

SERIOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

TRUST - CONFIDENCE - INTEGRITY - INDEPENDENCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



Message from the Civilian Director of SiRT

It is a pleasure to present the Serious Incident Response Team's Annual Report for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Although statistics were shared with the Department of Justice, the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Annual Reports were not prepared and as the new Director I have taken the liberty of presenting information required under the Police Act as Appendices to this report.

It is a true honour to have been appointed as SiRT Director for a term of five years. I look forward to providing stability and leadership to the team as we progress as a leader in civilian oversight of police in the Maritimes and Canada.

Through 2023-24, SiRT experienced one of its busiest years to date with the successful onboarding of operations in New Brunswick and a growing trend of increasingly complex incidents and investigations annually. This success was not achieved without its challenges, but the SiRT team has worked around the clock to ensure the citizens of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have the utmost trust and confidence in the investigation of serious incidents involving police. Everyday I am impressed by the high standards of excellence each and every member holds themselves to. I am proud to lead such an impressive group of dedicated professionals as we work together to ensure objectivity, transparency, and independence.

As Director, I have worked diligently with the team to address the recommendations brought forth in the Final Report of the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) that are related to SiRT. I am pleased to announce we have accepted all of the recommendations within our jurisdiction. Next year we will outline the work that has taken place.

Looking forward, SiRT is focused on improving transparency and accountability by improving our website and updating policies and procedures. We will prioritize technological advancements and increase our human resources to ensure all employees are set up for success and that SiRT is up to date with industry best practices. We are also committed to strengthening relationships with diverse communities. Finally, for the first time, SiRT will hire a student intern, providing more opportunities to gain practical experience in their field of study.

Thank you for the opportunity to work on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in this capacity.



Erin Nauss

Director, Serious Incident Response Team (SiRT)

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Mandate.....	5
Mission Statement	5
About the Serious Incident Response Team	6
How SiRT Receives Cases.....	6
Investigative Process	7
2023-24 Investigations & Statistics	8
Investigation Types and Police Agencies	8
Investigations with Charges	9
Percentage of Investigations by Police Agency.....	9
Mass Casualty Commission	10
Serious Incident Response Team Members.....	10
APPENDICES	11
2022-2023 Statistics	11
Investigation Types and Police Agencies	11
Investigations with Charges	12
Percentage of Investigations by Police Agency.....	12
APPENDICES	13
2021-2022 Statistics	13
Investigation Types and Police Agencies	13
Investigations with Charges	14
Percentage of Investigations by Police Agency.....	14

Executive Summary

The Serious Incident Response Team, most commonly referred to as SiRT, is the civilian oversight agency responsible for investigating the conduct of police officers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick when that conduct results in death, serious injury, an allegation of sexual assault or intimate partner violence, or other matters that the Director determines are in the public interest to be investigated.

The agreement between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to have SiRT act as an oversight agency in New Brunswick was signed in February 2023. Since Fall 2023 SiRT has opened an office in Fredericton, hired Assistant Director Rebecca Butler, two investigators, one seconded officer, and administrative staff.

Throughout the 2023-24 fiscal year, SiRT received 114 notifications from both police and the public and conducted 43 investigations.

A breakdown includes:

- 43 investigations conducted: 30 in Nova Scotia, 13 in New Brunswick
- 17 review files opened: 10 in Nova Scotia, 7 in New Brunswick

9 police officers were charged with one or more criminal offences in the 2023-24 fiscal year: 6 in Nova Scotia and 3 in New Brunswick.

In the 2022-23 fiscal year SiRT conducted 45 investigations. 6 police officers were charged with one or more criminal offences in the 2022-23 fiscal year. Although the formal agreement with New Brunswick was not yet in place, in practice SiRT began taking all New Brunswick referrals that met the SiRT mandate as ad hoc investigations, which is reflected in the higher number of files.

