



Summary of Investigation

SiRT File # 2025-0118

Referral from

RCMP Nova Scotia

October 14, 2025

Erin E. Nauss

Director

June 17, 2026

SiRT MANDATE

The Serious Incident Response Team (“SiRT”) has a mandate to investigate all matters that involve death, serious injury, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence or other matters determined to be of a public interest to be investigated that may have arisen from the actions of any police officer in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. This mandate encompasses incidents that occur on or off duty, to avoid the real or perceived bias of police investigating police.

At the conclusion of every investigation, the SiRT Director must determine if criminal charges should result from the actions of the police officer. If no charges are warranted the Director will issue a public summary of the investigation which outlines the reasons for that decision, which must include the information set out by regulation. Public summaries are drafted with the goal of adequate information to allow the public to understand the Director’s rationale and conclusions.

Mandate invoked: This investigation was authorized under Section 26I of *Police Act* due to the death of the Affected Party.

Timeline: SiRT commenced its investigation on October 14, 2025. The investigation concluded on May 4, 2026.

Terminology: This summary uses the following language in accordance with regulations made under the *Police Act* and to protect the privacy of those involved:

- **“Affected Party/AP”** means the person who died or was seriously injured in relation to a serious incident.
- **“Civilian Witness/CW”** means any non-police individual who is a witness to or has material information relating to a serious incident.
- **“Witness Officer/WO”** means any police officer who is a witness to or has material information relating to a serious incident.
- **“Subject Officer/SO”** means a police officer who is the subject of an investigation, or whose actions may have resulted in a serious incident.

Evidence: The decision summarized in this report is based on evidence collected and analyzed during the investigation, including, but not limited to, the following:

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| 1. Police Reports | 7. Body-Worn Camera Footage |
| 2. 911 Call Recordings | 8. Forensic Identification Services (FIS) Reports |
| 3. Police Radio Transmissions | 9. Autopsy Report |
| 4. Witness Officer Notes, Reports & Statements (12) | 10. CEW and Firearm Analysis |
| 5. Civilian Witness Statements (4) | |
| 6. Subject Officer Notes & Reports | |

INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

Introduction

On October 14, 2025, members of the RCMP in the Halifax District responded to 911 calls related to a disturbance in Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia. The first call was made at 1:25 pm and a female caller told the operator that her neighbour asked her to call because their granddaughter (the Affected Party “AP”) had assaulted her. The same person made a second 911 call at 1:39 pm and reported the AP had a large knife and was threatening her grandmother and to harm herself.

The Subject Officer (“SO”) and Witness Officer #1 (“WO1”) were the first on scene. They attempted to reason with the AP, but she did not respond to verbal commands to drop the knife. She advanced with the knife in a threatening manner. WO1 discharged his Conducted Energy Weapon (“CEW/Taser”) twice, striking the AP. This was not successful. The AP’s grandmother and neighbour were nearby, and although officers told them to go inside, they remained on scene. The SO pleaded with the AP to drop the knife. The SO discharged her firearm, striking the AP in the leg. The AP continued to advance toward the SO with the knife, and the SO discharged her firearm a second time, striking the AP in the chest. Officers immediately began lifesaving measures until EHS arrived. The AP was transported to hospital and was pronounced deceased.

911 Calls

Recordings of 911 calls document an initial call from Civilian Witness #1 (CW1). She stated that her neighbour asked her to call 911 because her granddaughter (the AP) was assaulting her. At that time, she told the operator it appeared to be a physical altercation, and she did not see any weapons. She stated the AP had similar episodes in the past. CW1 called 911 a second time and told the operator the AP had a large knife. CW1 then said the AP was coming towards her, so she

was getting in her car. She stated that the grandmother (Civilian Witness #2/CW2) was trying to get the knife from the AP. The AP was threatening CW2 and to harm herself. The AP then began to bang on CW1's car window, and the operator reassured her that police were on their way.

The 911 recording continues when the police arrive on scene, and the operator tells CW1 to stay in her car; however, before the call ends, CW1 states that she is going to go and comfort the grandmother, CW2.

