

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

24 February 2025 / 24 février 2025

Submitted by / Soumis par:

**Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police
d'Ottawa**

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

**Deputy Chief Paul Burnett, Community Police Command / Commandement de la
police communautaire
BurnettP@ottawapolice.ca**

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-24-04 – MAJOR EVENTS AND
DEMONSTRATIONS**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À L'ENQUÊTE I-24-04 - ÉVÉNEMENTS MAJEURS ET
DÉMONSTRATIONS**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Service Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMENDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de service de police d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

INQUIRY

1. Determination of Staffing Needs for Major Events

- What factors does the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) consider when determining staffing needs for major events and demonstrations?
- What role, if any, do event-specific risk assessments and after-action reviews from past events play in adjusting staffing assumptions for future major events?

**2. Major Events and Demonstrations: Data and Costs (September 1, 2023 –
August 31, 2024)**

- How many major events and demonstrations were policed by OPS during this period?

- How many officer hours were dedicated to these events, including regular hours and overtime?
- What was the total cost to OPS for policing these events, including overtime and external assistance from other police services?
- How many arrests and fines were issued during these events?
- What revenue streams (e.g., federal/provincial funding, paid duties) contribute to covering these costs, and how much do they represent relative to the total expenses?
- What is the scope of these revenue streams, and which events qualify for federal or provincial funding?
- What criteria does OPS use to determine whether an event qualifies as a paid duty?
- For events designated as paid duty, what costs, if any, are still borne by OPS?
- Have there been observed trends in the number of officers volunteering for paid duties?
- Please provide a breakdown of all the above data by event type, including recurring events (e.g., weekly Palestine protests), major annual events (e.g., Canada Day, Panda Games), and other categories of major events.

3. Impact on Proactive Policing and Resource Allocation

- How does the mobilization of resources for major events affect proactive policing efforts?
- Which proactive units, in addition to Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRTs) and Community Police Officers (CPOs), have been mobilized for major events?
- How many hours have CPOs and NRT members spent away from their regular duties to police major events?
- What are the current staffing levels of each Neighbourhood Resource Team compared to the required levels?

RESPONSE

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) has an extensive history of managing many major events and recognizes the importance of effective resource allocation and public safety during these occasions. Over the years, OPS has developed and updated policies, procedures and training to adapt to the evolving landscape of major events and demonstrations. This evolution is based on lessons learned, operational reviews, and after-action reports. Currently, OPS is working to improve its data collection related to major events and demonstrations. This response outlines the factors considered when

determining staffing needs, the role of risk assessments and after-action reviews, and provides data on major events and their associated costs.

Determining Staffing Needs:

OPS employs a structured approach to determine the appropriate staffing levels needed for major events and demonstrations based on public safety, efficient resource allocation, and minimal disruption to the community. The primary factors influencing this decision include:

- **Risk Assessment and Intelligence Gathering:** Each event undergoes a risk assessment and intelligence evaluation to anticipate potential risks and threats. Intelligence gathering and analysis play a pivotal role, informing decisions about public safety and operational strategies. This includes assessing social media activity, identifying potential threats from extremist groups or individuals, and understanding the broader geopolitical or social context.
- **Event Size and Location:** The number of participants and the event's location affect resource needs. Events in urban areas or close to critical infrastructure require additional officers for crowd control, traffic management, and police liaison teams.
- **Historical Context:** Understanding past events and demonstrations on similar topics or organized by the same groups provides valuable context for anticipating behaviors, identifying logistical challenges, and making necessary adjustments.
- **Nature and Objective of the Event:** The event's purpose, whether it entails a peaceful assembly, protest, march, or rally, is evaluated, alongside any potentially contentious issues that may heighten tensions. This includes the event's theme, expected speakers, and affiliations with known organizations.
- **Potential for Escalation:** Events anticipated to escalate due to ideological conflicts or counter-demonstrations are treated with heightened caution.
- **Known Security Threats:** OPS collaborates with law enforcement partners to identify specific threats, such as extremist groups or individuals, and examines any social media activity suggesting possible disturbances.
- **Crowd Composition and Behaviors:** OPS evaluates the anticipated crowd, which may include evaluating mobility concerns or tendencies toward disruptive behavior. For example, events with more militant participants may require a stronger visible presence.
- **Staffing and Special Units:** Based on the risk level, OPS assesses the need for specialized units such as the Public Order Unit, Evidence Gathering Team, Tactical, Hand Off Team, and Police Liaison Team.

- **Role of the Police Liaison Team:** The PLT's work is instrumental in determining staffing needs. Their engagement with event organizers provides critical insights into the organizers' intentions, the event's planned routes, and their reliability in ensuring a peaceful demonstration. Successful collaboration with the PLT often leads to more precise resource allocation and reduced operational challenges.
- **Logistical Requirements:** Evaluating logistical needs, including barriers and technical equipment such as remotely piloted aerial systems (RPAS) and ear protection, contributes to staffing determination.
- **Community Impact and Public Safety Needs:** OPS considers the impact on local residents, businesses, and traffic, aiming for minimal disruption while maintaining public order in officer deployment.