In the 2021-22 fiscal year SiRT conducted 22 investigations. 6 police officers were charged with one or more criminal offences in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Please note that criminal charges may stem from investigations that took place throughout multiple fiscal years.

A review file means a preliminary investigation was started which determined the case did not meet the SiRT mandate.

Mandate

To investigate all matters that involve death, serious injury, sexual assault and intimate partner violence or other matters of public interest that may have arisen from the actions of any municipal police officer or RCMP officer in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.

Mission Statement

To ensure the citizens we serve have the utmost trust and confidence in the investigation of serious incidents involving police

About the Serious Incident Response Team

The Serious Incident Response Team (SiRT) is a civilian led police oversight agency that is responsible for conducting investigations into incidents that involve death, serious injury, sexual assault, intimate partner violence or any matter of public interest that are a result of the actions of a police officer in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.

A serious injury includes:

- fractures to limbs, ribs, head or spine
- burns, cuts, or lacerations which are serious or affect a major portion of the body
- loss of any portion of the body
- serious internal injuries
- any injury caused by gunshot
- significant number of stitches
- admission to hospital because of the injury (not including outpatient care followed by release).

When an investigation is complete, the SiRT Director decides if criminal charges should be laid against the officer. A public summary of the investigation outlining the reasons for the decision is completed and posted on the SiRT webpage. When a charge is laid, the case is referred to the appropriate prosecution service.

