



ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

SiRT | SERIOUS INCIDENT
RESPONSE TEAM

TRUST-CONFEDENCE-INTEGRITY-INDEPENDENCE



Message from SiRT Director



Erin Nauss

SiRT Director

I am honoured to present the Serious Incident Response Team's Annual Report for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

SiRT is responsible for conducting investigations of police officers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick when there is a death, serious injury, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or other matter of a public interest to be investigated.

SiRT has had another very busy year, and staff continue to go the extra mile. Despite limited resources, they consistently exceed expectations to conduct professional, impartial, high-quality investigations.

In providing police oversight, SiRT works with a diverse range of communities across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. To do this well it is essential to connect with the people we serve to raise awareness, build trusting relationships and understand what is needed from us when a serious incident impacts those directly involved, their family, and community.

Over the last year SiRT has delivered presentations to facilitate education and open dialogues across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with community members, police officers, provincial and municipal government partners and law students. We also created informational graphic cards in seven languages, established a Facebook page and met regularly with our Community Liaison Committee which has representatives from Black and African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaw, newcomer and Muslim communities. Under the Police Act, we have appointed and worked with community liaisons in files that have occurred in Indigenous communities.

As an oversight organization it is important to remain current with developments in investigative best practices, cultural competency, and the law and have prioritized ongoing learning by attending several courses and presentations covering topics such as Taser data interpretation, intimate partner violence, sexual assault and Indigenous cultural competency.

Occupational Health and Safety is of pivotal importance, and it has been a priority to update and improve equipment. We have invested in Trunked Mobile Radio communications for all investigators and now have access to a 24-hour dispatch system through the Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre of the Nova Scotia Department of Emergency Management. Safety gear, PPE, and updated equipment have been prioritized.

I sit on the board of the Canadian Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE). CACOLE is a non-profit organization of individuals and agencies involved in the oversight of police officers in Canada. CACOLE hosts an annual professional development conference. Assistant Director Rebecca Butler and I were fortunate to help plan last year's conference in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and I participated on a panel with other oversight bodies, police agencies, and police unions on note taking in critical incident investigations.

I'm happy to report that to better meet the volume and complexity of investigations, the New Brunswick SiRT office has expanded to hire an additional two full-time investigators. The Province of New Brunswick also announced funding for a new Indigenous Liaison position. SiRT also hosted a policing studies student for the practical placement component of their studies, providing an opportunity to learn about their field and police oversight.

A review of SiRT's resources was recommended by the Joint Canada – Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission Public Inquiry final report. SiRT recognizes the current fiscal realities, but to perform its crucial role in safeguarding public trust in the police and the overall fairness of the Nova Scotia criminal justice system, additional resources are needed to achieve best practices.

As Director, I am confident in the year ahead and the progress we will continue to make towards building public confidence in the oversight of police in all communities of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Thank you,



Erin Nauss
SiRT Director

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SiRT Terminology

Full Investigation

When an incident is reported that clearly meets the SiRT mandate a full criminal investigation is completed. An official Notice of Investigation is issued to the police agency.

Review File (preliminary investigation)

When an incident is reported and it is unclear if the matter meets SiRT's mandate, an investigator is assigned and a review of the incident is done. This can be labour intensive and includes actions such as taking statements, reviewing police reports, reviewing medical records, video, etc. When the evidence ultimately shows the matter does not meet the SiRT mandate, an official Notice of Investigation is not issued to the police agency and SiRT's involvement ends. Police agencies are informed of the decision.

Terminated Investigation

When an incident meets the SiRT mandate and an investigation is started but cannot be completed it is terminated. For example, a person who sustained a serious injury during an arrest does not wish to proceed or it is not possible for investigators to gather adequate evidence such as medical records. An official Notice of Investigation would have been issued to the police agency. When an investigation is terminated the police agency is notified with an official Notice of Termination.

Oversight Investigation

When an incident that falls within the SiRT mandate has been reported; however,

- the police agency has already begun an investigation into the matter;
- SiRT does not have capacity or expertise to conduct the full investigation; or
- The Director determines there are other reasons SiRT can only perform an oversight role (jurisdictional issues, etc.)

