



Serious Incident Response Team

**Annual Report
2024-25**

Message from the Director

Civilian led oversight of the investigation of serious incidents involving the actions of a police officer is integral to maintaining public confidence in policing and an important component in the administration of justice in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In my role as Director, I am pleased to submit the Serious Incident Response Team – Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL) annual report covering the period from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. I have prepared this annual report pursuant to the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, which classifies SIRT-NL as a Category 3 Entity.

In preparing this annual report, I have considered the strategic directions of the Provincial Government as communicated by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. As Director of SIRT-NL, I hereby acknowledge my accountability for the preparation of this report, pursuant to the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, and the achievement of the objective and indicators set out herein.

As required by the provisions of the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**, an Investigative Summary (Director's Report) is published at the conclusion of each full investigation which is released to the key stakeholders in those files. In the interest of transparency, each report is also made available to the public via SIRT-NL's website.

SIRT-NL is honoured and privileged to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and will continue to work diligently in building and maintaining public trust and confidence through investigative excellence, independence, and transparency.



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**;
- 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 JPS'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 2024-25, SIRT-NL operates with a budget of \$474,800.

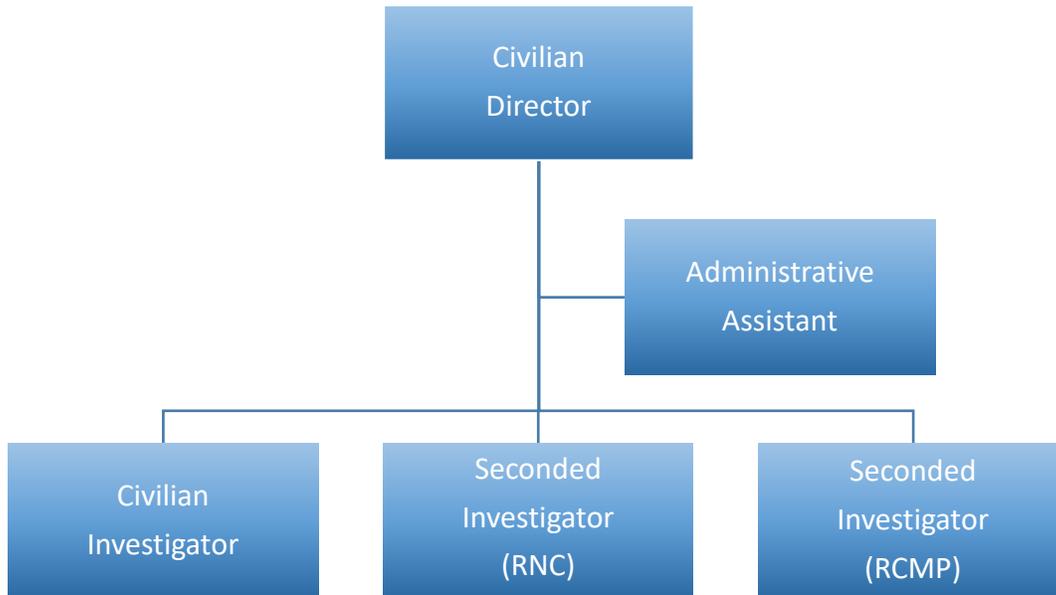
Employees and Location

The SIRT-NL office is located at 26 Kyle Avenue, Mount Pearl, NL. As of March 31, 2025, 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 JPS, 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

As part of its commitment to collaboration and best practices in civilian oversight, SIRT-NL actively participates in the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE). CACOLE is a national non-profit organization that brings together oversight professionals from across Canada and internationally to advance the principles of transparency, accountability, and impartiality in law enforcement oversight. In 2024, SIRT-NL was represented at the CACOLE annual conference held in Calgary, Alberta, from May 27 to 29, where delegates engaged in discussions on emerging oversight challenges and shared innovative approaches to investigative excellence. Additionally, SIRT-NL participated in the Heads of Agency meetings in Ottawa from October 29 to 30, fostering interprovincial dialogue and strengthening partnerships among oversight bodies. SIRT-NL also maintains representation on CACOLE's volunteer Board of Directors, ensuring that Newfoundland and Labrador's perspectives contribute meaningfully to national oversight initiatives.