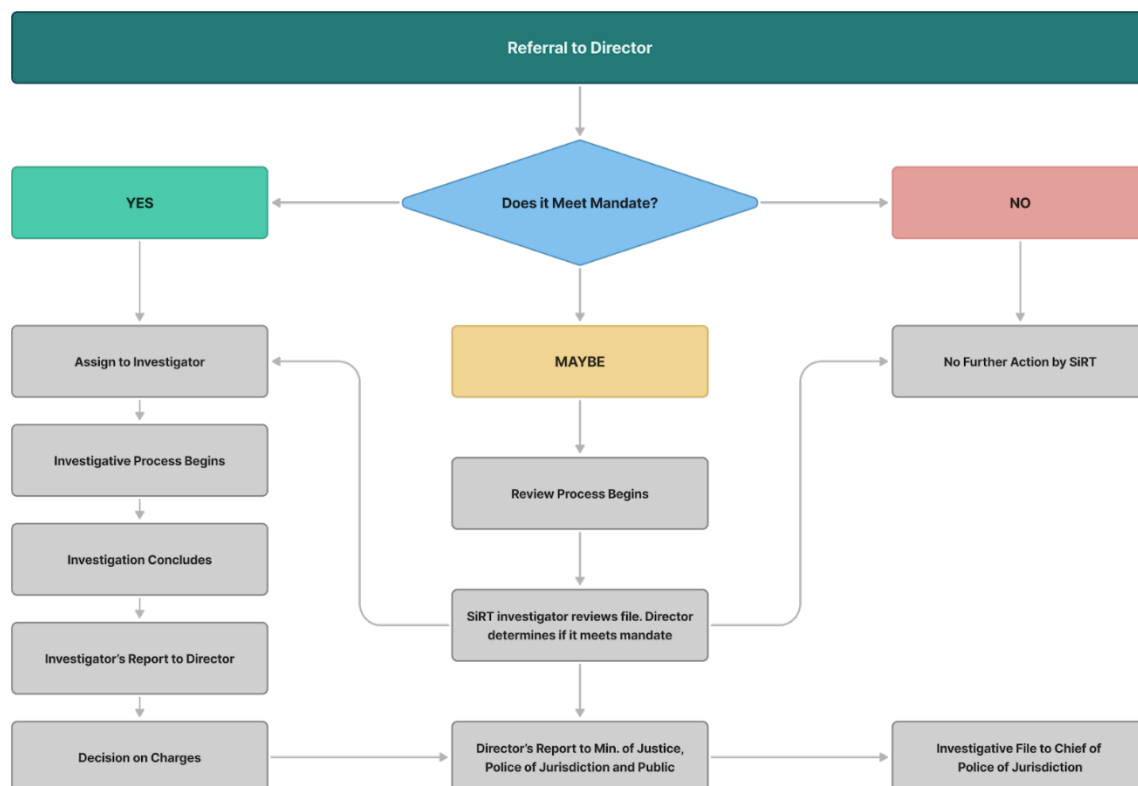
How SiRT Receives Cases

The Chiefs of all municipal police agencies and the head of the RCMP, in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, are required by law to refer all serious incidents to the SiRT. Members of the public can make referrals for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick by contacting SiRT directly by calling 1-855-450-2010 (toll free) or emailing sirt@novascotia.ca. SiRT can also launch or take over an investigation on its own or be referred a matter by the Minister of Justice (NS)/Minister of Public Safety (NB).

In every case, it is up to the SiRT Director to determine whether the incident meets the criteria for a SiRT investigation. Incidents can meet the requirements even though there is no allegation of wrongdoing on behalf of the police.

Investigative Process

- When an incident is reported to SiRT, the Director determines if it meets the requirements to be investigated by SiRT. More information could be required to make this decision, and an investigator will be assigned to gather necessary details.
- Police departments are required to report incidents to SiRT as soon as they become aware, however, incidents can also be reported by members of the public.
- An investigation only takes place if the case fits the specific criteria for a SiRT investigation. When appropriate, the police service or members of the public who made the report are notified with the decision.
- If an incident meets the mandate for SiRT's involvement, a thorough investigation is immediately started. This can include interviews, gathering evidence, reviewing medical reports, communicating with other agencies, and appointing a community liaison where appropriate.
- When the investigation is complete, the SiRT investigator provides a report to the SiRT Director. The Director reviews the report and makes an independent decision if charges should be laid. The Director then issues a public report, and the decision is communicated to the Affected Party and the Subject Officer(s), police agency and the Minister of Justice (NS) or Minister of Public Safety (NB).
- If a charge is laid, SiRT turns the case over to the appropriate prosecution service.



2023-24 Investigations & Statistics

During the 2023-24 fiscal year, SiRT received 114 notifications from both police and the public. Of those 43 became investigations while 17 were classified as review files.

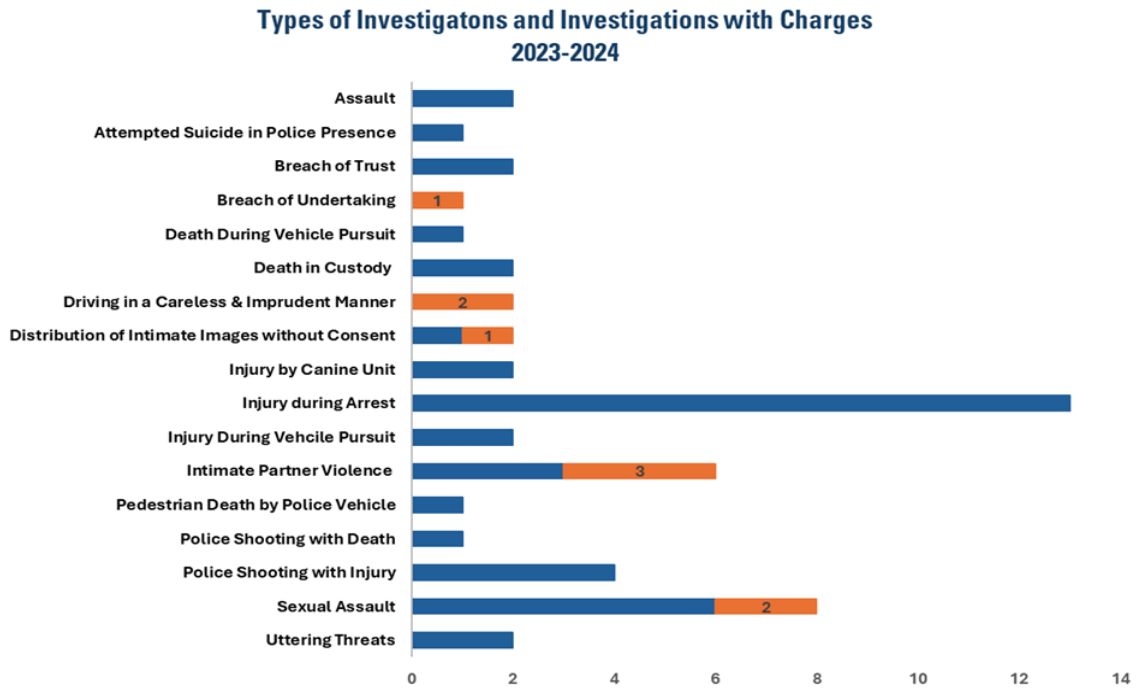
A total of 9 officers were charged with one or more offences: 6 in Nova Scotia and 3 in New Brunswick. These charges stem from investigations that took place in the 2023-24 and 2022-23 fiscal years.

