
MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Ontario Provincial Police

Under the *Police Services Act*, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is responsible for policing areas of Ontario that do not have their own police agencies. The OPP provides general policing services to over 2.3 million people throughout the province (that number increases to 3.6 million in summer due to tourists and cottage users).

In addition to the above general policing responsibilities, the OPP is specifically charged under the Act with patrolling traffic on certain highways, maintaining specialized investigative and enforcement capabilities to assist municipal police agencies, and enforcing liquor and other laws as the Solicitor General may direct in serving provincial interests.

The OPP has over 4,750 uniformed officers, some 770 auxiliary members who provide over 160,000 hours of volunteer services, and over 1,400 civilian employees. It consists of a corporate head office, six regional headquarters, over 80 detachments and 80 satellite locations across the province.

For the 1997/98 fiscal year, total OPP expenditures amounted to \$541 million. Of this total, \$535 million (99%) was for operating expenditures and \$6 million (1%) was for capital expenditures. Operating expenditures were allocated as follows:

	\$ Million
Salaries and benefits	421
Transportation and communication	26
Services	39
Supplies and equipment	42
Transfer payments	7
TOTAL	535

Source: Ontario Provincial Police

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of our audit were to assess whether the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services had adequate procedures and systems in place with regard to the Ontario Provincial Police to:

3.12

-
- measure and report on the effectiveness of mandated community-oriented policing and traffic management services in the promotion of public safety; and
 - ensure that policing services were delivered with due regard for economy and efficiency.

We focused our audit on field operations and organizational support activities, which together represented over 90% of OPP expenditures. In particular, because salaries and employee benefits accounted for 80% of OPP operating expenditures, the emphasis of our audit was on the management of human resources in these activities. Prior to the commencement of the audit, we identified audit criteria to address our audit objectives. These criteria were reviewed and accepted in October 1997 by the OPP's two Deputy Commissioners.

Our audit included visits to the OPP general headquarters, four of the six OPP regional headquarters, six detachments and three communication centres within the regions visited. Our audit also included interviews with OPP and ministry officials, examinations of all relevant management reports of the OPP, reviews and analyses of OPP policies and procedures (known as police orders) as well as operational data and statistics relating to OPP operations. We also reviewed and, where warranted, relied on audit work performed on the OPP by the Audit Services Branch of the Ministry of the Attorney General. Our fieldwork was completed in February 1998.

Our audit was performed in accordance with the standards for assurance engagements, encompassing value for money and compliance, established by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, and accordingly included such tests and other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

OVERALL AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

We noted that, through its 1997/98 business planning process, the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services had established a number of specific, measurable corporate goals to assess the effectiveness of the OPP in serving the community. However, to better assess that effectiveness, the OPP needed to:

- fully implement the process it has developed for identifying and prioritizing policing services to meet community service expectations; and evaluate and report on the progress of community policing implementation to ensure that corrective action, if necessary, can be taken on a timely basis; and
- review and, if required, revise the effectiveness measures of its traffic management services. Traffic management outcomes measured should be reasonably attributable to the traffic management efforts of the OPP.

In order to ensure that policing services are delivered with due regard for economy and efficiency, improvements were needed in the following areas:

- Staff deployment—the OPP needed to revise current staff scheduling practices to better align the deployment of hours worked by officers with the service requirements of the communities involved. Our audit indicated significant mismatching of staff hours worked and calls for OPP service on a month-to-month, day-to-day and hour-to-hour basis.

-
- Overtime management—the OPP needed to establish better management controls for the assignment and approval of overtime and monitor overtime hours so that timely corrective action can be taken if necessary. Between the 1993/94 and 1996/97 fiscal years, overtime expenditures increased by 140%, from \$12 million to \$29 million, despite a relatively stable level of calls for OPP services during the same period.
 - Billing and collecting policing service revenues from municipalities—the OPP needed to improve cost-identification and work with the Ministry to ensure effective billing and collection of policing service revenues. We noted that of the 40 municipalities with OPP policing service contracts, 5 had not been billed for OPP services for three years as of the end of 1997. The total unbilled services for these municipalities amounted to \$23 million. In addition, five other municipalities had been billed but had not paid for about \$6.6 million of services provided by the OPP since 1993.

DETAILED AUDIT OBSERVATIONS

EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

The OPP's legislated and strategic objectives in providing policing services include the following:

- to reflect community needs and promote the prevention and detection of crime;
- to promote public peace, well-being and security;
- to ensure an appropriate enforcement of law; and
- to prevent accidents and promote traffic management.

The OPP collects and reports various statistics relating to its operations. These include input statistics such as number of frontline officers, management staff, hours worked by frontline officers and number of vehicles employed; output statistics for activities such as calls for service answered, kilometres driven, patrol hours and charges laid; and outcome statistics such as clearance rates (that is, resolving occurrences) for various crimes and road fatality rates.