SIRT-NL has continued building upon and maintaining relationships with both provincial police forces. These relationships are important for the proper functioning of SIRT-NL and maintaining public trust and accountability. A positive relationship facilitates transparent and impartial investigations, ultimately enhancing public confidence in policing. SIRT-NL will continue to foster its relationship with both police forces by strictly adhering to a practice of investigative excellence along with conducting investigations which are fair and independent.

SIRT-NL also maintains contact with the RNC Public Complaints Commission. While SIRT-NL is not a public complaints body, it investigates serious incidents potentially involving police misconduct. Public complaints can and have been a source of information for SIRT-NL investigations, which focus on death, serious injury, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

Strategic Issue

Issue: Investigating serious incidents that have arisen from the actions of a police officer in Newfoundland and Labrador as defined in the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**.

As required by its enabling legislation, SIRT-NL conducts 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. SIRT-NL has jurisdiction over both policing agencies in Newfoundland and Labrador, the RCMP and the RNC.

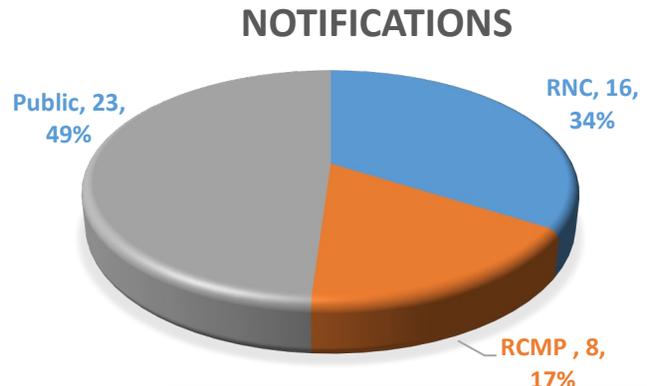
In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, SIRT-NL will report on the results of its objective and indicators in its Annual Reports, which will be prepared for each year of the 2023-26 Activity Plan. SIRT-NL has considered the strategic directions the Provincial Government in the development of this report and SIRT-NL will focus on achieving the below objective and indicators. The objective and indicators are consistent for the 2023-26 planning period and the indicators will be reported on for each fiscal year.

Objective: By March 31, 2025, SIRT-NL will respond to notifications of serious incidents as per the **Serious Incident Response Team Act**.

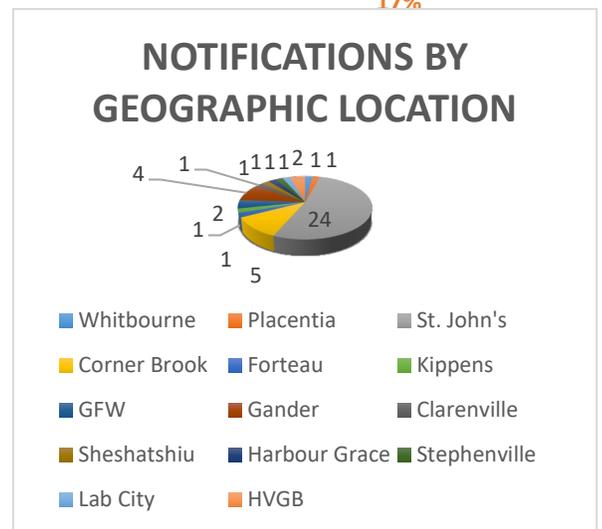
Indicators	Results
Number of investigations directed.	Ten investigations were directed in 2024-25.
Number of investigations concluded.	Nine investigations were concluded in 2024-25.
Number of investigation summaries released.	Five investigation summaries were released in 2024-25.

