

Chapter 4

Section 4.12

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services

Ontario Provincial Police

Follow-up to VFM Section 3.12, *2005 Annual Report*

Background

Under the *Police Services Act*, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) primarily provides patrols on all provincial highways, waterways, and trail systems; front-line police services in smaller rural communities that do not have their own municipal police service; emergency support services to all communities in Ontario; support for complex criminal and organized crime investigations, as well as intelligence with respect to anti-terrorism activities; and laboratory services in support of criminal investigations. The OPP maintains 79 local detachment offices and 87 satellite offices (which report to one of the detachments) throughout the province.

With, in the 2006/07 fiscal year, approximately 5,500 uniformed officers, 2,000 civilian employees (1,800 in 2004/05), and 850 auxiliary officers (800 in 2004/05), the OPP is one of North America's largest deployed police services. For the 2006/07 fiscal year, OPP expenditures before municipal recoveries (costs paid by municipalities for policing services) totalled \$809.3 million (\$733.2 million in 2004/05).

We concluded in our *2005 Annual Report* that while several issues from our previous audit in 1998—such as the use of overtime and billings to municipalities—had been largely addressed, in other areas—such as staff deployment, shift scheduling, and the implementation of community-

oriented policing principles—much work remained to be done. Our specific concerns in 2005 included the following:

- The OPP's staff deployment model was not being used, and the assignment of officers to detachments did not take into account actual total workload. Also, the Differential Response Unit was not fully implemented province-wide to free up officer time to respond to more serious calls for service.
- Research in other jurisdictions indicated that the 12-hour shifts used by most detachments have health and safety implications and do not offer the best matching of officers to demand for services.
- There was little evidence that the objectives of community-oriented policing were being met at some detachments, and detachments had little guidance for implementing community-oriented policing consistently.
- There were no provincial standards for what an adequate level of traffic patrol should be. Therefore, traffic patrol was often not a high priority and was found to vary, at times significantly, from detachment to detachment and region to region.
- Even though the collision rate for OPP vehicles was high and the OPP classified approximately half of these collisions as preventable, no periodic and/or remedial driver training was being provided.

- We found weaknesses with respect to adherence to requirements relating to seized property and drugs and the storage of armaments.

We made a number of recommendations for improvement and received commitments from the Ontario Provincial Police that it would take action to address our concerns.

Current Status of Recommendations

The OPP has made good progress in implementing most of the recommendations in our *2005 Annual Report*, including those pertaining to the Differential Response Unit, traffic patrol, and driver training. However, on several others—such as staff deployment, security of seized items, and detachment armaments—additional action will be required. The current status of action taken on each of our recommendations is as follows.

DUE REGARD FOR ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

Staff Deployment

Recommendation

To help ensure that available uniformed officers are allocated to detachments based on assessed need and efficiently deployed, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) should:

- expedite completion of the joint OPP-RCMP staffing model and ensure that:
 - it takes into consideration non-contract municipal policing and provincial policing responsibilities in estimating the number of officers that need to be assigned to each detachment; and
 - it is used by the OPP for allocating officers to detachments; and

- reassess the merits of the 12-hour shift schedule and consider alternatives that would provide a better match between the number of officers on duty and the demand for police services.

Current Status

According to the OPP, testing of the new OPP-RCMP detachment staffing model was completed on six OPP test sites early in 2007; after the testing the model was to be customized to reflect all OPP parameters and business rules. We were told that this requires a significant amount of additional data collection and analysis, which was under way at the time of our follow-up.

Testing of the new staffing model in up to 25 OPP sites was expected to be completed by the fall of 2007 and, if the testing was successful, province-wide implementation of the new staffing model was expected to commence across the province shortly thereafter.

With respect to shift scheduling, the OPP informed us that shift scheduling is being reviewed as part of the OPP Efficiency Review, which, at the time of our follow-up, was researching alternatives to the 12-hour shift to determine which alternatives would be best suited to the detachments in their area. Early indications pointed toward the conclusion that several shift variations will be needed in order to address local geographical, workload, and response-time issues.

As of the time of our follow-up, while awaiting the results of the Efficiency Review, the OPP was continuing to use the 12-hour shift schedule in most locations.

Differential Response Unit

Recommendation

Given the significant benefits of freeing up officer time to handle more serious matters through implementing the Differential Response Unit (DRU) function, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- encourage all regions across the province to fully implement the DRU function; and
- require the regions to provide the information necessary to assess the results achieved and promulgate best practices across the province.

