



**Serious Incident Response Team**

**Annual Report**

**2025-26**

## Message from the Director

Civilian oversight plays an important role in a modern justice system. When serious incidents occur involving police, independent review and investigation help ensure that the facts are examined objectively and that decision-making is demonstrably fair. This independence supports public confidence in policing and reinforces trust in Newfoundland and Labrador's justice system.

I am pleased to present the Serious Incident Response Team – Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL) Annual Report for April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. This is my second annual report as director of SIRT-NL, and the first reflecting a full reporting period during which time I served as Director.

This report is prepared under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, which lists SIRT-NL as a Category 3 Entity. In preparing it, I considered the Government's strategic directions as communicated by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. Under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am responsible for the content of this report, including the objectives and indicators described in it.

Under the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**, SIRT-NL releases an Investigative Summary (Director's Report) at the conclusion of each full investigation and shares it with key stakeholders. To support transparency, we also publish these reports on our website.

Over the past year, SIRT-NL has continued to advance its mandate through careful, impartial, and timely work. I am proud of the professionalism and dedication shown by our team as we respond to serious incidents and report our findings as transparently as practicable. We remain committed to earning and maintaining public confidence through independent, high-quality investigations and clear public reporting.



**Stephen Ring**  
Director

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## Overview

The **Serious Incident Response Team Act** (the Act) established the Serious Incident Response Team of Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL). The Act was proclaimed on March 26, 2021. SIRT-NL became fully operational on June 29, 2021.

SIRT-NL is a civilian-led police oversight agency responsible for conducting investigations into incidents involving death, serious injury, sexual offence, domestic violence or any matter of significant public interest that may have arisen from the actions of a police officer in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Team consists of the director, a civilian investigator, an investigator seconded from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC), an investigator seconded from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and an administrative assistant. All investigators report to the director, who must never have been a police officer.

The director and investigators of SIRT-NL have authority under the **Serious Incident Response Team Act** to lay criminal charges against police officers when the evidence gathered during an investigation provides grounds to believe a criminal offence has been committed. All investigative decision-making and the decision to issue a public report, lay a charge or refer a matter to Crown counsel are the responsibility of the director.

SIRT-NL has jurisdiction over both policing agencies in Newfoundland and Labrador, the RCMP and the RNC.

SIRT-NL conducts its investigations to a criminal law standard. The team can receive allegations of wrongdoing from the police agencies, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety (JPS) or directly from the public. The director may initiate an investigation upon notification of a serious incident or where the director becomes aware of a serious incident.

At the conclusion of each SIRT-NL investigation, the director reports on the results as transparently as practicable under the circumstances while respecting the integrity of the investigation and the privacy interests of those involved.

Upon receiving a notification of wrongdoing, SIRT-NL can take one or more of the following actions:

- conduct its own investigation;
- refer the matter to another agency to conduct an investigation;
- enter into an agreement to have an independent team from another province conduct an investigation;
- oversee, observe, monitor or review an investigation by an agency;
- appoint a community liaison or observer to work with SIRT-NL in the course of an investigation;

- refer the matter to the RNC Public Complaints Commission under the **Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Act, 1992**;
- refer the matter under the complaints process of the **Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act** (Canada); or
- determine that the matter is not within the mandate of SIRT-NL.

Where SIRT-NL determines there are grounds to lay a criminal charge, the director releases a public report which includes the subject officer's name and the nature of the charge(s). The matter is then referred to Public Prosecutions. The director may release a supplementary report at the conclusion of the prosecution. Where the director determines there are no grounds to lay a charge, a public report is released outlining all the relevant facts and reasons for the decision. This allows the public to understand the basis for the decision.

SIRT-NL is committed to providing equitable and gender affirming services in accordance with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+).

The budget of SIRT-NL is contained within the Department of Justice and Public Safety's budget and, as a result, SIRT-NL does not provide separate audited financial statements. According to the Estimates of the Program Expenditure and Revenue of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for 2025-26, SIRT-NL operates with a budget of \$456,100.