Through the Ministry's 1997/98 business planning process, a number of specific performance goals were developed to assess the OPP's effectiveness:

- to be among the top 5% of Canadian police forces—municipal, provincial and federal—with the lowest ratio of management staff to front line officers;
- to maintain the OPP among the top 10 Canadian police forces—municipal, provincial, and federal—at clearing violent crime occurrences;
- to keep the Ontario road fatality rate among the lowest 10 such rates in North America; and
- to achieve improved rates of citizen satisfaction with OPP service as well as reduced numbers of public complaints.

The establishment of the above measurable goals is a positive first step in assessing OPP effectiveness.

Additionally, we noted that recent amendments to the *Police Services Act* would result in the establishment of more police service boards and community policing committees with responsibilities for determining local OPP policing objectives and monitoring and evaluating OPP services. These boards and committees are expected to furnish the OPP with additional mechanisms for setting service expectations within their local communities and to provide greater OPP accountability for policing activities to those communities.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Since the late 1970s, the philosophy of community policing has been adopted by many police forces throughout North America. Amendments to the *Police Services Act* in 1990 included the requirement for Ontario police forces to provide community-oriented policing services. Various definitions exist with regard to the activities that encompass community-oriented policing. In essence, community-oriented policing focuses on involving communities in identifying and solving law and order issues in their areas.

In its 1995 organizational review document, the OPP outlined its commitment to a full partnership approach to community policing. This approach emphasizes crime prevention and reduction of victimization through working with a wide range of community groups and establishing roles and responsibilities for identifying and solving law and order issues.

In 1996, the OPP developed a strategic plan and initiated various projects for the entrenchment of community policing as the method of delivery for all OPP services.

The OPP has established a process for identifying and prioritizing policing services to solve community problems and meet service expectations. It has also developed measures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on community policing including: the implementation of the new service delivery model; community satisfaction with services; levels of reported and unreported victimization rates; and community policing successes with community partners.

We noted several examples of effective community policing initiatives for problem-solving and reporting that had been carried out by some detachments. However, we found that the processes and measures described above had yet to be implemented in most of the detachments we visited.

While the OPP has indicated that it is implementing a more integrated community policing approach to service delivery, we noted that approximately eight years have elapsed since community policing was first required by the *Police Services Act*. It has taken the OPP a considerable length of time to develop community policing service delivery processes and related officer training.

Recommendation

In order to be more effective in serving the community through community policing activities, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- **fully implement the process developed for identifying and prioritizing policing services to meet community service expectations;**

- identify and disseminate best practices in community policing among detachments; and
- measure the effectiveness of community policing activities against established criteria.

The Ontario Provincial Police should also periodically evaluate the progress of community policing implementation, taking corrective action where necessary to ensure that implemented initiatives are effective in helping communities achieve the objectives of reducing crime and victimization.

Ministry Response

We agree with the recommendation. Action plans to implement community policing processes, disseminate best practices and measure effectiveness of activities are well under way. In the fall of 1995, the Ontario Provincial Police established the Community Policing Development Centre to focus on the development of a model for community policing with the Ontario Provincial Police and to coordinate, support and monitor implementation. In the spring of the following year, a strategic plan was developed which clearly identified goals and strategies to be implemented over a 42-month timeframe (December, 1999).

Accountability to local governing authorities for success in reducing local victimization rates and efficient use of local resources is a distinct part of the Ontario Provincial Police service delivery model.

Implementation of the Ontario Provincial Police community policing strategic plan is on schedule and is being monitored at the regional level and by the Community Policing Development Centre to identify issues and determine corrective action where required.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The OPP is responsible for patrolling certain provincial highways as well as the roads within the municipalities it polices. The OPP addresses these responsibilities through activities at its regional offices and detachments. At the regional level, teams primarily dedicated to traffic duties and the RIDE (Reduced Impaired Driving Everywhere) program have been established to patrol provincial highways.

Detachments are required to complete a traffic management plan each year outlining local traffic concerns and actions to be taken during the year. Some detachments have also dedicated specific officers to address these local traffic concerns.

The OPP maintains statistics on accidents and fatalities as well as on activities and enforcement for various corporate and regional initiatives such as holiday RIDE programs. The motor vehicle collision data from OPP jurisdictions between 1993 and 1997 are as follows:

Motor Vehicle Collision Data

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Fatal Collisions	685	570	545	533	544
Personal Injury Collisions	19,335	18,410	17,313	17,014	16,187
Reportable Damage Collisions	54,552	55,184	52,101	54,469	53,692
TOTAL	74,572	74,164	69,959	72,016	70,423