SiRT's primary purpose is to monitor, review, supervise, assess, or ensure compliance rather than to investigate the specific allegation or incident.

Referral Does Not Meet Mandate

When an incident is reported that clearly does not meet the SiRT mandate and no further action is required.



Executive Summary

The Serious Incident Response Team (SiRT), is the independent 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 following report will provide an overview of important updates related to SiRT's professional development, the independent investigation into the wrongful conviction of Glen Assoun, SiRT budget allocations, as well as important statistics.

A high-level overview of the 2025-26 fiscal year stats include 155 notifications received from the police and public/other organizations, of which SiRT conducted 48 investigations and provided oversight of 3 investigations led by other police agencies.

A breakdown includes:

- 117 police notifications received
- 38 public/other organizations source notifications received
- 48 investigations conducted
- 3 files where SiRT provided oversight of investigations led by other police agencies
- 42 review files opened
- The remaining 62 notifications did not require additional review or investigation as they did not meet the SiRT mandate.
- 11 police officers were charged with one or more criminal offences

Over the last year SiRT has noticed a steady increase in public calls and emails that do not relate to SiRT's mandate. As this trend continues to increase, we have started to document these communications and expect to have statistics to share in future reports.

About SiRT

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 matters of public interest that are a result of the actions of a police officer, on or off duty, 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).

Investigating Death

SiRT investigates matters that involve the death of an individual that may have resulted from the actions of a police officer (on or off duty).

Investigating Sexual Assault

SiRT investigates any form of unwanted sexual act or contact that is alleged to have been imposed on a person by a police officer (on or off duty) without consent. It can range from unwanted touching to penetration.

Investigating Intimate Partner Violence

SiRT investigates harmful actions that are alleged to have been conducted by a police officer (on or off duty) towards a spouse, common-law partner or dating partner. This can include matters like physical assault, threats of violence, criminal harassment and other behaviour.

About SiRT

Investigating Public Interest Cases

Matters that are in the public interest are considered by the Director on a case-by-case basis. When determining if an incident meets SiRT's mandate to investigate in the public interest the following factors may be considered if the conduct in question involves allegations of a serious criminal offence that impacts a member of the public:

- The seriousness of the offence
- If the matter involves a young person
- If the matter is motivated by systemic racism or discrimination
- The impact the incident might have on the public's confidence in the police and the justice system

Independent and Impartial

We operate independently of police and government. This independence safeguards SiRT investigations from bias and outside influences.

According to law a current or former police officer cannot be the Director of SiRT.

When an investigation is complete, the SiRT Director decides if criminal charges should be laid against the officer(s) involved. 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.