Witness Officers

SiRT obtained the notes and reports and/or interviewed 12 Witness Officers during the investigation. The notes, reports and interviews of Witness Officer #1 (WO1) are of particular importance as he was on the scene for the entire police interaction with the AP. A summary of the most pertinent information for the investigation is set out below.

WO1 and the SO each left the Cole Harbour RCMP Detachment to respond to the call. On the way there, they were updated over police radio that the AP was in possession of a knife and was threatening to harm herself. WO1 stated that he sought some clarity from the dispatcher, as it was unclear whether the situation was occurring inside or outside, and there was indication the AP was also going after a neighbour. (This is confirmed by a review of police radio transmissions). WO1 stated that his risk assessment was elevated when he learned there was a knife. He requested additional members attend due to the heightened risk.

The SO missed the turn to the street, which was a cul de sac, so WO1 pulled in first and was followed shortly after by the SO's vehicle. WO1 stated he was not familiar with the neighbourhood, and there were a lot of unknowns when they first arrived. He observed an unclothed person sitting on the grass with an older female nearby. The person on the grass (the AP) lifted their hand and was holding a large kitchen knife, which he estimated was 8-9 inches in length. The AP stared at him and moved the knife back and forth across her throat. WO1 stated he was concerned for the AP's mental health and physical safety, as well as the safety of the person beside her and himself. WO1 went briefly to his police vehicle, and the AP stood up. He exited his vehicle with his pistol drawn, and stated the AP started staggering toward him, so he retreated to try and create some distance between them. He was trying to get behind his vehicle, as he knows how quickly someone with a knife can close a distance and cause harm. WO1 stated that he repeatedly told the AP to drop the knife and get on the ground. He used her name at one point, and the AP calmly asked how he knew her name. WO1 stated the way this interaction took place concerned him, and he was concerned about the AP's state of mind in the situation.

At this point, the SO had arrived. The AP moved to the centre of the cul de sac and was behaving erratically. She made a statement that sounded like “I am God.” WO1 stated that he was genuinely concerned about the situation. He stated that he felt like he was pleading with the AP to drop the knife. He yelled at CW2 to get in the house, noting that they had their guns drawn and did not want her to get hit by crossfire or to distract the officers, and for her own safety, but CW2 and another bystander did not move out of the way.

WO1 told the SO he was going to transition to his Taser, and they both retreated backward. The AP was moving toward them. WO1 discharged the Taser but the AP continued to approach them with the knife and a vacant stare in her eyes. They continued to give commands to drop the knife. WO1 readied the Taser again and discharged it a second time. This was not successful, so WO1 took out his firearm again. (*Director’s note: the CEW analysis set out below found that the probes did not make an electrical connection*).

WO1 stated that the AP appeared to be fixated on the SO and was moving toward her with a vacant look in her eyes. He retreated behind the SO’s vehicle. WO1 stated he thought the AP was going to kill them with the knife. He then heard the SO fire her gun. WO1 stated he thought the SO missed, as the AP did not slow down or pause. He observed a gunshot wound to the AP’s right upper thigh, but she was still moving toward the officers with the knife. WO1 and the SO continued to give commands, and he then heard another gunshot, and the AP went down. The AP still had the knife in her hand, and he could hear backup arriving. Based on training, he waited for backup to arrive before approaching the AP. Since the AP still had the knife, WO1 and SO maintained lethal overwatch (*Director’s Note: lethal overwatch is when officers have their weapons ready in case of a continued threat*). When backup arrived, the SO left the scene. WO1 and other officers removed the knife, handcuffed the AP, and began providing emergency first aid.

Other witness officers arrived on scene after the shots were fired. Their notes, reports, and recollections recounted in interviews with SiRT are consistent and similar in nature.

Witness Officer #2 (WO2) stated that he became aware the situation was escalating on his way to the scene and was aware that the situation was very high risk. He activated his lights and sirens (as did other responding officers) to make his way there. It was aired over police radio that shots were fired. When WO2 arrived on scene, both WO1 and the SO had their firearms pointed at the AP. He worked with other officers to secure the area.

Witness Officer #3 (WO3) also assisted to secure the area. He noted that upon arrival, the SO was approximately 10-15 feet from the AP, who was on the ground. Witness Officer #4 (WO4) organized the responding officers to ensure the AP was in custody, the weapon was secure, and to

render first aid. Each officer assumed a different role. WO4 noted that although the AP was down, on arrival his risk assessment was still high due to the circumstances, but once it was clear the AP was no longer a threat, the handcuffs were removed to administer first aid and CPR.