Source: Ontario Provincial Police data

EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

3.12

The OPP's 1997/98 corporate business plan identifies a key overall objective for traffic management as keeping the Ontario road fatality rate among the lowest 10 fatality rates in North America. However, we noted that significant refinements would be needed for its use as an effectiveness measure of the OPP's traffic management efforts. Specifically, in our review of road safety information from Ontario and other jurisdictions, we noted that the recent decline in road fatality and personal injury rates in Ontario and across North America could be due to a number of factors not solely related to policing efforts. For example:

- New vehicle safety features introduced in recent years, such as air bags and anti-lock brakes, have contributed much to road safety. In a report to the U.S. Congress in December 1996, the U.S. Department of Transportation indicated that drivers protected by air bags experienced a reduced fatality risk of 31% in frontal crashes.
- Better compliance with seat belt legislation has been another factor in reducing road fatalities. The Ministry of Transportation estimated that the use of seat belts has saved about 5,000 lives in Ontario over the last 20 years. According to Transport Canada, the percentage of drivers wearing seat belts in Canada has increased from 86% in 1992 to 92% in 1996.
- The 1994 introduction of the graduated licensing system in Ontario has resulted in a reduction of road fatalities, especially among young, inexperienced drivers. A 1998 study published by the Ministry of Transportation showed that, under the new licensing system, fatality and injury rates decreased by 24% for new drivers of all age groups; among new drivers between 20 and 24 years old, the collision rate decreased by 42%.
- Changing demographics has also contributed to the reduction in road fatality rates. According to *Ontario's Road Safety Plan*, which was updated by the Ministry of Transportation in 1997, the maturing of baby boomers is expected to result in a decrease in certain types of collisions associated with younger driving populations. Such collisions, including single vehicle collisions, drinking-driving collisions and high-speed collisions, are the most common types of collisions leading to car occupant fatalities.

Our review of accident statistics in North America indicated some positive trends for Ontario, especially for collisions causing fatalities or personal injuries. In particular, our review of 1996 statistics of other jurisdictions indicated that the Ontario fatality rate of 14 deaths per 100,000 registered vehicles was rated seventh lowest among North American states and provinces. Thus, the OPP's overall objective of Ontario being among the 10 jurisdictions with the lowest road fatality rates in North America had been achieved at that point in time.

However, until the OPP's contribution to reducing road fatality rates can be measured, comparing Ontario's rate to the rates of other North American jurisdictions could be counter-productive. By using such comparisons, OPP traffic management could appear to be successful if the road fatality rate drops for reasons unconnected to OPP efforts. Conversely, successful traffic management efforts could appear to be ineffective if rates fail to decrease due to factors outside of OPP control, such as traffic volume, road conditions and weather.

While fatality rate reduction is a desirable and measurable objective, isolating factors that can be attributed to policing efforts would be more useful in assessing OPP traffic management effectiveness. For example, factors such as non-compliance with seat belt legislation, drinking and driving, and high-speed driving that are commonly linked to fatal collisions can be affected by OPP community education and traffic enforcement efforts. Provincial performance targets, such as increasing the percentage of compliance with seat belt legislation and reducing the percentage of collisions involving drinking and driving, and high-speed driving, would be more relevant in assessing OPP traffic management efforts than simply comparing the Ontario road fatality rate to the rates of other jurisdictions.

Recommendation

To better evaluate the effectiveness of its traffic management, the Ontario Provincial Police should develop performance targets that can be more directly attributed to its traffic management efforts.

Ministry Response

We agree with this recommendation. The 1998/99 Business Plan has already been approved and performance targets have been identified which include the performance target "Ontario's road fatalities be at or below the national fatality rate." We acknowledge that it is very difficult to determine how the Ontario Provincial Police specifically contributes to any reductions, as several factors other than policing may contribute to success in this area.

As the Ontario Provincial Police approaches the 1999/2000 business planning cycle, which will commence in the fall of 1998, the Ontario Provincial Police will be committed to identifying performance targets that can be more attributable to its traffic management efforts.

DETACHMENT TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLANS

Our 1993/94 audit of the OPP noted the following points regarding detachment traffic management plans and subsequent reports of plan results:

- Most plans were not based on an in-depth analysis of traffic problems and trends, contrary to the problem-solving approach advocated by management for community policing. Plan objectives were usually stated in terms of service levels or outputs, such as patrol hours and charges laid, or were more general, such as reducing the number of highway accidents.

3.12

- Key objectives were not being achieved.

Our current audit of detachment traffic management plans revealed similar situations. In addition, we found that communities being served were sometimes not even consulted or involved in the establishment of traffic management plans and that objectives set in some plans were not monitored or evaluated by senior management to determine whether they were achieved.

Recommendation

In order to deliver more effective traffic management services, the Ontario Provincial Police should ensure that:

- detachment traffic management plans are based on a comprehensive analysis of traffic problems and are consistent with its expectations for community policing; and
- performance of detachments in identifying and resolving local traffic problems is reported to and monitored by senior management.

