



Ontario Provincial Police 2021 Value-for-Money Audit

Why we did this audit

- The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is one of the largest police forces in North America, with about 5,600 police officers and 2,500 civilian employees.
- The OPP's operating expenditures totalled more than \$1.2 billion in the 2020/21 fiscal year, an increase of 26% since our last audit in 2011/12. Salaries and benefits represented 88% of these expenditures.

Why it matters

- In 2020, the OPP provided policing services to 327, or 74%, of Ontario's 444 municipalities, and approximately 16.3% of Ontario's population.
- The OPP is responsible for patrolling over 1 million square kilometres across Ontario.
- In 2020, OPP officers laid over 424,000 charges, including over 104,000 charges for violations of the Canadian Criminal Code, and over 269,000 charges related to the Highway Traffic Act.

What we found

Significant Vacancies, Stress Leaves and Increasing WSIB Costs

- OPP detachments are increasingly understaffed with frontline officers. In 2020, over 1,000 frontline constable positions were vacant, representing 26% of the total funded frontline constable positions at the OPP. Constables on long-term leave make up 33% of these vacancies.
- Stress-related officer leaves are contributing to rising vacancies at OPP detachments.
- The OPP is incurring rapidly increasing financial costs, reaching \$42.7 million in 2020, related to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims made by officers, largely due post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) claims.

RECOMMENDATION 1

OPP Providing Far Fewer Patrol Hours

- The OPP is providing less proactive policing in the province.
- In 2020, the OPP provided 28% fewer patrol hours than it did in 2016 (from 1.36 million hours to just over 975,000 hours), despite increasing reported incidents of crime and calls for service in recent years.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Vacancies Vary by Region and Detachments, Affect Ability to Resolve Crimes

- Frontline officer vacancy rates vary considerably between OPP regions and detachments. While the west and east regions had 28% and 27% of these frontline constable positions vacant in 2020, the northwest region had only 17%.
- Regions with higher frontline officer vacancies resolve fewer crimes.
- In 2020, the crime clearance rate was 63.5% at the highest staffed region, and 33.7% at the lowest staffed region.

RECOMMENDATION 6

OPP Providing Municipalities Less Service Than Its Deployment Model Requires

- The OPP is not delivering service levels to municipalities identified in its own deployment model.
- Specifically, for municipalities where data was available, we found that 111 or 48% of these municipalities received less than 75% of the constable hours and full-time equivalent (FTE) staff the OPP identified were needed to respond to calls for service on a timely basis, including 26 municipalities that received less than 50% of the needed hours and FTEs.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Officer Scheduling Not Aligned with Calls for Service

- Frontline officer schedules are not aligned with calls for service.
- OPP detachments receive their peak number of calls between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. They receive the fewest calls between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m. – 75% lower than during peak hours. However, the number of frontline constables on duty during this much less busy time was only 25% lower than during peak hours.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Consequences Limited for Officers with Violations

- Detachment inspections lack authority to drive improvement.
- Officers at detachments who were found with significant violations that posed a safety or liability risk appeared to face limited consequences.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Many OPP Frontline Vehicles Underutilized

- Many OPP vehicles are underutilized.
- We found that where the OPP had recorded the kilometric travel of its frontline vehicles, from 2018/19 to 2020/21 between 16% and 34% of them were underutilized relative to the Ministry of Transportation’s utilization guideline of 14,400 annual kilometres (the OPP does not have its own internal benchmark).

RECOMMENDATION 12

Response Times Not Tracked

- The OPP does not accurately track or monitor call response times.
- An important indicator of public safety is how quickly a police service responds to calls, particularly high-priority, urgent calls.

RECOMMENDATION 14

No Performance Indicators with Targets to Measure Effectiveness

- The OPP has not identified key performance indicators with targets, and does not use such indicators to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Conclusions

- The OPP did not have processes in place to consistently deliver provincial and municipal police services efficiently and effectively.
- The OPP does not have performance indicators with targets to measure and publicly report on the effectiveness of the police services it delivers.

Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca