

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary

Public Complaints Commission

ACTIVITY PLAN

2007 – 2008

Message from the Commissioner:

The Royal Newfoundland Public Complaints Commission is pleased to submit its activity plan for the fiscal year 2007-2008.

I have prepared this plan in accordance with the provisions of the Transparency and Accountability Act which classifies the Commission as a Category 3 Government Entity and requires of it the preparation of performance-based plans every three years.

This enclosed plan has been prepared following consideration of the strategic directions of the Department of Justice and none are applicable at this time. To accommodate the transition phase for compliance with the Act, this plan covers only the fiscal year 2007-2008. As required, a subsequent plan will be forwarded anticipating our activities for the following three fiscal years, 2008-2011.

My signature below is indicative of the Commission's accountability of this Plan, as well as for the achievement of objectives contained therein.



John Rorke,
Commissioner

Overview:

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commission operates pursuant to Part III of the *Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Act, 1992*. The sole Commissioner is appointed by Government and serves on a part-time basis, hugely supported by a team consisting of a full-time manager, a half-time secretary, and investigators and adjudicators who provide services as required on a contractual basis. The Commission functions as an independent, quasi-judicial body. The Commissioner and the adjudicators make considered and reasoned decision at arms-length from Government, and the Commission is required by Section 39 of the *RNC Act* to report at least annually to the House of Assembly.

The Commission operates with a budget of approximately \$200,000 from adequate St. John's facilities located in a commercial office building with unlimited day-time public access. The location is visibly removed from the precincts of Government and the forts of the RNC. Our suite includes a large room furnished and equipped for the conduct of public hearings.

The Commission provides civilian oversight to public complaints made against the conduct of members of our Provincial police force, and offer redress by appeal to members of the public or police officers who are dissatisfied with the disciplinary decisions of the Chief of Police.

The process made available by the Commission is designed to be a user-friendly avenue for the public expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of police officers employed by the Province. The Commission is normally reactive, acting on written and signed complaints from persons claiming to be adversely affected by the police actions. Occasionally the Commission may independently make recommendations to the RNC respecting matters of concern or interest to the public relating to police services.

Primary Clients:

The Commission serves members of the public who are affected by the conduct of members of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, providing them with a public avenue to voice their dissatisfaction about conduct unbecoming to RNC members of all ranks which is improper or liable to discredit the force.

In turn, we provide to those same police officers an avenue of appeal of decisions made and disciplinary measures meted out by the Chief of Police in response to the public complaints.

Mandate:

The mandate of the Commission is dictated by statute, Part III of the *Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Act, 1992* and the Regulations made there under; the

decisions of the panel of adjudicators, and decisions of the law courts arising directly from appeals of the decisions of the Commission and its adjudicators; as well as decisions affecting the governance of administrative bodies generally.

The Commission's mandate is to investigate, hear and decide complaints from the public alleging unbecoming conduct on the part of members of the RNC which is liable to discredit the force and bring it into public disrepute. A second equally important role is to process appeals made by RNC members who have been subjected to internal discipline as the result of a public complaint and are themselves dissatisfied with the decision made or the punishment meted out by the Chief of Police or his delegate.

The role of the Commission is to receive and maintain a registry of all complaints received, and to ensure that they are all advanced and concluded appropriately and in a timely manner.

Vision:

An environment where the public has access to established mechanisms of review of complaints concerning police conduct.

Mission:

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commission, as a Category III Government Entity, has the options of adopting the Department of Justice Mission indicating how it contributes to that mission, or developing its own mission. The Commission is an arms-length entity from the Department of Justice and, therefore, it is not appropriate to adopt that Mission Statement.

Given this, the intent of the mandate, and that this transition plan is for a one year period, development of a mission with measures and indicators would be redundant of the objectives which are already developed in the current activity plan. At the time of developing a multiyear plan (2008-2011) the RNC Public Complaints Commission will give further consideration to developing its own mission statement.

Values:

The Commission strives for excellence in providing high standards of professional service to all persons engaged in its process.

At the core of our activities are these guiding values:

Transparency: Each person communicates openly to ensure a fair and just process.

Independence: Each person ensures the independence of this office by acting in an unbiased, neutral manner in the delivery of their duties.

Fairness: Each person strives for consistency in their approach to clients.

Confidentiality: Each person is committed to safeguarding the confidentiality of private information obtained and entrusted to them in the conduct of their work.

Enhanced Access to Information to the RNC Public Complaints Commission:

In consideration of Government's strategic directions and those of the Department of Justice, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commission found that a key issue for fiscal year 2007-2008 is our method of obtaining information. More specifically, it has been identified that our accessibility by the public could be greatly enhanced.

Goal: By March 31, 2008 the RNC Public Complaints Commission will have enhanced access to information for its clients.

Measure: Enhanced access to information.

Indicators: Updated forms
Updated website information
Forms made available on the website