Ministry Response

The 1999/2000 business planning process will require business plans to be submitted at the detachment level. To ensure that detachment commanders are not tasked with several planning processes, traffic management plans will form part of the detachment business plans. These plans will be reviewed by senior managers and by the communities they serve, either through police services boards or community advisory committees. Formulation of the plans will be based on an analysis of the traffic issues within the communities served and will be completed in consultation with the community.

DUE REGARD FOR ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The OPP has over 4,750 uniformed officers and 1,400 civilian employees. Uniformed officers were distributed to the following categories over the last five years:

OPP Uniformed Staff by Category

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Commissioned officer	136	114	109	116	125
Staff sergeant	276	245	235	227	214
Sergeant	744	680	697	794	773
Constable	3,213	3,618	3,678	3,614	3,653
TOTAL	4,369	4,657	4,719	4,751	4,765

Source: Ontario Provincial Police data

STAFF DEPLOYMENT

In 1990, the OPP implemented a staff deployment model for determining staffing levels at the detachments. The model implemented was a modified version of one originally developed by a U.S. state's police department. It determines the number of police officers to deploy in a detachment primarily by the number of calls for service, which is considered to be the workload of the detachment, with adjustments to allow for court attendance, training, patrol and administration.

In our review of staffing levels at detachments, we noted that while the statistics for calls for service were used by corporate headquarters to deploy officers to detachments, these statistics were not used by detachments to determine the workload requirements for scheduling those officers. Our audit indicated that a significant mismatching of staffing levels and workload requirements occurred on a month-to-month, day-to-day and hour-to-hour basis.

Deployment by Month

The OPP provides general policing services to 2.3 million people throughout Ontario. However, in June, July and August, its services extend to 3.6 million people due to the influx of tourists and cottage users.

The table below is a summary of the monthly calls for service statistics and the corresponding hours worked by detachment field sergeants and constables in 1996, including overtime hours, according to daily activity reports. Civilian staff, some sergeants at regional headquarters and general headquarters, staff sergeants and other senior officers who are generally involved in administration and support activities are not required to prepare daily activity reports. Thus, the table does not reflect their work.

Monthly Staff Hours Worked and Calls for Service in 1996

	Hours Worked	Calls for Service
Jan	520,599	38,754
Feb	491,800	35,572
Mar	488,706	37,960
Apr	496,890	38,707
May	517,864	44,866
Jun	472,496	47,465
Jul	444,543	48,826
Aug	439,405	49,985
Sep	469,406	40,299
Oct	487,090	41,061
Nov	462,405	39,583
Dec	411,795	36,498

Source: Ontario Provincial Police data

3.12

We noted that, during the months when its services were most needed, the OPP had disproportionately low levels of staff hours worked. For example, in the busy months of June, July and August, the OPP had 30% more calls than in the slow months of January, February and March. However, during these slow months between January and March, 10% more staff hours were worked, including overtime hours, than during the three summer months. During the slowest month, February, 12% more staff hours were worked than during August—the month with the highest number of calls for service in the year.

Our discussions with detachment commanders indicated that most officers take their vacations in the summer months. OPP management indicated that the public was not exposed to undue risk in the summer months; officers were able to respond to all the calls for service in those months. According to management, OPP policy stipulated that “vacation leave shall be granted provided not more than 1/6 of a detachment are absent at one time.”

To cope with the situation of having a significant increase in calls for service and a reduced level of staff, OPP had responded by reducing the hours scheduled for court attendance and training during the summer months.

Deployment by Day

On a day-to-day basis, our analysis of staff deployment showed that most hours were worked by officers on weekdays when calls for service were low and that the fewest hours were worked on weekends when calls for service were high. For example, in 1996, Saturdays had, on average, 24% more calls for service than Wednesdays; however, Wednesdays had, on average, 53% more staff hours worked.

The following is a summary of hours worked by officers and calls for service during the weekdays and weekends in 1996.

Daily Staff Hours Worked and Calls for Service in 1996

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Hours Worked	582,488	865,536	922,549	958,838	904,272	843,461	625,933
Calls for Service	67,180	66,667	66,502	67,304	68,755	79,840	83,328

Source: Ontario Provincial Police data

None of the detachment commanders indicated that the public was being exposed to undue risk due to reduced weekend staffing levels; officers were able to respond to all their calls for service with the resources available.

As training, court attendance and other administrative functions requiring time during business hours certainly necessitate having more officers working during the weekdays, we further analyzed the hours worked on night shifts (between 4 p.m. and midnight) which required no time for training, court appearances or other administrative functions.

Our analysis showed a similar pattern of staffing levels for the night shifts—more hours were worked on week nights when calls for service were low and fewer hours were worked on weekend nights when calls for service were high. Although the Wednesday night shift had one of the lowest levels of calls for service, it was still the shift with most hours worked.