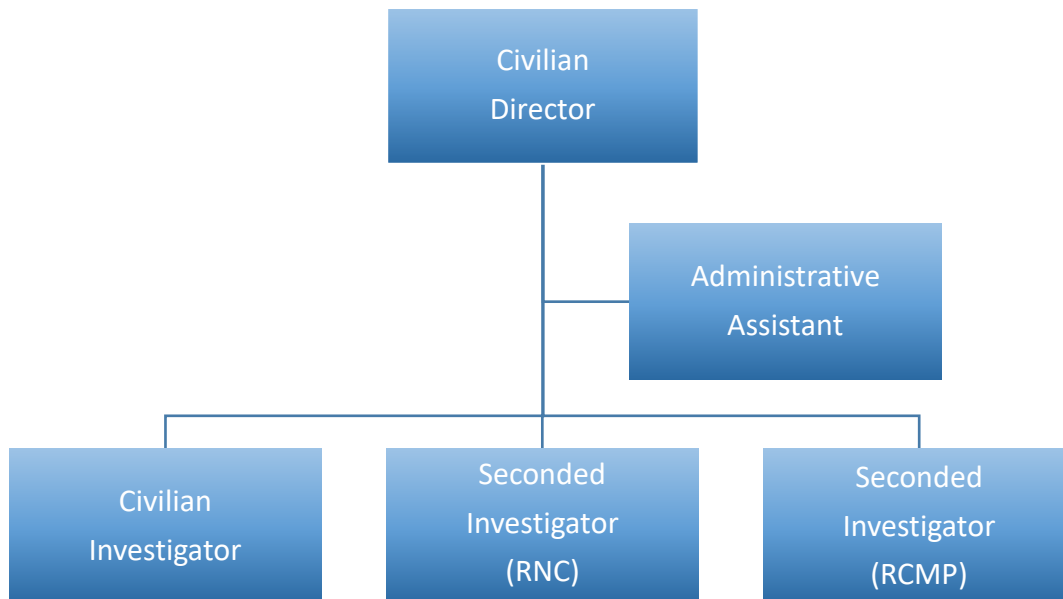
## Employees and Location

The SIRT-NL office is located at 26 Kyle Avenue, Mount Pearl, NL. As of March 31, 2026, SIRT-NL members were:

- Stephen Ring - Civilian Director
- Tom Warren - Civilian Investigator
- William Miller - Investigator seconded from the RCMP
- Bill Rossiter - Investigator seconded from the RNC
- Joanne Kavanagh - Administrative Assistant

The Team operates independently of law enforcement agencies. Decision-making authority rests solely with the civilian director who, under the provisions of the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**, must never have been a police officer.

## Organizational Chart



## Mandate

SIRT-NL's mandate is to investigate serious incidents, which are defined in the **Serious Incident Response Team Act** as a death, a serious injury, a sexual offence, domestic violence or any matter of significant public interest that may have arisen from the actions of a police officer in the province. SIRT-NL does not present separate lines of business as they are reflected in the mandate.

## Primary Clients

The people served by SIRT-NL are those who are party to a serious incident notification. These are the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, the chief officer of the agency in which the police officer under investigation is or was employed, the police officer under investigation and the person directly affected by the serious incident or, where they are deceased, their family.

## Vision

To build public trust and confidence in policing in Newfoundland and Labrador through demonstrating independence, investigative excellence and transparency.

Additional information on SIRT-NL can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.sirtnl.ca/>

## Highlights and Partnerships

In 2025–26, SIRT-NL continued to fulfill its mandate by providing independent, civilian oversight of serious incidents involving police. Over the course of the year, SIRT-NL continued to focus on conducting investigations in a timely, thorough, and impartial manner, consistent with its legislative responsibilities and its commitment to accountability and maintaining public confidence.

SIRT-NL's investigative work this year addressed a range of complex and sensitive matters which required careful consideration of both factual and legal issues. SIRT-NL's ability to manage a diverse caseload across the province while maintaining a consistent standard of investigative quality demonstrates its capacity to operate effectively in a demanding and evolving environment.

Transparency remained a central focus for SIRT-NL. In accordance with the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**, SIRT-NL continued to release public reports at the conclusion of investigations. These reports outline the relevant facts, applicable legal principles, and the reasons for each decision, allowing for greater public understanding of the outcomes of SIRT-NL investigations while respecting investigative integrity and privacy considerations.

SIRT-NL's work is supported by ongoing collaboration with key partners. SIRT-NL maintained strong and professional working relationships with both the RNC and the RCMP, which are essential to ensuring timely notification of serious incidents and effective access to investigative information. These relationships are grounded in mutual respect for the independent role of SIRT-NL and support the efficient and effective conduct of investigations. SIRT-NL also remained in contact with the RNC Public Complaints Commission, recognizing that public complaints may inform matters within its mandate.

At the national level, SIRT-NL continued its engagement with the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE). Participation in conferences and Heads of Agency meetings provided opportunities to collaborate with oversight bodies from across Canada, share knowledge and best practices, and remain informed of emerging issues in civilian oversight. Ongoing involvement at this level supports the

continuous improvement of SIRT-NL's investigative practices and ensures alignment with broader standards of accountability and transparency.

SIRT-NL also undertook efforts to strengthen its internal capacity in response to the complexity of serious incident investigations. Through ongoing collaboration with partners, the Team is working to ensure it remains well positioned to meet operational demands while maintaining high standards of professionalism and investigative excellence.

Through its work in 2025–26, SIRT-NL has continued to advance its mandate by delivering independent oversight, fostering effective partnerships, and promoting transparency in the investigation of serious incidents involving police.

## Strategic Issue

**Issue:** Responding to and investigating serious incidents involving police in Newfoundland and Labrador, as set out in the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**.

The **Serious Incident Response Team Act** requires SIRT-NL to investigate incidents involving death, serious injury, sexual offence, domestic violence, or any matter of significant public interest that may have arisen from the actions of a police officer in Newfoundland and Labrador. SIRT-NL has jurisdiction over both provincial policing agencies: the RCMP and the RNC.

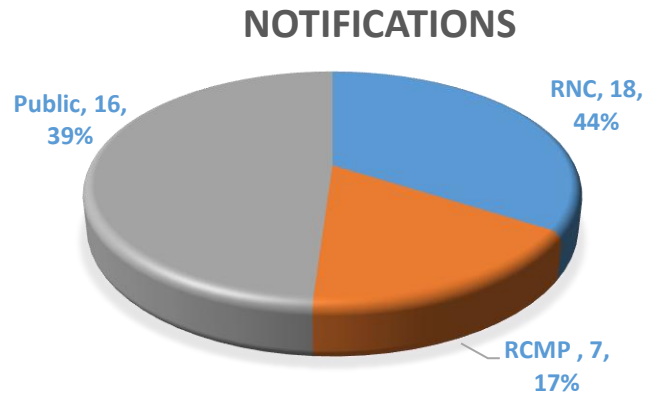
Under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, SIRT-NL reports each year on its objectives and indicators. Annual reports are being prepared for each of the 2026-29 fiscal years. In developing this report, SIRT-NL considered the strategic directions of JPS and will focus on the objective and indicators set out below.

**Objective:** By March 31, 2026, SIRT-NL will respond to notifications of serious incidents as per the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**.

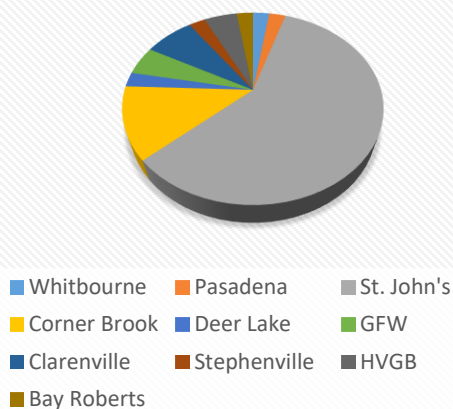
| Indicators                                  | Results                                                |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Number of investigations directed.          | Eight investigations were directed in 2025-26.         |
| Number of investigations concluded.         | Ten investigations were concluded in 2025-26.          |
| Number of investigation summaries released. | Nine investigation summaries were released in 2025-26. |

## Additional Breakdown of Activities

During the 2025-26 fiscal year, SIRT-NL received 41 notifications of potential serious incidents. Of these notifications, 18 were provided by the RNC and seven were provided by the RCMP. Members of the public submitted 16 notifications.



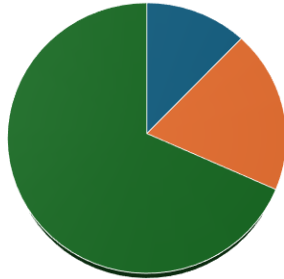
### NOTIFICATIONS BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION



Approximately 60 percent of the notifications received by SIRT-NL came from St. John's and surrounding area. Corner Brook ranked second in terms of the number of notifications. The remainder of notifications were spread throughout our Province.