A number of other officers attended the scene, and performed various roles including perimeter security, crowd control, comforting family and witnesses, providing support to the SO, accompanying EHS, and securing evidence as directed.

Subject Officer (SO)

Subject officers are not required by law to provide their notes and reports to SiRT or to submit to an interview. In this case, the SO consented to SiRT reviewing her reports. SiRT also accessed the SO's body-worn camera footage.

The SO noted that she was dispatched to a call regarding a physical assault. On the way to the call officers were advised the female had a knife and was threatening to harm herself. The SO wrote that her risk assessment was extremely high, and she activated her lights and sirens to clear the way to the call. When she arrived on scene, the SO observed the AP with a large kitchen knife, approximately 8-10 inches long. The AP was tall and nude. She observed WO1 off to the right of the AP with his firearm drawn, about 30-40 feet from the AP.

The SO exited her vehicle, drew her firearm, and called out to WO1 to make sure he activated his body-worn camera. SO noted they walked towards the AP and told her to drop the knife and get down on the ground. The SO noted that WO1 drew his Taser and moved 4-5 feet from her to the right. They continued to yell commands, but the AP did not comply. The SO's notes state that the AP started to slowly advance towards them, swaying back and forth, waving their arms, holding onto the knife in their right hand. The AP continued to ignore commands, WO1 discharged his Taser and the AP went to the ground. The SO noted that she believed this would work to change the AP's behaviour, but it was not effective.

The SO noted that the AP then looked directly at her, with an absent look. The SO motioned for the AP to throw the knife over to her left side and told her to stay on the ground. She noticed two elderly women nearby, watching what was happening, and yelled at them to get inside a house for their safety. The SO noted she was worried that the AP might turn away from the officers and harm the bystanders. The bystanders did not listen and remained outside.

The AP got onto their feet and advanced toward the SO with the knife in her hands. The SO again yelled commands to drop the knife, but the AP did not comply. The SO wrote that she felt the AP

was intently focused on her. WO1 Tased the AP a second time, and it was not effective. The AP continued to walk toward the SO.

The SO wrote that she felt the AP was going to kill her. She continued to slowly back up and yell commands to drop the knife and get down on the ground. When the AP was close, the SO stated "Don't make me do this, I don't want to shoot you," and continued walking backwards, yelling commands to drop the knife and get on the ground. The SO fired one shot, but the AP continued to advance like nothing had happened. She continued to yell commands and observed blood coming from the AP's right thigh.

The SO yelled again for two female bystanders to get inside their house. One pointed that her house was across the street, and the SO told them to go inside any house, but they did not comply and remained outside.

While giving commands to drop the knife and get on the ground, the SO heard the AP say that they were God and did not have to listen to her. The SO noted the AP said this twice. The SO's notes state that at this point she believed the AP was under the influence of drugs and was suffering from mental health issues, and that the officer commands were not reaching her. The SO noted she feared grievous bodily harm or death to herself, WO1 and the nearby civilians. The SO stated, "I don't want to do this", but the AP continued toward her, holding the knife. The SO continued to back up and then fired a second shot. The AP dropped to the ground. The SO then stopped to assess if the force used (the firearm) was effective in stopping the AP's threats. The SO maintained sight of the AP and then saw other members arrived. The other officers continued to deal with the situation and take control of the scene.

Civilian Witnesses

CW1 provided a statement to SiRT on October 14, 2025. She stated that she was sitting on her deck and heard a scream from across the street. She came down her pathway and saw the AP pulling and grabbing CW2, who asked her to call 911. CW1 called 911 and continued to hear yelling and a struggle. CW2 then asked her to call 911 again, and CW1 heard her asking the AP to put down a knife. CW2 observed the knife and called 911 a second time.

The AP was running in and out of her house and was singing. CW1 observed her remove her clothing. She came down steps from the house and spotted CW1. CW2 told CW1 to get in her house, but she couldn't so she got in her car. CW1 stated that the AP held the knife and stared at her. She stated she looked at her with a blank stare and what she felt was intent. The AP hit the car window hard and moved the knife back and forth across her throat. CW2 was trying to get the AP away from her car and to get the knife from her.

CW1 stated she noticed the police had arrived. They were clearly giving the AP instructions to drop the knife. She observed a male officer with a Taser and a female officer with a firearm. The officers told them to go inside a house, but CW2 was the AP's grandmother and was not moving, and she stayed with her to support her. She observed the Taser discharge. After the officers pleaded with the AP some more, they again told her and CW2 to get back, so they went around a corner of a trailer. They heard a gun shot and, CW2 came around the corner and asked police if they shot the AP.

CW1 heard CW2 state that this is what the AP wanted all along, and when officers were performing emergency first aid, she said something like, she doesn't want to come back.

The AP's family was fully cooperative with SiRT's investigation. CW2 provided a statement to SiRT on October 14, 2026. She provided information about the AP's life history and her mental health struggles.

CW2 explained that the day in question she encountered the AP in the shed in a state of mental distress, talking about things that were not making sense. She tried to talk to her, but it was not effective. The AP took CW2's phone. CW2 tried to hide knives in the house and threw some in the dryer. The AP went outside, and their neighbour, CW1 came by due to the yelling, and she asked her to call the police. CW2 stated the AP had a knife. She went to a car with CW1 inside and ran the knife across her throat. CW2 asked CW1 to call the police again.

CW2 stated that the police arrived and she heard them very loudly and repeatedly telling the AP to put down the knife. She stated she is not sure if they Tasered the AP. She remembers hearing two shots, and the police trying to revive the AP.

SiRT interviewed Civilian Witness #3 (CW3), a family member of the AP on October 14, 2025. He was in the family home and witnessed the AP in distress and taking knives. He heard her tell CW2 she loved her and came in to tell CW3 she loved him, along with other statements that did not make sense. When CW3 saw the state of the AP he was very concerned. He looked out the window and observed some of the interaction with police. He indicated that with the knives he was worried the police were going to have to shoot the AP.

SiRT interviewed a neighbour who witnessed some of the events, Civilian Witness #4. Her observations align with the other civilian and police witnesses.

Body-Worn Camera Footage

The SO and WO1's body-worn camera footage was reviewed. The footage confirms the sequence of events outlined in police officer notes, reports, and the interviews of both police and civilian witnesses. In the footage, you can clearly hear both officers give repeated commands to the AP to drop the knife and get on the ground, and you can observe the AP failing to comply. At one point, the officers are pleading with the AP. The ineffective discharge of WO1's Taser is documented on two occasions. After the first discharge of the Taser, the AP went briefly to her knees and then got back up and proceed toward the officers. The second discharge did not appear to have any impact.

BWC footage shows the proximity of the AP to the officers, and you can clearly hear the SO plead with the AP, and state that she does not want to do this. After an initial shot is fired, the AP continues toward her and fails to respond to repeated requests to drop the knife. WO1's BWC footage shows the SO backing up, hollering at the AP to drop the knife, as the AP continues moving forward toward the SO. When the SO fires a second shot, the AP drops to the ground. The AP still had the knife in her hand and made some movements. More officers arrived shortly after, and the AP was handcuffed and emergency first aid administered.

Autopsy Report

The autopsy was performed by the Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service on October 15, 2025. The autopsy report concluded the cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds, and the manner of death was homicide. A toxicology report prepared as part of the autopsy found that the results of that testing was non contributory to the outcome.

Across Canada, coroners and medical examiners are required to categorize deaths according to what is called the cause of death and the manner of death, both of which are reflected on the death certificate. The "manner of death" means the mode or method of death and can be deemed: natural, homicide, suicide, accident or undetermined. This is not a determination of criminality and does not have the same meaning as criminal or culpable homicide.

Forensic Identification Services (FIS)

SiRT engaged a municipal police agency to provide Forensic Identification Services (FIS) of the scene. FIS located two shell casings, which aligns with the two shots discharged by the SO and the findings of the autopsy.

CEW & Firearms Analysis

The SO's firearm was analyzed by the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team, and it was found to be functioning properly. The analysis aligned with two shots being fired from the SO's firearm.