Staff Hours Worked and Calls for Service Between 4 p.m. and Midnight in 1996

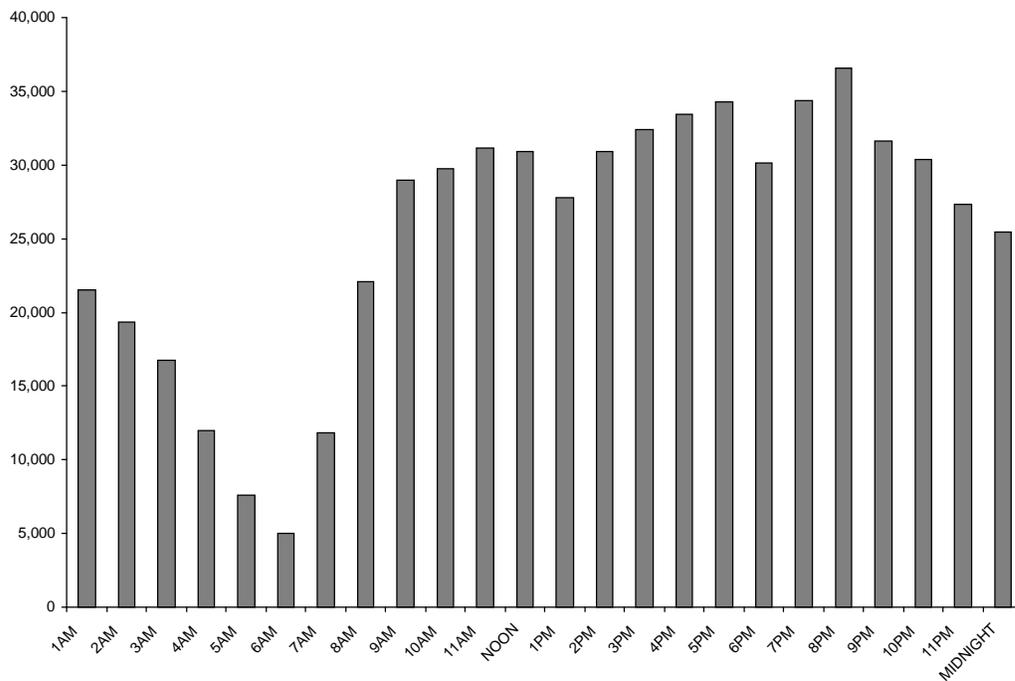
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Hours Worked	221,417	259,992	270,158	284,334	268,225	263,107	237,337
Calls for Service	24,633	25,933	26,386	26,251	27,630	34,388	32,027

Source: Ontario Provincial Police data

Deployment by Hour

Our analysis of hourly calls for service showed the following pattern.

Calls for Service by Hour of Day in 1996



Source: Ontario Provincial Police data

Since 1992, the majority of OPP detachments have had officers working on 12-hour shifts. Detachment scheduling of officers is primarily based on maintaining an equal number of officers in a shift at all times of the day. This practice can therefore result in having excess staff assigned to work during the slow hours between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. There are few calls during that period, and even fewer opportunities for community policing activities.

We noted that some detachments staggered the shifts of some staff around 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. to smooth the transition between shifts. We noted that if such staggering were extended to having more staff over a longer period during busy hours, staff could be more effectively deployed to correspond with workload requirements.

However, we were informed that significant changes in shift scheduling would require agreement from the majority of police officers in the detachments. Additionally, it would

cause a shortage of police cars because cars assigned to detachments were based on a ratio of three officers to one car. The 3-to-1 ratio was developed when officers were working eight-hour shifts. With officers now working mostly 12-hour shifts, assigning more officers to busy times would result in a shortage of cars, and officers being stationed around detachments instead of being on the road.

3.12

Recommendation

The Ontario Provincial Police should review current staff scheduling practices and revise them as necessary to ensure that officer hours worked are efficiently matched to the service requirements of the communities involved.