Investigation Types and Police Agencies

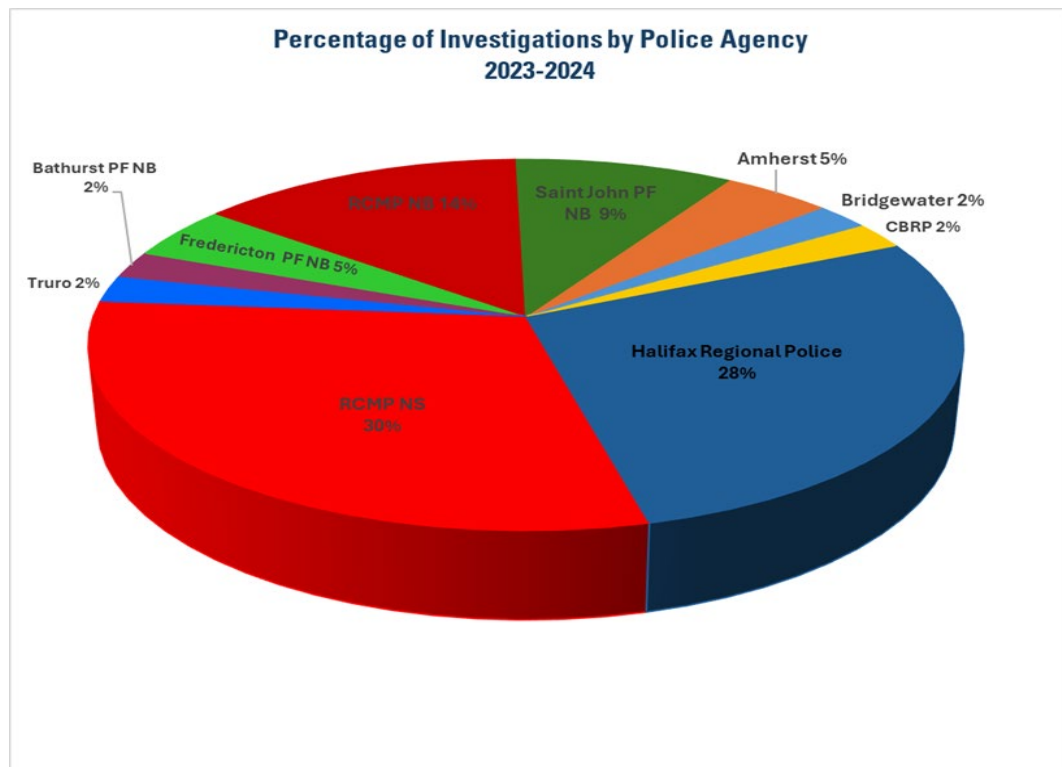
		Number & Type of Investigation by Police Agency 2023-2024									
		APS	BWP	CBRP	HRP	RCMP NS	TPS	BPF NB	FPF NB	RCMP NB	SJPF NB
Types of Investigations	Assault	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
	Attempted Suicide in Police Presence	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Breach of Trust	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Breach of Undertaking	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Death During Vehicle Pursuit	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Death in Custody	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Driving in a Careless & Imprudent Manner	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Distribution of Intimate Images without Consent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	Injury by Canine Unit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
	Injury During Arrest	1	1	-	4	3	-	1	-	2	1
	Injury During Vehicle Pursuit	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Intimate Partner Violence	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
	Pedestrian Death by Police Vehicle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Police Shooting with Death	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Police Shooting with Injury	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	1
	Sexual Assault	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	-	-
	Uttering Threats	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total Investigations Per Police Agency	2	1	1	12	13	1	1	2	6	4

