.

Jul 22 2013

FREDERICTON - Police say there will be no charges in connection with the wounding of an RCMP officer in northern New Brunswick in April of last year, where the bullet came from the gun of his colleague.

Cpl. Chantal Farrah says charges were ruled out following an investigation by the Quebec provincial police.

At the time, police said the incident occurred following a chase near Campbellton when the Mounties stopped a man wanted on a number of warrants.

The RCMP, New Brunswick Crown Prosecutors office and the Quebec provincial police will not say how the officer was shot - just that the investigation is complete and there won't be charges.

Farrah says neither officer was suspended.

She says an administrative review is being done and a formal hearing under the RCMP Act is pending.

Jul 22 2013

VICTORIA - British Columbia's criminal justice branch says police officers don't have to be perfect, nor do they have to be nice when arresting people who may become abusive.

The branch made the comment after deciding that two police officers who arrested a woman in Port Alberni after an altercation won't face charges, even though the woman's knee was broken in the melee.

The branch says the Crown carefully reviewed a report on the incident from the police watchdog and concluded it's unlikely the officers would be convicted because it's not clear the officers acted outside the bounds of a lawful use of force.

The woman involved has been charged with two counts of assaulting a peace officer and one of obstructing police.

Police were called to a government office in Port Alberni after a complaint of someone causing a disturbance on the morning of Feb. 15.

The case was handed over to the Independent Investigations Office, but the branch says it won't release more details of the actual incident because the charges against the woman are now before the courts.

Jul 22 2013

An RCMP office in northeastern Manitoba went up in flames over the weekend, and officers believe the fire was intentionally set.

Around 4 a.m. Sunday, officers got a call the Island Lake RCMP office in St. Theresa Point was on fire.

Police and emergency crews rushed to the

scene, but the building and everything inside was destroyed.

No one was injured in the fire, and now Thompson RCMP's major crime unit is investigating.

Officers believe the fire was intentionally set and are treating it as an arson case.

St. Theresa Point is 610 kilometres north-east of Winnipeg. It is accessible only by air and boat in the summer and by winter road in the winter.

(CBC News)

TUESDAY
JULY 23, 2013

Jul 23 2013

HALIFAX - An independent agency that investigates police in Nova Scotia says two Halifax officers used reasonable force when a woman's arm was broken during an arrest in March.

The Serious Incident Response Team, known as SIRT, says the officers from Halifax Regional Police were called to Highway 111 in Dartmouth on March 4 after a woman was seen jumping in front of cars.

SIRT says the woman appeared to be suffering from a mental illness and the officers believed she was endangering herself and others.

When the policemen attempted to arrest the 55-year-old woman, she resisted and ended up with a broken arm.

The report says no charges will be laid as the officers had a duty to arrest the woman and applied reasonable force.

It says witnesses who saw the arrest agreed that the force used by the officers was warranted.

Jul 23 2013

SASKATOON - A seatbelt ticket given to a Saskatchewan driver with no arms has been tossed out of court.

A lawyer representing Steve Simonar says the Saskatoon prosecutor's office withdrew the \$175 ticket after the province granted Simonar an exemption that allows him to drive without a belt.

The 55-year-old business man has been driving modified vehicles using his feet since he lost both of his arms in 1985.

He has said surprised officers who pulled him over in the past usually let him off with "have a nice day."

He was hurt and angry when a city constable handed him his first ticket in April.

Simonar said he used to carry a doctor's note and didn't know the rules had changed requiring him to apply for a medical exemption.

Jul 23 2013

MONTREAL - Quebec has come out on the losing side yet again in its gun-registry battle with Ottawa.

The province's highest court has dismissed a Quebec government bid to force Ottawa to keep data related to the federal long-gun registry.

The same court ruled last month that the federal government's destruction of the data was constitutional.

The provincial government had already announced plans to appeal that decision to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Quebec Justice Minister Bertrand St-Arnaud reacted quickly to today's ruling by saying the province would launch an immediate appeal with the Supreme Court to prevent any destruction of documents.

Ottawa has already erased registry data pertaining to other provinces.

Jul 23 2013

VANCOUVER - More than two years after hooligans poured through the streets of downtown Vancouver, torching cars, looting stores and beating anyone standing in their way, police are recommending another raft of charges.

Sgt. Randy Fincham says the VPD is preparing to hand its 12th round of charge recommendations to Crown in the wake of the June 15, 2011 violence that followed Vancouver's loss in Game Seven of the Stanley Cup final.

With the announcement Tuesday of the new recommendations, riot investigators have tallied 1,204 offences against 352 suspected rioters since the melee.

One hundred and two admitted or convicted rioters have received sentences ranging from discharges to more than a year in jail.

A police release also says 25 have been charged with breaching conditions imposed either while awaiting trial or after sentence.

In addition, officers are still working to identify at least three of what they have dubbed the Top 10 suspects shown on video taking part in the mayhem.

Jul 23 2013

MIDHURST, Ont. - A coroner's jury found Tuesday that the use of a Taser was a contributing factor in the accidental death of a 27-year-old Ontario man at the hands of police.