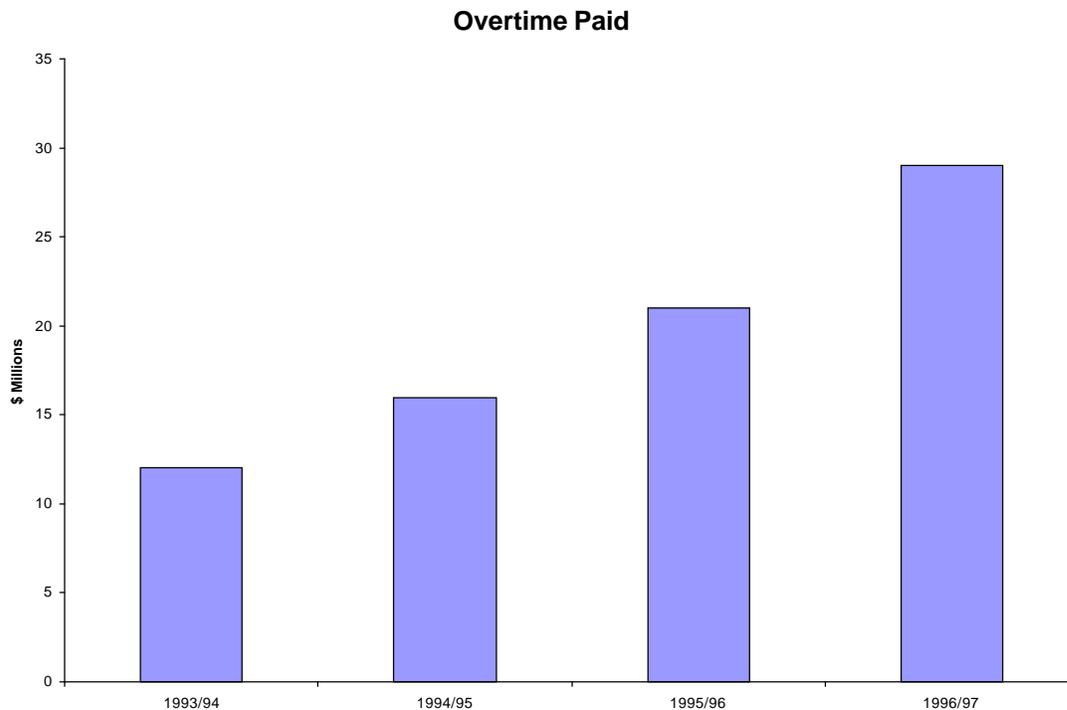
Ministry Response

We agree with this recommendation. Since January 1998, the Ontario Provincial Police has been working toward the development of a more flexible shift scheduling manual which meets workload and community needs and, to the extent possible, accommodates employee preferences. The manual has been completed and an agreement in principle has been reached.

While an implementation date has not been set, it is expected that the new manual will be in effect in the fall of 1998.

OVERTIME MANAGEMENT

Our review of OPP overtime showed that despite a stable level of calls for service over the years, the overtime hours worked by officers has steadily increased. Over the last four years, overtime expenditures have increased by 140%, from \$12 million in the 1993/94 fiscal year to about \$29 million in the 1996/97 fiscal year.



Source: Ontario Provincial Police data

Although court attendance was often mentioned as a major cause of overtime, our review of court hours worked by officers indicated that overtime hours for court attendance had declined in recent years and thus did not support the increase in overtime. The inflexibility of scheduling staff in 12-hour shifts and the inefficiency of report writing were also identified by detachment commanders as reasons for significant overtime; however, we noted that these situations had existed for many years and were not the reasons for increases in recent years. Upon further examination of controls and discussions with detachment commanders, we concluded that the significant increase in overtime in recent years was caused mainly by a lack of adequate management and budgetary controls. Specifically:

- Officers assigned to detachments, especially those with specialist training, were often contacted to perform duties by other OPP units directly, with little consideration for the staffing needs of the home detachments. Detachment commanders had no control over the hours worked by their officers outside their detachments; however, overtime hours generated by such outside duties were charged to the home detachments.
- Although Wednesdays have notably fewer calls for service than most other days, they are the days with the most officers working and the most overtime hours being incurred. On average, Wednesdays in 1996 had 60% more overtime hours than Sundays and 42% more than Saturdays.

The OPP has also recognized problems relating to the excessive use of overtime. In September 1997, regional headquarters and detachments were requested to submit plans to reduce overtime expenditures to a target level of \$20 million. In addition, an Overtime Research Project Team was established to investigate the causes of overtime. That team reported similar concerns.

3.12

Recommendation

To promote the appropriate use of overtime, the Ontario Provincial Police should establish better management controls to ensure that overtime hours are:

- worked only on the basis of clearly identified and justifiable need; and
- monitored so that, if necessary, appropriate corrective action can be taken.

Ministry Response

We agree with this recommendation. When faced with the increased levels of overtime expenditure, Ontario Provincial Police senior management responded by:

- *conducting a review of overtime through the Overtime Research Project; and*
- *implementing action plans in 1997 for reduction of overtime expenditures in the 1997/98 fiscal year.*

All bureaus and regions were required in 1997 to submit action plans to ensure management controls were in place and complied with, with a goal to significantly curtail overtime expenditures. This resulted in significant improvement and a notable reduction of overtime in the latter six months of 1997, which continued into 1998. Overtime in 1997/98 decreased by 24% over the peak period reached in 1996/97.

Starting in 1998/99, budget allocations will result in more accountability for overtime expenditures at the local level. For the first time, overtime budgets will be decentralized to the regions and bureaus which will be responsible for managing and monitoring overtime expenditures and ensuring that overtime budgets are met.