Additional Breakdown of Activities

During the 2024-25 fiscal year, SIRT-NL received 47 notifications of potential serious incidents. Of these notifications, 16 were provided by the RNC and 8 were provided by the RCMP. Members of the public submitted 23 notifications.



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

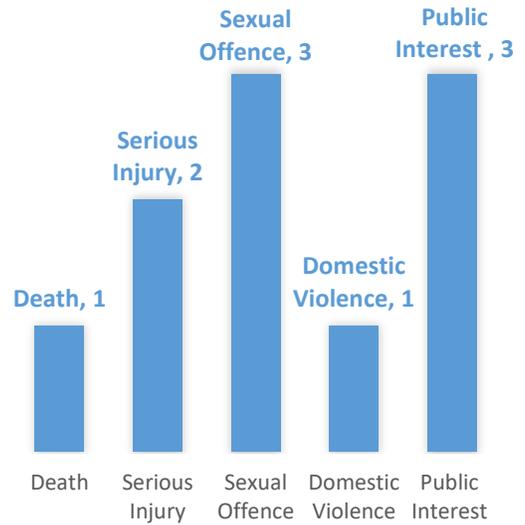


Of the 47 notifications received by SIRT-NL, 10 resulted in a full investigation being initiated. 35 notifications were screened out after a preliminary fact gathering exercise determined that they did not fall within SIRT-NL's mandate. One notification resulted in a file closure, without investigation, because the affected person did not want their complaint investigated. The remaining notification is awaiting information from the affected person to determine whether an investigation will proceed.



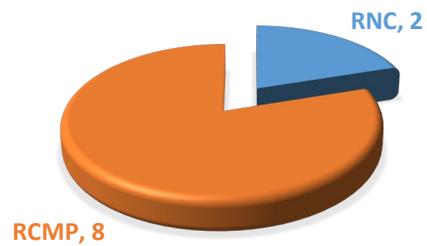
The subject matter of new investigations included a death, serious injuries, sexual offences, domestic violence, and public interest cases.

INVESTIGATIONS BY TYPE



It is noted that one of the RCMP investigations involves a historic sexual assault alleged to have been committed by a now retired RCMP officer. There were no charges laid by SIRT-NL this past fiscal year.

INVESTIGATIONS BY POLICE AGENCY



Opportunities and Challenges

SIRT-NL has made significant efforts to promote community awareness and understanding of SIRT-NL's mandate and protocols, SIRT-NL initiated a wide-ranging marketing campaign and engaged extensively in community outreach. SIRT-NL will build upon this strong foundation and will continue to seek opportunities for community outreach. This will include examining interactions with stakeholders and conducting targeted outreach where it would benefit those agencies in which SIRT-NL interacts.

Both provincial police forces have been advising SIRT-NL of serious incidents involving their members and providing information in a timely manner which is essential to ongoing investigations. SIRT-NL will continue to foster relationships with both police forces by strictly adhering to a practice of investigative excellence along with conducting investigations which are fair and independent.

SIRT-NL was also involved with the CACOLE this past year. CACOLE is dedicated to advancing the concept, principles, and application of civilian oversight of law enforcement throughout Canada and abroad. SIRT-NL intends to remain active in this organization which will provide an excellent opportunity to collaborate, share experiences, and best practices with other jurisdictions.

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, 2025 (unaudited).

4.1.04. SERIOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

		Estimates		
		Actual \$	Amended \$	Original \$
01. Salaries		351,333	351,400	337,200
Operating Accounts:	Employee Benefits	4,639	4,900	4,000
	Transportation & Communications	16,053	25,200	31,200
	Supplies	9,010	9,000	13,500
	Professional Services	200	24,900	71,400
	Purchased Services	5,677	8,500	8,500
	Property, Furnishings, and Equipment	379	500	9,000
02. Operating Accounts		35,958	73,000	137,600
Total Serious Incident Response Team		387,291	424,400	474,800

Contact Us

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