Mandate

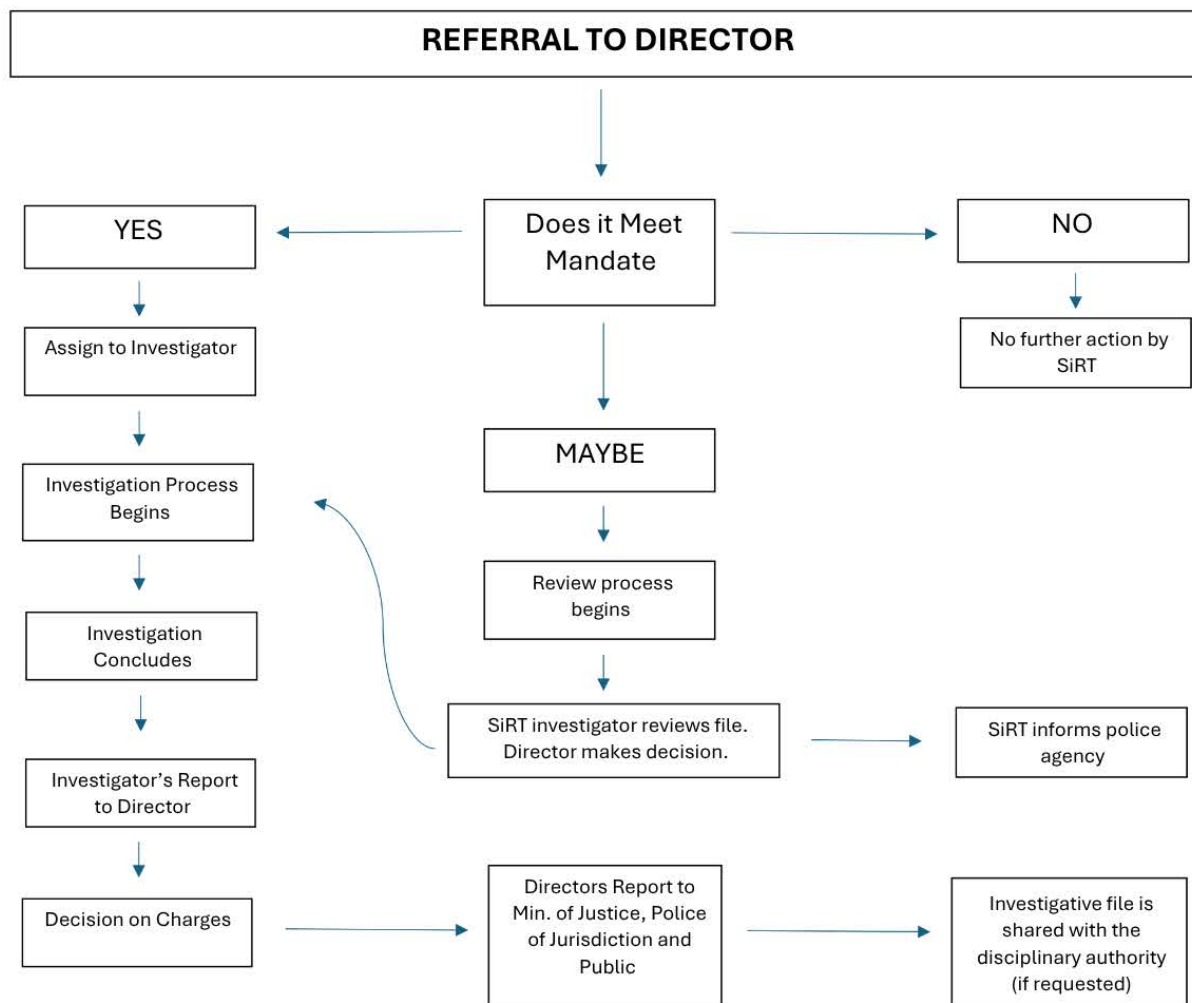
To investigate all matters that involve death, serious injury, sexual assault and intimate partner violence or other matters of public interest that may have arisen from the actions of any municipal police officer or RCMP officer in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.

Mission

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

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 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).



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 agencies 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 legislated mandate for a SiRT investigation. When appropriate, the police agency or members of the public who made the report are notified with the decision.

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.

News releases are issued for all new investigations, with the exception of those that involve sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or those where it would impact the integrity of the investigation. A news release is generally issued at the conclusion of every investigation. This information is made available and searchable on the SiRT website.

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Investigations & Statistics

Referrals and Investigations

During the 2025-26 fiscal year, SiRT received 155 incident notifications

- 117 from the police
- 38 from the public/other organizations

Of those notifications:

- 48 became full investigations
 - 26 Nova Scotia
 - 21 New Brunswick
 - 1 PEI
- 3 oversight files
 - 1 in Nova Scotia
 - 2 in New Brunswick
- 42 review files
 - 25 Nova Scotia
 - 17 New Brunswick
- 41 police referrals did not meet the SiRT mandate for an investigation
 - 21 Nova Scotia
 - 20 New Brunswick
- 21 public/other referrals did not meet the SiRT mandate for an investigation
 - 16 Nova Scotia
 - 5 New Brunswick

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Investigations & Statistics

Charges

In 2025-26 a total of **11 officers** were charged with one or more offences: 6 in Nova Scotia and 5 in New Brunswick. Three of the officers charged stem from investigations that started in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Additionally, one matter was referred to Restorative Justice.

SiRT takes every measure possible to complete investigations in a timely manner. However, some investigations are more complex or have extenuating circumstances that result in a longer investigative period.