A download was analyzed from WO1's CEW (Taser) by the manufacturer. The analysis found that both activations would not have had any effect on the subject (the AP). It found that there was only one electrical connection made during the two separate discharges. (In order to make an electrical connection at a minimum two points must connect).

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Criminal Code:

Protection of persons acting under authority

25 (1) Every one who is required or authorized by law to do anything in the administration or enforcement of the law

- (a) as a private person,
- (b) as a peace officer or public officer,
- (c) in aid of a peace officer or public officer, or
- (d) by virtue of his office,

is, if he acts on reasonable grounds, justified in doing what he is required or authorized to do and in using as much force as is necessary for that purpose.

When not protected

(3) Subject to subsections (4) and (5), a person is not justified for the purposes of subsection (1) in using force that is intended or is likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm unless the person believes on reasonable grounds that it is necessary for the self-preservation of the person or the preservation of any one under that person's protection from death or grievous bodily harm.

When protected

(4) A peace officer, and every person lawfully assisting the peace officer, is justified in using force that is intended or is likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm to a person to be arrested, if

- (a) the peace officer is proceeding lawfully to arrest, with or without warrant, the person to be arrested;

- (b) the offence for which the person is to be arrested is one for which that person may be arrested without warrant;
- (c) the person to be arrested takes flight to avoid arrest;
- (d) the peace officer or other person using the force believes on reasonable grounds that the force is necessary for the purpose of protecting the peace officer, the person lawfully assisting the peace officer or any other person from imminent or future death or grievous bodily harm; and
- (e) the flight cannot be prevented by reasonable means in a less violent manner.

Excessive force

26 Every one who is authorized by law to use force is criminally responsible for any excess thereof according to the nature and quality of the act that constitutes the excess.

Defence — use or threat of force

34 (1) A person is not guilty of an offence if

- (a) they believe on reasonable grounds that force is being used against them or another person or that a threat of force is being made against them or another person;
- (b) the act that constitutes the offence is committed for the purpose of defending or protecting themselves or the other person from that use or threat of force; and
- (c) the act committed is reasonable in the circumstances.

Factors

(2) In determining whether the act committed is reasonable in the circumstances, the court shall consider the relevant circumstances of the person, the other parties and the act, including, but not limited to, the following factors:

- (a) the nature of the force or threat;
- (b) the extent to which the use of force was imminent and whether there were other means available to respond to the potential use of force;
- (c) the person's role in the incident;
- (d) whether any party to the incident used or threatened to use a weapon;
- (e) the size, age, gender and physical capabilities of the parties to the incident;
- (f) the nature, duration and history of any relationship between the parties to the incident, including any prior use or threat of force and the nature of that force or threat;
- (g) (f.1) any history of interaction or communication between the parties to the incident;
- (h) the nature and proportionality of the person's response to the use or threat of force; and
- (i) whether the act committed was in response to a use or threat of force that the person knew was lawful.

No defence

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply if the force is used or threatened by another person for the purpose of doing something that they are required or authorized by law to do in the administration or enforcement of the law, unless the person who commits the act that constitutes the offence believes on reasonable grounds that the other person is acting unlawfully.

LEGAL ISSUES & ANALYSIS

I must now assess the evidence to determine whether there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe a criminal offence has been committed. Reasonable and probable grounds is a standard lower than a balance of probabilities or beyond a reasonable doubt, and more than reasonable suspicion. It also requires that the grounds be justifiable from an objective point of view. In other words, a reasonable person must be able to find that grounds exist. In determining whether there are reasonable and probable grounds to lay a charge, all the evidence gathered must be considered.

Section 25 of the *Criminal Code* permits a peace officer, acting on reasonable grounds, to use as much force as is necessary to enforce or administer the law, provided that the force used is not excessive based on all the circumstances. A peace officer is justified in using force that is intended or is likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm if they believe on reasonable grounds that the force is necessary for the purpose of protecting the peace officer or another person from imminent or future death or grievous bodily harm. The Supreme Court of Canada in *R v Nasogaluak* [2010] 1 S.C.R. 206, at paragraph 35 stated:

Police actions should not be judged against a standard of perfection. It must be remembered that the police engage in dangerous and demanding work and often have to react quickly to emergencies. Their actions should be judged in light of these exigent circumstances. As Anderson J.A. explained in *R. v. Bottrell* (1981), 60 C.C.C. (2d) 211 (B.C.C.A.):

In determining whether the amount of force used by the officer was necessary the jury must have regard to the circumstances as they existed at the time the force was used. They should have been directed that the appellant could not be expected to measure the force used with exactitude.