APS-Amherst Police Service | BW-Bridgewater Police | CBRP-Cape Breton Regional Police | HRP-Halifax Regional Police | TPS-Truro Police Service | BPF-Bathurst Police Force | FPF-Fredericton Police Force | SJPF-Saint John Police Force |

Investigations with Charges



Percentage of Investigations by Police Agency



Mass Casualty Commission

On March 30, 2023, the Mass Casualty Commission released its Final Report – [Turning the Tide Together](#). Of the 130 recommendations provided, eight recommendations were for SiRT.

SiRT has accepted all recommendations. Work is on track to be completed in 2024. Details of this work will be available in the next annual report.

Serious Incident Response Team Members

Director (Civilian): Erin Nauss, located in Nova Scotia. The Director cannot be a current or former police officer.

Assistant Director (Civilian): Rebecca Butler, located in New Brunswick.

Four full time SiRT investigators, each with over 25 years of criminal investigation experience.

Three full-time seconded police officers who answer only to the Director while seconded:

- 2 seconded from RCMP (one in NS and one in NB)
- 1 seconded from Halifax Regional Police (HRP)

Manager of Business Administration

Administrative support

APPENDICES

2022-2023 Statistics

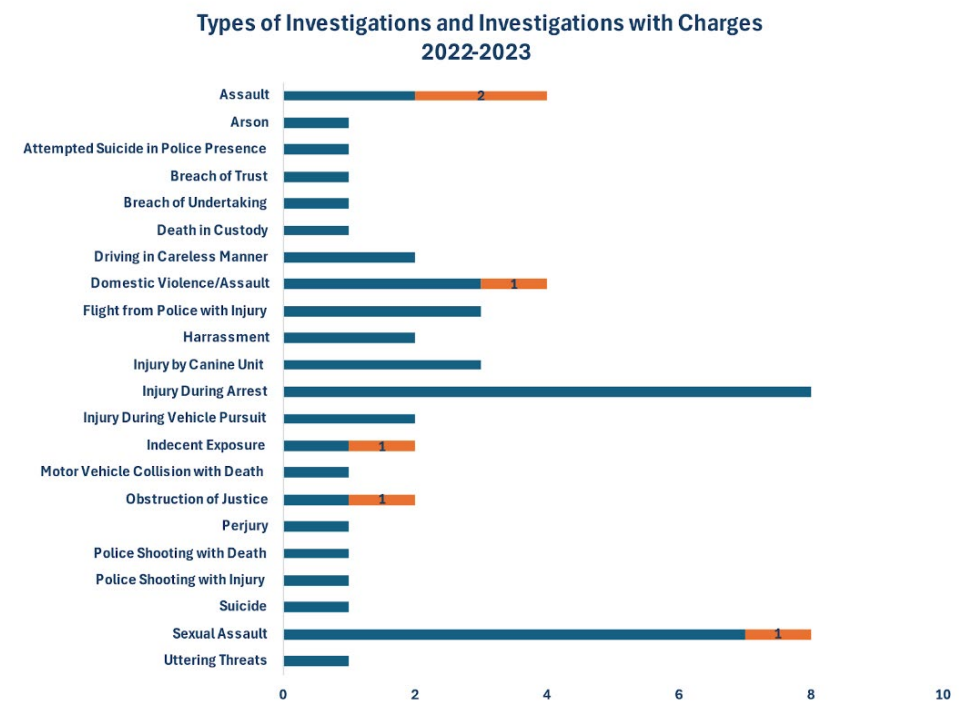
During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, SiRT received 106 notifications from the police and the public. Of those, 45 became investigations and 10 were classified as review files. A total of 6 officers were charged with one or more offences. Although the formal agreement with New Brunswick was not yet in place, in practice SiRT began taking all New Brunswick referrals that met the SiRT mandate as ad hoc investigations, which is reflected in the higher number of files.

Investigation Types and Police Agencies

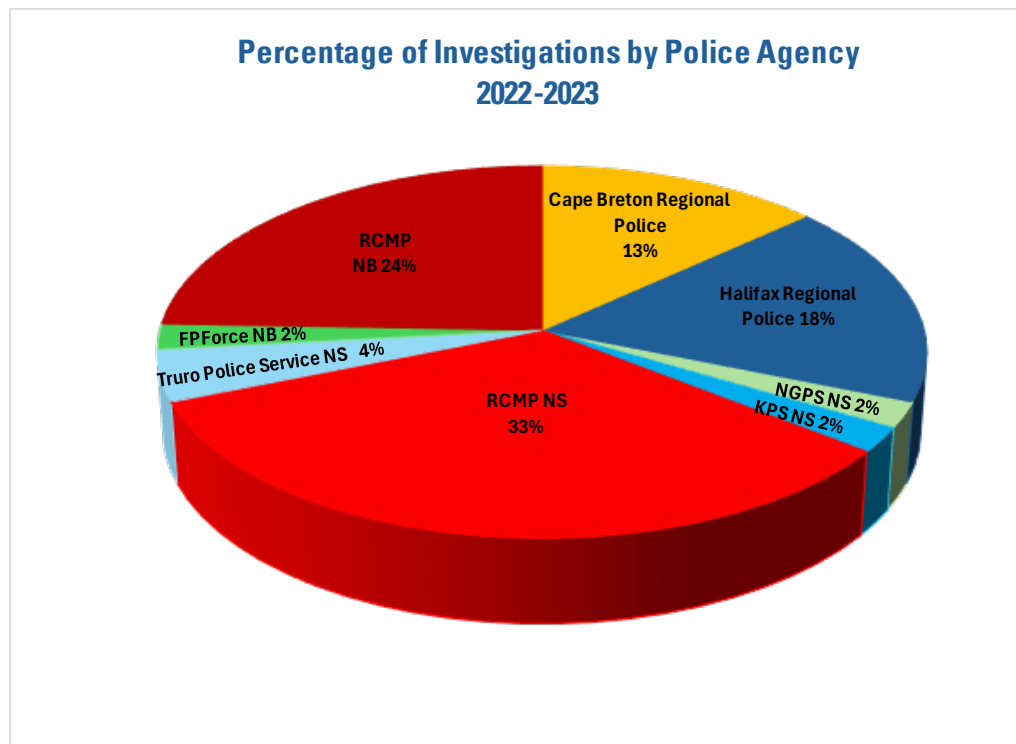
**Number & Type of Investigation by Police Agency
2022-2023**

		CBRP	HRP	NGPS	KPS	RCMP NS	TPS	FPF NB	RCMP NB
Types of Investigations	Assault	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Arson	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Attempted Suicide in Police Presence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Breach of Trust	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Breach of Undertaking	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Death in Custody	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Driving in a Careless Manner	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Domestic Violence/Assault	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
	Flight From Police with Injury	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-
	Harassment (Criminal)	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Injury by Canine Unit	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Injury During Arrest	-	3	-	1	3	-	-	2
	Injury During Vehicle Pursuit	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Indecent Exposure	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	MVC with Death	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Obstruction of Justice	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Perjury	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Police Shooting with Death	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Police Shooting with Injury	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Suicide	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Sexual Assault	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	3
	Uttering Threats	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total Investigations Per Police Agency	6	8	1	1	15	2	1	11