As of March 31, 2026, there were:

- 10 investigations active/open from the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Nature of Files & Charges

Serious injury: 12 investigations with 1 ongoing (NS: 7 NB: 5)

- 2 officers charged in New Brunswick
 - One with:
 - failing to yield under the *New Brunswick Motor Vehicle Act*
 - One with:
 - assault causing bodily harm
 - assault with a weapon

Death: 7 investigations with 5 ongoing (NS: 3 NB: 3 PEI: 1)

- 0 officers charged

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Investigations & Statistics

Sexual assault: 3 investigations with 0 ongoing (NS: 3 NB: 0)

- 5 officers charged^[1]
 - 4 officers charged in Nova Scotia with:
 - Sexual Assault
 - 1 officer charged in New Brunswick with:
 - Sexual Assault
 - Breach of Trust

Intimate partner violence: 5 investigations with 2 ongoing (NS: 2 NB: 3)

- 1 officer charged in New Brunswick with:
 - Assault
 - Uttering Threats

Public interest: 12 investigations with 2 ongoing (NS: 6 NB: 6)

- 3 officers charged and one referred to Restorative Justice
 - 2 officers charged in Nova Scotia:
 - One with:
 - Breach of trust
 - Obtaining property by false pretence
 - Obstruction
 - Possession of property obtained by crime with a value over \$5000.00
 - One with:
 - Assault
 - 1 officer charged in New Brunswick^[2]:
 - Child Luring Offences
 - Breach of Trust
 - 1 officer in Nova Scotia was referred to Restorative Justice related to theft.
- 9 Investigations Terminated (NS: 5 NB: 4)

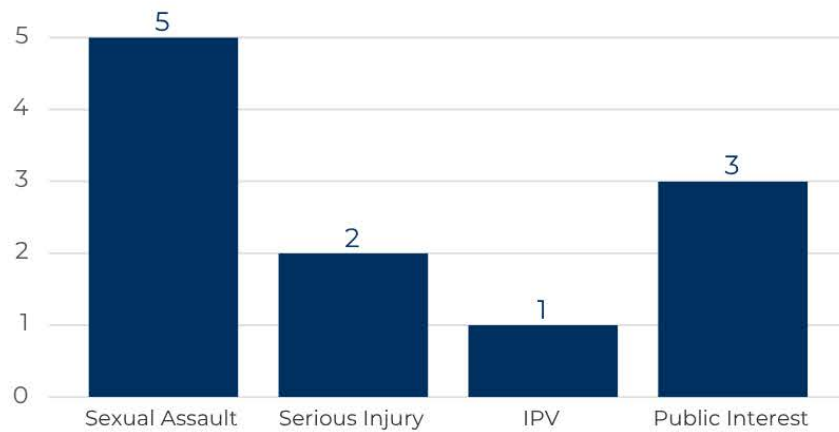
^[1]Two Sexual Assault charges (1 NS and 1 NB) stem from investigations that started in 2024-25.

^[2] These charges stem from an investigation that started in 2024-25.

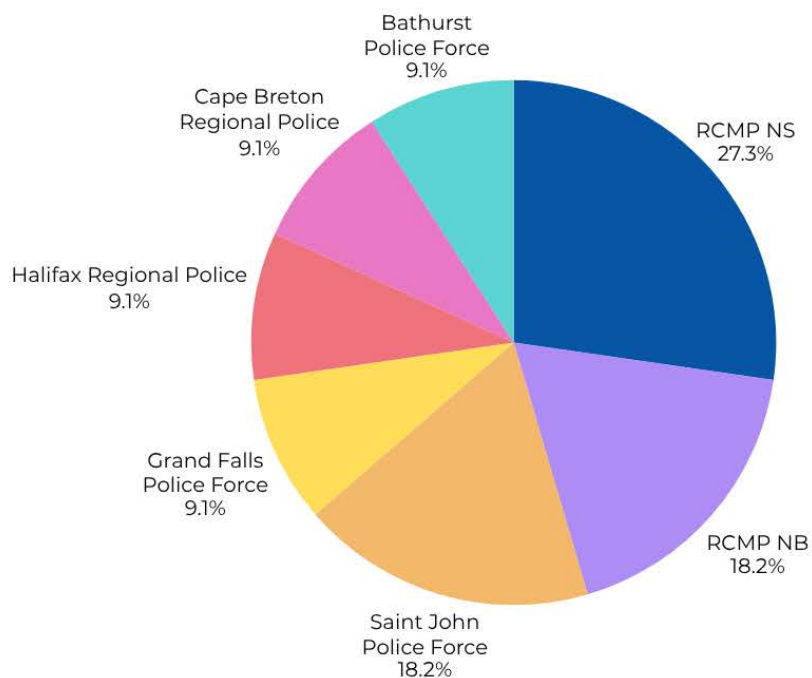
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Investigations & statistics