Current Status

At the time of our follow-up, it had become an operational requirement that each regional headquarters establish a Differential Response Unit, and we were informed that these units have now been established across the province.

In addition, the OPP also established a requirement in October 2006 that an annual service review be conducted on each Differential Response Unit. We understand furthermore that the OPP Efficiency Review project referred to earlier is intended to focus on, among other things, developing standards and requirements for the Differential Response Unit's annual service reviews.

Information Systems

Recommendation

To help ensure that the information in the Daily Activity Reporting system can be relied on for decision-making purposes, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- develop procedures whereby the completeness and accuracy of the information entered by individual officers is reviewed and approved by a senior officer;
- assess alternatives for inputting information into the system in order to minimize the time required; and
- periodically review the hours entered for specific functions to assess whether the proportion of hours being charged to each activity is reasonable.

To ensure that all information entered into the Records Management System is reviewed and approved, the System's override option—whereby

officers can bypass the required supervisory function—should be reconsidered.

Current Status

Since the time of our 2005 Annual Report, the Daily Activity Reporting (DAR) system has been revised so that overtime hours recorded by an officer are accepted by the system only after all hours worked in a month have been reported in the DAR system and overtime hours have been reviewed and approved on-line by a senior officer. However, officers can continue to record regular working hours without review and approval by a senior officer.

We also noted that, as of the time of our follow-up, the OPP had contracted with a consultant to review various components of the DAR system, including looking at alternatives to data entry and the possibility of linking DAR to other computer systems, including the Records Management System.

We found that the OPP was using information in the DAR system to monitor time spent on major events—such as the Caledonia land claim—or for tracking overtime. However, although reports can be produced for analysis by front-line supervisors, there was no evidence that DAR was used to analyze overall time spent on regular general duty codes, such as crime prevention and administration, to determine whether the time being charged to these codes was reasonable.

At the time of our follow-up, the Records Management System's override option, whereby officers can bypass the required supervising functions, had not yet been addressed. However, the OPP informed us that it was in discussions with a vendor regarding implementing the necessary changes to address this issue. It was also conducting a review of the system, which included efforts to determine the extent to which the override option has been used.

Overtime

Recommendation

To help ensure that overtime is reasonable and incurred only when operationally necessary, the Ontario Provincial Police should ensure that a superior officer approves all overtime claims.

Current Status

Following our 2005 Annual Report, the OPP revised its overtime policy to include the requirement that all overtime be approved by a supervisor before such costs are incurred.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

Community-oriented Policing

Recommendation

To ensure that all detachments are proactively dealing with community concerns and are complying with community-oriented policing principles, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- *establish minimum requirements to guide detachments in the consistent implementation of community-oriented policing services;*
- *co-ordinate and monitor the ongoing implementation of community-oriented policing principles and the achievement of related objectives across the province; and*
- *periodically evaluate the effectiveness of community-oriented policing program service delivery and, if necessary, take corrective action.*

Current Status

We were advised that, at the time of our follow-up, specific requirements to guide detachments in the consistent implementation of community-oriented policing had not been established, primarily because of differences in detachments' workloads and the need for flexibility to meet local needs and priorities. Nevertheless, local needs are identified through a variety of means, such as local town hall gatherings and community policing committees.

For example, a recent survey conducted by the OPP found that 94 community policing committees meet as necessary to facilitate information sharing and needs analysis.

In fall 2006, the OPP developed the Results Driven Policing Accountability Framework, which emphasizes crime prevention and traffic enforcement—both of which are also integral aspects of the Community-oriented Policing Initiative. However, at the time of our follow-up, the OPP still needed to identify an appropriate mechanism for documenting and tracking community involvement and input into policing strategies at all levels.

At the time of our follow-up, the OPP was using its annual business-planning process as a mechanism for reporting on goals and activities of detachments, including community-oriented policing activities. However, from a review of these plans, it was often difficult to determine which goals and activities had been identified as priorities by the community or were related to community-oriented policing. Additional information will be needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program on both a detachment and a provincial level.

Traffic Patrol

Recommendation

To increase police visibility and enforcement action with a view to reducing collisions and resultant deaths, personal injuries, and property damage, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- *establish provincial standards with respect to adequate levels of traffic patrol and consider the advisability of increasing the numbers of dedicated highway patrol officers; and*
- *ensure that the patrol standards, once established, are met and that the results achieved are monitored and assessed.*

Current Status

The OPP informed us that increased police visibility on our highways and the reduction of motor vehicle

collisions are key priorities for it. As a result, subsequent to our *2005 Annual Report*, the Highway Safety Division was created with a key objective of establishing provincial patrol standards and systems to monitor, assess, and report on results achieved.