Aron Firman's death in June 2010 has been called an "index case" by Ontario's top pathologist, who has testified that the stun gun was a key factor in the fatality.

The jury found the cause of death was cardiac arrhythmia due to a state of excited delirium and schizophrenia.

The panel also made a number of recommendations aimed at preventing such deaths in the future, including that police officers should call paramedics and begin CPR immediately when someone becomes unresponsive after being struck with a Taser.

Current procedures require that officers first check for a pulse.

A lawyer representing Taser International

has suggested Firman could have died from cardiac arrhythmia brought on by "excited delirium" - a condition sometimes cited as a cause of death in people using cocaine or those with severe mental illness.

Presiding coroner William Lucas warned the five-member jury panel on Friday not to resort to an "undetermined" cause of death as a matter of convenience.

Firman, who suffered from schizophrenia, died after an encounter with Ontario Provincial Police in Collingwood, Ont.

The inquest has heard vastly different testimony from experts. Some have suggested the use of a Taser on Firman was a key factor in his death, while others argued the stun gun had little to do with the fatality.

Ontario's police watchdog cleared the officers involved of any wrongdoing, but also said the Taser's deployment caused Firman's death.

Jul 23 2013

CALGARY - It could be another three weeks before the Calgary Police Service's arrest processing unit for newly-detained suspects, closed because of massive flooding in the east end of downtown last month, will be back in operation in its administration building.

APU initially sent its fresh arrests to the Calgary Remand Centre in the northwest for a week while its No. 1 backup facility - Calgary Courts Centre - was part of the overall downtown power closure.

Since June 27, says acting Supt. Chris Butler, APU has been occupying up to 20 cells a day in the lower level of the courts building.

APU is normally located on the third floor of the building on 7th Ave. S.E., across from city hall, and was not damaged. However, access was greatly affected by the overflowing of the Bow River.

"We're optimistically hoping to be back for mid-August, but it's dependent upon getting remediation done on our building on time," Butler said on Tuesday. "Our elevator was completely submerged in water and we have had to order new parts."

Officers' gymnasium, squash and racquetball courts, men's and women's locker facilities in the below-ground floors were completely destroyed by flooding and it is uncertain if or when they will be reopened.

As for the temporary move of APU, it was a significant but relatively smooth operation, said Butler. They are sharing the cells with the Sheriffs, who oversee prisoners brought in from remand for court appearances and trials.

"Staff at the court is a 24/7 operation," Butler said. "We have four teams and each has a Staff Sergeant, Sergeant, four constables, four core commissioners for property management, feeding, fingerprint checks, etc., and a paramedic on staff."

(Calgary Herald)

WEDNESDAY
JULY 24, 2013

Jul 24 2013

KELOWNA, B.C. - Keith Wiens stared straight ahead and remained stoic after a Kelowna, BC jury found him guilty Tuesday night of murdering the woman he said he loved.

The five men and seven women deliberated for just over four hours before they returned a verdict of second-degree murder.

Members of Lynn Kalmring's family and supporters whooped and cheered quietly before a sheriff motioned them to stay quiet.

Jurors had the option of convicting Wiens, 57, of manslaughter or finding him not guilty.

They recommended he serve at least 20 years before he's eligible for parole.

The usual minimum before eligibility for second-degree murder is 10 years. Lawyers will argue the term in court this afternoon.

"It's like this huge weight lifted off," said Donna Irwin, Kalmring's sister. "And Lynn is free."

Dressed in a suit and tie, the former Mountie appeared a condemned man earlier Tuesday. He turned to face Kalmring's family moments before the verdict, the first time he'd looked at them throughout the three-week trial.

(The Kelowna Daily Courier)

Jul 24 2013

TORONTO - A 21-year-old man is facing charges after Toronto police say he attempted to hit an officer with his vehicle, then fled through a cemetery after a traffic stop Wednesday.

Police allege the officer had stopped the vehicle and was checking the licence plates when the driver suddenly accelerated toward the officer.

They say the officer jumped out of the way and the car struck a number of parked cars with people inside.

Police say the man then fled from the vehicle and was chased on foot through Mount Pleasant Cemetery before being arrested.

Const. Tony Vella says a female passenger in the man's car was also arrested but he had no further details.

Vella says the man is facing "a number" of charges.

Jul 24 2013

IQUALUIT, Nunavut - A seven-year prison sentence has been handed down to a man who was drunk when he fired more than a dozen shots into a remote northern RCMP detachment.

Joe Utye, a 21-year-old resident of Kimmirut, Nunavut, pleaded guilty in March to

one count of recklessly discharging a firearm and was sentenced yesterday.

Court heard that Utye fired 13 shots at the Kimmirut detachment last July while two officers and a woman were inside.

No one was hurt.

Local residents used a rope to tie Utye up until an RCMP emergency response team arrived about two hours later from Iqaluit.

The Crown had sought a six- to eight-year sentence, but the defence argued for six years minus credit for time served.

Utye has about another five and a-half years to serve, based on time spent in pre-trial custody. (CBC)

Jul 24 2013

TORONTO - A rare piano that was stolen from a downtown Toronto hospital has been recovered.