Investigations with charges



Police agencies with charges



SiRT Training & Presentations

As an independent oversight agency, SiRT recognizes the importance of remaining current with evolving investigative best practices, legal developments and culturally informed approaches to investigations. As an organization we are committed to continuous learning and professional development as it strengthens our ability to deliver independent, objective, and high-quality investigations.

Training courses taken in the past year include: Taser data interpretation provided by Axon International; Intimate Partner Violence training provided by the Nova Scotia Public Prosecution Service; and Evidence Based, Risk-Focused Intimate Partner Violence Investigations provided by the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN). Sexual Assault Investigations training has also been provided by experts from the Nova Scotia Public Prosecution Service, and we continue to seek opportunities to maintain our expertise in this area.

One of our investigators attended an intensive Anti-Corruption Investigative Techniques course, and two other investigators will be attending a symposium regarding sexual assault investigations this fall. The full investigative team will take the Sexual Offence Investigations course offered by CPKN.

The entire SiRT team completed The Path: Indigenous Cultural Competence Training, which is one of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We also attended a cross-cultural education session on Islam and the Muslim culture that was hosted by the Atlantic Muslim Resource Centre.

Over the last year the SiRT Director and team have delivered presentations to facilitate education and open dialogues across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Including presentations to:

- police cadet classes across the Maritimes;
- police management and Chiefs of Police;
- Dalhousie Law Students;
- attendees of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities Conference; and
- community members

Glen Assoun Investigation

In 1999, Glen Assoun was wrongfully convicted and sentenced for the murder of his ex-girlfriend, Brenda Lee Anne Way.

A new trial was ordered after the Federal Minister of Justice concluded there was a reasonable basis that a miscarriage of justice occurred. After spending almost 17 years in prison, Mr. Assoun was released. In March 2019, a Nova Scotia court acquitted Mr. Assoun and he received a compensation settlement from the federal and provincial governments.

On September 8, 2020, then Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Nova Scotia, Mark Furey, asked SiRT to investigate whether there was criminal misconduct by the police during the period before the appeal of Glen Assoun's conviction.

In March 2021, SiRT engaged the Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia (IIOBC) to investigate this matter to ensure independence from Nova Scotia.

Unfortunately, on April 18, 2023, the IIOBC provided notice that due to significant workload and resource issues it would not be able to continue its investigation. When the current SiRT Director was appointed, she began actively seeking another independent agency to take on this investigation. This took time, as it was difficult to find an agency that had the capacity and resources to take on an investigation of this magnitude. In late 2023 through early 2024 there was an agreement in principle in place with another oversight agency, but they ultimately withdrew citing resources issues.

In the fall of 2025, SiRT announced it entered into an agreement with the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) to complete the investigation into whether police committed a criminal offence related to the investigation and 1999 conviction of Glen Assoun for the murder of Brenda Way.

ASIRT has a dedicated team leading this investigation. It is expected to take a couple of years at which time an update will be provided to the public.

SiRT Budget

SiRT operates on a modest budget totalling \$2.5 million annually, that is covered by the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The budget supports the independent investigation of incidents involving police across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Costs are primarily directed toward salaries and benefits, professional services (such as investigative resources), professional development, and the operational resources required to conduct thorough, impartial, and timely investigations.

Nova Scotia's allocation is approximately \$1.2 million annually.

New Brunswick's allocation is approximately \$1.3 million annually.

SiRT 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.

Six full time SiRT investigators: each with significant criminal investigation experience.

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

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

Indigenous Liaison Investigator (Vacant)

Manager of Business Administration

Legal Technician

Manager of Communications & Special Projects

SiRT | **SERIOUS INCIDENT
RESPONSE TEAM**