The SO and the other officers were lawfully in the execution of their duties as police officers when they responded to the call. The risk assessment increased when it became known the AP had a knife and had threatened to use it on herself and others. As set out in s. 25 of the *Criminal Code*, lethal force is only permissible when an officer reasonably believes it is necessary for the protection of themselves or others from death or grievous bodily harm. The accounts of the

officers, combined with the body-worn camera footage, make it very clear that that there was a real risk to the safety of the SO, WO1, and civilian bystanders. The body-worn camera footage shows that attempts were made to stop the AP through communication, but she did not respond to repeated requests to drop her weapon. The less lethal option of the CEW/Taser was attempted twice, and did not dissuade the AP. After striking the AP in the leg with a gunshot, she remained undeterred and continued to advance on the SO with a knife.

The law respecting self-defence or the defence of others is also applicable to police officers. Section 34 of the *Criminal Code* sets out how the defence applies to the use of force utilized in defending yourself or another person. It provides that conduct that would otherwise constitute an offence is legally justified if it was intended to deter a reasonably apprehended application of force, either actual or threatened to yourself or another person, and the conduct itself was reasonable. The reasonableness of the conduct must be assessed considering all the relevant circumstances.

An examination of each of the factors in subsection 34(2) of the *Criminal Code* is required to determine whether the discharge of a firearm by the SO is reasonable in the circumstances, to consider the relevant circumstances of the person, the other parties, and the act in question. I have applied each of the factors to the facts in this matter:

(a) the nature of the force or threat – a knife can cause significant physical injury or death. The AP had a knife and continually moved in the direction of the officers. The threat was real and potentially deadly.

(b) the extent to which the use of force was imminent and whether there were other means available to respond to the potential use of force – when the SO fired at the AP, it was reasonable for her to presume the threat was imminent. The AP did not respond to repeated officer commands and was walking toward the SO with a knife. WO1 had attempted to respond to the threat with a Taser, but two discharges did not have an impact on the AP. The AP was approaching the SO, and although she continued to use communication techniques, there were no alternative means or less-lethal options available based on the circumstances. A failure to respond quickly would have put the SO's life and the lives of others at risk.

(c) the person's role in the incident – the AP's actions gave the SO no choice but to respond in defence of herself and others.

(d) whether any party to the incident used or threatened to use a weapon - the AP had threatened others and was clearly in possession of a knife.

(e) the size, age, gender and physical capabilities of the parties to the incident – The AP was a tall adult and did not respond to the Taser or a gunshot to the leg/thigh. This lack of response indicated she was physically capable of inflicting bodily harm or death with the knife.

(f) the nature, duration and history of any relationship between the parties to the incident, including any prior use or threat of force and the nature of that force or threat – the AP had threatened a neighbour and family members, and had threatened to harm herself, before police arrived. The AP was not known to police.

(f.1) any history of interaction or communication between the parties to the incident – N/A

(g) the nature and proportionality of the person's response to the use or threat of force – the AP pointed a knife, and due to her actions, it was not possible to employ a less-lethal response to the threat posed. WO1 had attempted to use a CEW twice without success and the SO's first less-lethal shot did not subdue the AP. Due to the risks associated with a knife, it was not possible for the SO to use other less-lethal intervention options in the moment.

(h) whether the act committed was in response to a use or threat of force that the person knew was lawful - this clause is not applicable to the assessment in this case as the use of the knife by the AP was not lawful.

Based on a review of the facts and the law, I am satisfied that the SO acted reasonably to stop a major threat. The circumstantial evidence supports the perception of the SO that there were reasonable grounds to believe the threat to her life and the lives of other officers and civilians was at risk.

CONCLUSION

After a careful review of the evidence and the law, I have determined that there are no reasonable grounds to believe the SO committed a criminal offence. This was an extremely tragic situation and SiRT sends condolences to the AP's family and all those involved.