Investigations with Charges



Percentage of Investigations by Police Agency



APPENDICES

2021-2022 Statistics

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, SiRT received 117 referrals¹. Of those, 22 became investigations while 14 were classified as review files. A total of 6 officers were charged with one or more offences.

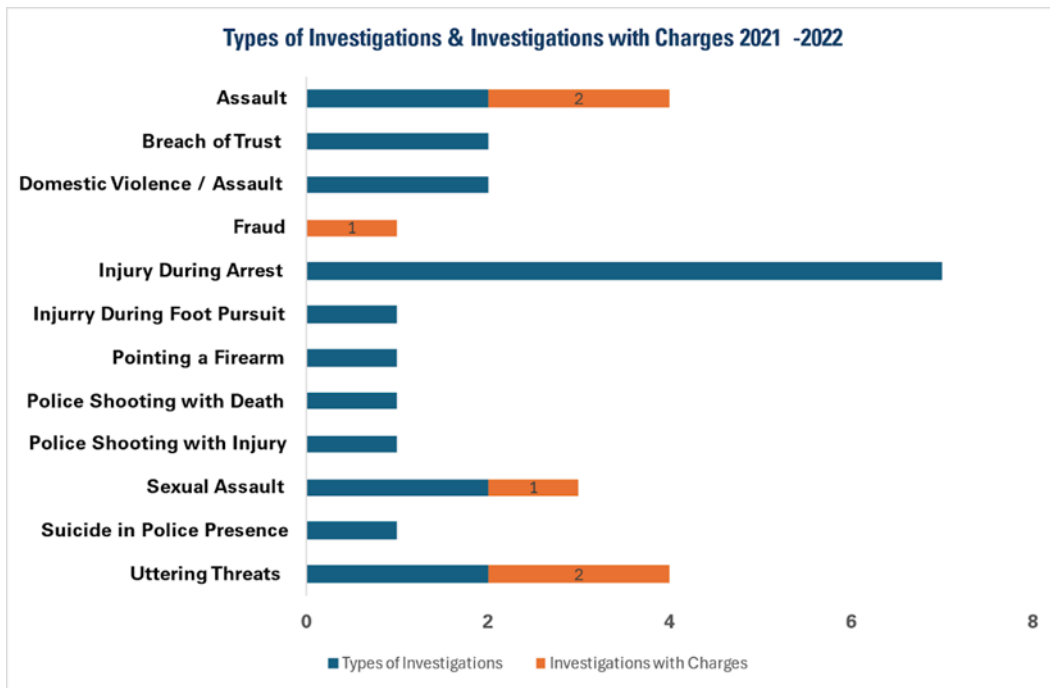
Investigation Types and Police Agencies

**Number & Type of Investigation by Police Agency
2021-2022**

		HRP	RCMP NS	BWPS	RCMP NB
Types of Investigations	Assault	-	2	-	-
	Breach of Trust	1	1	-	-
	Domestic Violence/Assault	1	1	-	-
	Injury During Arrest	5	2	-	-
	Injury During Foot Pursuit	1	-	-	-
	Pointing a Firearm	-	-	-	-
	Police Shooting with Death	-	1	-	1
	Police Shooting with Injury	-	-	-	1
	Sexual Assault	1	1	-	-
	Suicide in Police Presence	-	1	-	-
	Uttering Threats	-	1	1	-
	Total Investigations Per Police Agency	9	10	1	2

¹ 38 referrals came to SiRT in August 2021 related to HRM encampment evictions.

Investigations with Charges



Percentage of Investigations by Police Agency