## NOTIFICATIONS, BY RESULT

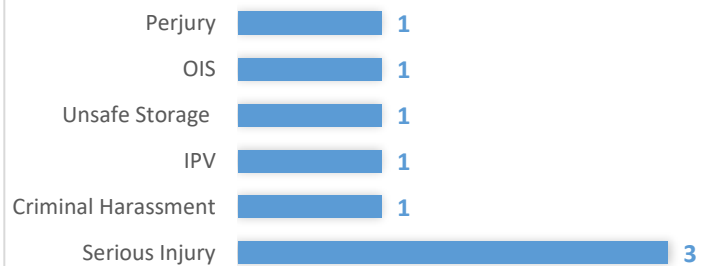
- Affected Person Non-participation
- Investigation
- Screened out (No Mandate)



Of the 41 notifications received by SIRT-NL, eight resulted in a full investigation being initiated. 28 notifications were screened out after a preliminary fact gathering exercise determined that they did not fall within SIRT-NL's mandate. Five notifications resulted in a file closure, without investigation, because the affected person did not want their complaints investigated.

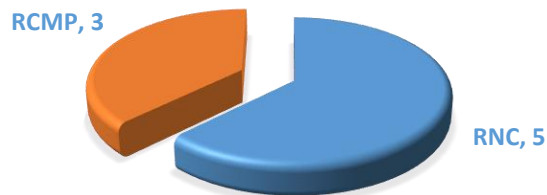
The subject matter of new investigations included serious injuries, criminal harassment, intimate partner violence (IPV), perjury, unsafe storage of a firearm and an officer involved shooting (OIS).

## INVESTIGATIONS BY TYPE



## INVESTIGATIONS BY POLICE AGENCY

One investigation involving an RCMP officer resulted in a charge of dangerous driving being laid.



## Opportunities and Challenges

SIRT-NL continues to operate in an environment where independent oversight, transparency, and timely investigations is expected. Ongoing public and police awareness of SIRT-NL's mandate contributes to sustained levels of notifications, requiring continued alignment of resources to ensure timely and effective responses.

The complexity of SIRT-NL investigations is increasing. Matters frequently involve significant volumes of evidence, including digital and video materials, as well as multiple participants. While this supports thorough investigations and well-informed decision-making, it can create pressures on timelines and investigative resources. Continued refinement of investigative practices and engagement with national oversight partners supports the consistent delivery of high-quality outcomes.

Effective oversight depends upon maintaining strong and professional working relationships with policing partners. Ongoing cooperation from the RNC and the RCMP supports timely notification of serious incidents and access to necessary information. Maintaining these relationships, while preserving SIRT-NL's independence, remains an ongoing priority.

There are opportunities to further enhance public awareness and understanding of SIRT-NL's role and processes. Continued communication and outreach can help ensure that individuals affected by serious incidents, and the public more broadly, have clear and consistent information about SIRT-NL's work.

SIRT-NL will also continue to focus on maintaining appropriate staffing and expertise to meet operational demands. Supporting organizational capacity remains important to ensuring the continued delivery of independent, timely, and effective oversight.

## Financial Statements

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2026 (unaudited).

### 4.1.04. SERIOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

|                                             |                                      | Estimates      |                |                |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                             |                                      | Actual \$      | Amended \$     | Original \$    |
| 01. Salaries                                |                                      | 339,503        | 338,500        | 338,500        |
| Operating Accounts:                         | Employee Benefits                    | 4,387          | 4,400          | 4,000          |
|                                             | Transportation & Communications      | 12,308         | 21,200         | 26,200         |
|                                             | Supplies                             | 1,553          | 9,000          | 10,500         |
|                                             | Professional Services                | 24,489         | 35,400         | 61,400         |
|                                             | Purchased Services                   | 4,212          | 8,500          | 8,500          |
|                                             | Property, furnishings, and equipment | 979            | 2,000          | 7,000          |
| 02. Operating Accounts                      |                                      | 47,924         | 80,500         | 117,600        |
| <b>Total Serious Incident Response Team</b> |                                      | <b>387,427</b> | <b>419,000</b> | <b>456,100</b> |

## Contact Us

### Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT-NL)

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