Police say they located the stolen instrument - a Steinway Boston baby grand valued at \$27,000 - after a man sold it to a local business.

They say the piano had some minor damage but has been returned to Toronto General Hospital.

Toronto police allege that on July 14, two thieves used a service elevator to move the piano to a loading area, where a third suspect helped them haul it into a waiting red-and-white cargo van.

Hospital security said employees asked the men what they were doing, but were told the piano was being taken away for musical servicing.

Artem Timofeyev, 27, of Toronto, is wanted on charges including theft over \$5,000, trafficking in stolen goods and fraud over \$5,000.

Jul 24 2013

MONTREAL - A video that purportedly depicts Quebec provincial police ruthlessly beating an Innu man has many First Nations communities in the province asking to regain control of their own police forces.

Shaky footage shot through the window of a vehicle last week showed what appears to be two officers attacking a young man from the Unamen Shipu community of La Romaine, Que.

The video has since sparked two separate police investigations and prompted Ghislain Picard, chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec and Labrador, to demand immediate action.

Picard wrote two strongly worded letters this week - one to the federal and Quebec governments, with the other published online for the public.

The government letter makes a plea to re-implement First Nations police services and to ensure they receive the resources needed to do their jobs effectively.

From 2007 to 2009, six different First Nations communities in Quebec saw their self-

run police forces replaced by provincial police.

Picard is requesting an urgent meeting with the Quebec and federal ministers responsible for public security.

"First Nations elders, women and youth, in their communities or cities, are scared," he wrote in his online letter.

"They are scared of things getting out of control again. It is not normal. It is not acceptable."

Picard says the footage from last week serves as a reminder as to how the justice system might be failing the First Nations people.

"There is an issue here of racial profiling," said Picard, adding that frustration is clearly mounting among Innu against provincial police.

Provincial police spokeswoman Nathalie Girard said the force launched two inquiries as soon as they became aware of the video early last week.

One is looking into the behaviour of the officers, while the second is investigating the actions of the man shown in the video.

Because both inquiries are ongoing, police were unable to offer further comment on the content of the video.

Jul 24 2013

VANCOUVER - Entrenching victims' rights in legislation will help those affected by crime get on with their lives, says Canada's new justice minister.

Victims "very often, sadly, feel that they are re-victimized, or feel that in fact the system is failing and doesn't meet their needs," Peter MacKay told reporters Wednesday in Vancouver before leading a round-table discussion about the Conservative government's plan for a victims' bill of rights.

MacKay said the rights bill, expected to be tabled sometime this fall, will give victims some comfort and a louder voice in the justice system by putting those rights into laws.

MacKay, a former Crown prosecutor, was appointed attorney general and minister of justice in last week's cabinet shuffle. He said Wednesday that throughout his legal career he has seen, firsthand, how victims are sometimes poorly served by the court.

"I remember a few years ago running into an officer that I had done a number of high-profile cases with and he was wearing a little fish hook on his uniform," MacKay said. "And I said, 'What does that fish hook signify?' And he said, 'Catch and release.' He said that's what we're doing."

"He was wearing (the hook) on his uniform because of such a deep sense of frustration with the system," MacKay said.

Although he would not comment on specific cases where victims have not been served by the court, MacKay said there are certainly instances where he questions whether justice was done.

THURSDAY
JULY 25, 2013

Jul 25 2013

GUELPH, Ont. - Ontario's police watchdog says it has concluded its investigation into the death of a 72-year-old Guelph man and that no charges will be laid against any officers with the city's police force.

The Special Investigations Unit says Robert McGee died in March after police were called to his home by his wife, who said he had threatened to kill her with either a baseball bat or a knife.

The SIU says six officers responded to the call and some of them used a "breach and hold" technique to apprehend McGee, adding it's "probable" he struck his head when he was taken to the ground.

He was taken to hospital and held overnight, then released the next day into the care of his wife with medical records indicating he had minor cuts to his wrist and hands - presumably from the handcuffs - and a small abrasion to his forehead.

The SIU says about a week later, McGee was found unconscious after falling in his bathroom, and was confirmed dead after arrival at hospital.

A post-mortem showed that McGee died due to post-traumatic seizure disorder and SIU director Ian Scott says the man's death was unrelated to his apprehension by police officers.

Jul 25 2013

OTTAWA - An online dating service has found that the ladies seem to love a man in red.

The RCMP ranked fourth in a survey of 1,000 uniformdating.com members to find out the most "lust-inducing" police uniform in North America.

"Seeing as red is the colour of love it's no surprise at all that the Mounties, with their scarlet tunics, ranked so highly in the survey of most stylishly tempting police uniforms," a new release said.

Perhaps it's the red serge standing apart from dull-coloured police uniforms.

Or maybe it's the shiny leather riding boots, cowboy-style holsters and shiny brass buttons.

It could be the wide-brimmed black felt hats Canada's national force wears.

The top five sexiest uniforms in North America — California Highway Patrol, Texas State Troopers, N.Y. police department, RCMP and the Florida Highway Patrol — include some kind of hat.

(Ottawa Citizen)