As of the time of our follow-up, the Highway Safety Division had established a provincial standard for traffic patrol of 80 hours per month for each dedicated road officer for the provincial highways within his or her jurisdiction. In addition, each regional headquarters has also developed individual patrol standards for the other roads within its area. These individual standards allow for flexibility for local conditions, such as workload, collision analysis, and traffic patterns. As well, 55 additional officers have been assigned to Provincial Highway patrol, and the OPP has reintroduced the black-and-white cruiser for highway patrol officers in an effort to increase police visibility on highways.

At the time of our follow-up, the OPP was using the new Results Driven Policing Accountability Framework as a method of monitoring and evaluating the results of its traffic activities. Traffic statistics are collected, analyzed, and discussed during monthly meetings with regional commanders, provincial commanders, and the Commissioner. Response strategies are to be developed when issues are identified—such as when there is on some highways a large increase in accidents—and resources may be redirected in an attempt to rectify the situation.

Officer Training

Recommendation

To minimize property damage and to reduce the risk to officers and the public, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- *consider adding a driver-training component to its annual training program and providing remedial driver training where necessary;*

- *ensure that every officer receives firearms training at least once every 12 months, as required by regulation; and*
- *consider implementing centralized tracking for firearms training to ensure that the intent of required training is understood, that training is undertaken consistently across the province, and that accurate records are kept on the training undergone by each officer.*

Current Status

At the time of our follow-up, the OPP had undertaken a number of initiatives with respect to driver training. These included:

- an increase in the amount of driver-training theory included in courses presented to new recruits;
- production of an educational DVD, entitled *Drive to Survive*, which focused on collisions and how they could have been prevented, and which was shown to all officers as part of the 2006 annual training program;
- identification of high-risk officer groups that are provided with additional and/or remedial driver training courses; and
- establishment of committees to review all serious collisions involving officers, with a view to making recommendations for necessary corrective actions.

The OPP informed us that these initiatives have helped to reduce by about 11% the number of collisions involving OPP vehicles over the past two years.

With respect to firearms training, a memorandum was sent to all regional headquarters in March 2007 providing clarification on the legal requirement for each officer to receive training at least once every 12 months if he or she is to carry a firearm while on duty. However, the OPP acknowledged that during 2007, the mandatory firearms training for some officers was still overdue.

At the time of our follow-up, the OPP was in the testing phase of its implementation of a centralized tracking system for firearms training. Final

implementation was expected by the end of 2007. In the meantime, a spreadsheet program that was being used to monitor adherence to firearms-training requirements until the new program is ready was found to be unreliable because necessary information was missing or out of date. Therefore, it could not be relied upon to track accurately the legislated requirement for annual firearms training.

Security of Seized Items and Detachment Armaments

Recommendation

To preserve the security and integrity of seized property, drugs, and firearms and of detachment armaments, the Ontario Provincial Police should:

- *comply with internal requirements with regard to restricting access to and maintaining adequate records of these items;*
- *when items have been approved for disposal, do so on a timely basis; and*
- *ensure that access to high-risk items such as seized drugs is supervised.*

Current Status

The OPP required each regional headquarters to conduct a review of all detachment vaults and armaments between the fall of 2006 and early 2007 to determine if related policies were being adhered to, and to report the results of these reviews to General Headquarters.

The results of the reviews noted many instances of non-compliance with OPP vault and armament

procedures, findings that were consistent with those in our *2005 Annual Report*. In addition, where instances of non-compliance were identified, many detachments did not subsequently provide sufficient information on the extent of actions taken to rectify the situation.

Quality-assurance Processes

Recommendation

The Ontario Provincial Police should assess whether its three quality-assurance processes as currently implemented meet its objectives for the quality-assurance function or whether these objectives can be achieved through a more effective process.

Current Status

The OPP informed us that the Quality Assurance Unit conducted a review of the quality assurance processes and, from that review, a web-based computer program was introduced to merge the Self-Audit Workbook and the Management Inspection Process into one seamless process.

Testing of the program at selected detachments is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2007, with a full rollout of the program to be completed by year-end. It will be important to finalize policies and procedures concerning this process and responsibility for any follow-up action required before the system is rolled out.