On May 12, 1998, the overtime research report was submitted to senior management. The report contained several recommendations relating to accountability, overtime attributable to emergency response personnel, court case management and accommodation of employees with disabilities. Action plans have been developed and are being implemented.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE UNITS

The OPP differential response units (DRUs) identify those calls for service for which dispatching an officer to the scene would not provide any additional benefit, and address those calls over the telephone. For example, the theft of a bicycle where there are no witnesses and no evidence to be gathered at the scene would likely not require the presence of a police officer. However, as a matter of OPP policy, if a citizen demands to see a police officer, one is dispatched regardless of the nature of the call.

The OPP developed the DRU program in 1996 to provide a more efficient deployment of police officers. Studies in Canada and the United States suggest that from 30% to 40% of calls for service can best be dealt with by DRUs. In January 1997, the OPP approved the implementation of the DRU program province-wide in June 1997. Regional targets were to be set by the individual regions.

Our visits to detachment and regional offices indicated that the DRU program was not fully utilized because it was understaffed. In addition, its implementation was not being adequately monitored. For example:

- The majority of officers assigned to DRUs were on temporary light duties. As a result, some DRUs had unstaffed positions when these officers returned to their regular duties.
- Our discussion with OPP management indicated that only two regions had established individual targets. For 1997, only one region was able to achieve a greater-than-20% rate for calls being handled by a DRU. The rates achieved in the other regions were approximately 5% or were unknown as they were not being measured.

Recommendation

In order to realize the potential savings from the differential response units, the Ontario Provincial Police should determine and implement the mechanisms necessary to ensure that the differential response unit program is fully utilized.

Ministry Response

We agree with this recommendation. The Ontario Provincial Police will implement mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of differential response units. The evaluation will ensure that the program is utilized to its fullest; however, the evaluation will be completed within the framework of community consultation and acceptance. The Ontario Provincial Police must serve the needs of the community, and the community will have a significant voice in determining the mandate of local differential response units and the extent to which they should be utilized.

REPORT WRITING

The OPP uses the Ontario Municipal and Provincial Police Automation Co-operative (OMPPAC) integrated computer system to record reported occurrences, possible suspect sightings and investigation results and to generate its police reports.

In the early 1990s, the OPP made the decision to require officers to enter data and write reports because it planned to eventually install “smart” terminals in police vehicles. We noted in our current audit that none of the vehicles had yet been fitted with such technology, and there were no plans to do so.

3.12

In our 1994 report, we recommended that the OPP implement changes to reduce the considerable amount of time that officers needed for data entry and report writing on OMPPAC. Since then, we noted that the OPP has taken several steps to improve this area including:

- adoption by some detachments of generic OMPPAC reporting templates for combining information onto one incident report instead of several; and
- the automatic creation of some case files through the dispatching system to reduce the need for officers to prepare reports.

Despite these initiatives, officers continued to spend a significant amount of time writing reports. The activity report summary from OPP headquarters showed that about 10% of officer working hours were spent for case-related and other administrative reports such as Crown briefs for prosecutors. However, our discussions with detachment commanders indicated that significantly more hours were spent by officers to meet their report writing requirements. For example, officers usually performed their OMPPAC data entry toward the end of their shifts. This administrative responsibility took the officers away from the road to return to their detachments well before their shifts were over. The time spent on travelling and staying in the detachments was not normally recorded as report writing hours.

We noted that some municipal police forces have made use of alternative data entry personnel and current technology to substantially eliminate the need for officer data entry and report writing. At one detachment, the OPP continued the practices of the former local police force in using alternative staff and dictaphone technology to assist officers with OMPPAC reporting. The detachment informed us that the benefits of these practices included:

- significantly reduced officer time spent on report writing in comparison with officers at other detachments; and
- better consistency of report style and format because fewer personnel were involved in data entry and report preparation.

The OPP had neither substantiated nor quantified these benefits. At the end of our field work in February 1998, an OPP project team was studying the benefits that could be achieved by using alternative staff to assist with data entry.

Recommendation

To reduce time spent by officers on data entry and report writing, the Ontario Provincial Police should explore other options, including new technologies and alternatives to data entry by officers.

Ministry Response

We agree with this recommendation. There is currently a study under way which is examining alternatives to officer entry data. A draft report is expected in the summer of 1998.

Additionally, the Ontario Municipal and Provincial Police Automation Co-operative integrated computer reporting system will be replaced by

the year 2000. A request for proposal has been prepared and a decision is expected soon on the replacement for the Ontario Municipal and Provincial Police Automation Co-operative integrated computer reporting system.

Of particular interest with respect to this recommendation is a requirement that the replacement system realize tangible improvements in the area of data entry. One of the expectations of a new computer-aided dispatch records management system is that it allow officers or data entry personnel to enter tombstone data (name, date of birth, address, and so on) once, and then automatically populate that same data into other areas as it is needed.

This data rollover capability will assist Ontario Provincial Police personnel with completing numerous types of reports and forms (property reports, impaired driving forms and so on) as well as providing a more efficient method of meeting Canadian Police Information Centre data entry requirements or preparing Crown briefs. Modern word processing tools will provide more versatility to the user who must enter incident information.

On-line library tools with point and pick functionality would decrease the current amount of effort required in selecting the correct charge for an offence when completing statutory forms such as subpoenas and other court documents.

TRAINING OF OFFICERS

The OPP has a wide range of training programs designed to ensure that officers are trained and equipped with the skills necessary for effective and efficient delivery of police services. These programs include:

- basic and field training for new recruits;
- annual mandatory training courses for officers, such as firearms requalification, personnel safety/use of force and first aid requalification;
- training courses for specialists in breathalyzer use, explosive disposal, crime investigation and emergency response; and
- management training such as courses for detachment commanders on police administration.

Our audit indicated that the OPP had developed course training standards for the above programs to facilitate the monitoring of course design, delivery and evaluation. Course evaluation was done annually to assess the relevance of the courses and to determine whether they should be offered the following year.

In our examination of the training of officers, we concluded that officers were receiving the training and acquiring the skills deemed necessary by the OPP for delivering policing services.

PROVINCIAL REVENUES FOR MUNICIPAL POLICING SERVICES

Prior to January 1, 1998, the OPP provided policing services without charge to 576 small municipalities that had not established other means of providing such services. In addition, 40 municipalities had contracted to pay for the services of the OPP. Commencing January 1, 1998, in accordance with the *Police Services Act*, the province was to bill all municipalities without contracts for OPP services for the cost of those services on a basis specifically prescribed by Regulation.

The province does not recover costs from municipalities for activities such as provincial highway patrols that are determined to be in the provincial interest. However, the Act states that municipalities are responsible for providing all of the infrastructure and administration necessary for providing adequate policing services.

The OPP estimated that provincial revenues for municipal policing services will amount to approximately \$216 million for 1998. Of this total, \$178 million would be for cost recoveries from non-contract municipalities and \$38 million for cost recoveries from contract municipalities.

COST RECOVERY FROM MUNICIPALITIES WITHOUT CONTRACTS

In examining the OPP methodology for determining cost recoveries for non-contract municipal police services for 1998, we noted that the estimated \$178 million in OPP cost recoveries was primarily based on estimated 1997/98 expenditures. However, overhead costs were determined using a cost recovery formula based on an estimate for expenditures for the 1996/97 fiscal year that was less than the actual expenditures for that year.

OPP management indicated that differences between estimated and actual expenditures would be recovered because the OPP would be billing individual municipalities for the actual salaries and benefits of the officers deployed in their communities. In addition, actual amounts of other direct operating costs, with vehicles being the most significant, would be identified and billed to the municipalities. However, we noted that because overhead costs were based on the estimated expenditures, they would be underestimated if the cost recovery formula were not revised.

In addition, the OPP deducted 10% from the amounts otherwise recoverable from municipalities as an adjustment for the use of officers assigned to municipalities to assist in any provincial emergencies. The 10% adjustment was an OPP estimate for which the OPP could not provide us with supporting data. OPP management indicated that the 10% adjustment was a conservative estimate based on discussions with all regional and detachment commanders.

OPP management indicated that it was in the process of adjusting its system to collect more detailed information on costs and hours worked by officers in individual communities. The OPP intends to review the cost recovery formula later in 1998 to ensure that it reflects actual expenditures. Additionally, the OPP will review the 10% adjustment for provincial services to determine the most appropriate method of ensuring that municipalities are not charged for provincially mandated services.

REVENUES FROM MUNICIPALITIES WITH CONTRACTS

Municipalities with contracts for OPP services are billed for costs according to the provisions of their contracts. At the end of 1997, 40 municipalities were under contract to be billed, in total, approximately \$40 million annually for services provided by the OPP.

Of those 40 municipalities, we noted that, as of the end of 1997, five (within one regional municipality) had not been billed for OPP services for the past three years. The total unbilled amount was about \$23 million.

In addition to the unbilled amount of \$23 million, the OPP had accounts receivable totalling \$12.6 million for the year ended December 1997. We noted that \$8.4 million had been outstanding for more than 90 days. Of this amount, five municipalities owing about \$6.6 million had not paid for services provided by the OPP since 1993.

Recommendation

To ensure that the costs of providing its services to municipalities are appropriately recovered, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- **ensure that its system is adjusted to collect more detailed information to identify costs for recovery;**
- **work with the Ministry to establish adequate systems and procedures to more effectively bill and collect costs associated with municipal policing services.**

Ministry Response

We agree with the recommendation and have taken the following action. The Ontario Provincial Police has modified its activity data collection to ensure that detailed cost information is available in a timely fashion.

While it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance to effect billing and collect the revenue for Municipal Policing Services provided by the Ontario Provincial Police, the Ontario Provincial Police is committed to providing the Ministry of Finance with accurate and timely data.