Role of Risk Assessments and After-Action Reviews

Event-specific risk assessments and after-action reviews from previous events play a significant role in shaping future staffing assumptions. These evaluations provide valuable data that allow OPS to:

- Identify trends and patterns in public behavior during various types of events.
- Adjust staffing needs based on historical successes or challenges
- Enhance preparedness for events with similar characteristics, ensuring strategies are informed by past experiences.

Specifically, OPS uses event-specific risk assessments to meet with various OPS teams and external partners during the IECT (Integrated Event Command Table) and evaluate anticipated threats, crowd behavior, and resource demands. These assessments guide real-time decision-making and resource allocation. Additionally, OPS uses event-specific After-Action Reviews (i.e., post-event debriefs or 'hot washes' and after-action surveys) to provide critical feedback on what went well, what could improve, and specific lessons learned. We analyze elements such as the effectiveness of staffing levels, crowd control strategies, and public messaging. These findings are then incorporated into staffing assumptions for future events to enhance OPS readiness and response efficiency continuously.

Data Related to Major Events and Demonstrations (September 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024)

Between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024, OPS was deployed to 22 major events and 404 demonstrations. Six of the 22 major events were deployed by paid duties, and the rest of the events and demonstrations were staffed with either on-duty resources or off-duty officers on overtime. Out of these major events and

demonstrations, there were 7 investigations resulting in two arrests, 21 criminal charges, and 2 Provincial Offence Notices.

Costs

OPS receives Federal funding from the National Capital Extraordinary Policing Cost (NCEPC) program to offset costs associated with OPS deployment. This funding is intended to assist with Canada Day, Remembrance Day, National Demonstrations, Special Events and Vigils, Visits from Royals, Heads of State, and Dignitaries outside of the Major International Event Security Cost Framework, Conferences, Labour Disputes, Federal Landmarks, Institutions, and Institutions and events of national significance. The 2020-2025 program allows the OPS to recover up to \$14.25 million¹ based on the following annual limits: 2020-21: \$2.25 million; 2022-2023 to 2024-25: \$3 million per program year (\$12 million total).

The total cost of policing these events, including external requests for assistance, is not readily available. Calculating it would require dedicated personnel from the Event Management and Finance Sections. To address this, we are developing a structured process to systematically track and report all related costs, including officer deployment by rank, overtime, vehicles, logistics, and planning. This system is expected to be fully implemented by end of Q1. The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) provided public order assistance on several occasions, and the Canada Day event involved police officers from various municipal police services in Ontario, as well as the OPP and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Paid Duties

Paid duty assignments serve to enhance public safety, comply with legislative requirements, and ensure financial accountability for the policing resources needed for various events and business activities. The OPS is currently working on a data project aimed at gathering more information regarding paid duty assignments and major events.

Activities eligible for paid duties include traffic control, mobility support, security (when OPS is not the primary security provider), escorts, film-related duties, short-notice events, special events, and priority events.

However, certain activities cannot be performed as paid duties. These include regular police services, primary security, security for employers or unions involved in labour disputes, bodyguard services, money escorts, and security at events likely to provoke confrontation between groups. Additionally, security at licensed commercial locations where alcohol sales are the primary source of income (e.g., bars, clubs, taverns) is

prohibited unless approved by the Paid Duty Sergeant. Exceptions may be made based on public safety or security concerns.

Officers can sign up for paid duties voluntarily and can withdraw their name from an assignment at any time. Consequently, some significant events do not qualify for paid duty assignments but may qualify for overtime (e.g., Canada Day and Remembrance Day). Overtime assignments allow OPS to compel members to work based on a General Order, as these large events require various specialty units that cannot be mandated through paid duty assignments.

The current paid duty contract rates include an administrative percentage to help cover the program's operational costs. This administrative fee is charged only upon the completion of a contract. Thus, while the Paid Duty office undertakes considerable work to process contracts and schedule officers and vehicles, a cancellation by a client that prevents officer payment results in no administrative fee being collected. In 2023, the Paid Duty office processed over 3,300 contracts for off-duty policing services.

In fall 2023, a survey was conducted to gauge officer interest in paid duty assignments. Many officers expressed concerns about the lower pay associated with paid duty overtime compared to operational overtime, highlighting the absence of shift premiums, responsibility pay, and the inability to bank paid duty overtime. Furthermore, the apparent abundance of operational overtime has reduced the number of officers available for paid duties, contributing to a general sense of burnout from low staffing levels in patrol. Consequently, OPS frequently faces shortages of officers willing to take on paid duty assignments for events like Ottawa Senators and Ottawa RedBlacks games. These shortages often necessitate client approval to offer "pay at rank" to attract officers above the rank of Constable for paid duty overtime.

Mobilization of Resources for Major Events and Proactive Policing

The mobilization of resources for major events and demonstrations significantly affects the Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) regular operations, particularly in proactive policing efforts. To manage these demands, OPS often relies on Neighbourhood Response Teams (NRT) and officers working overtime.

Therefore, while using NRT to help cover major events ensures adequate coverage for events, it introduces specific challenges that impact neighbourhood policing and officer welfare, including:

- **Reliance on Neighbourhood Response Officers (NRT)**
 - **Shift from Neighborhood Duties to Demonstration Support:** NRT officers are frequently reassigned to staff demonstrations, particularly

unplanned protests. Although this strategy utilizes officers with strong community relations and de-escalation skills, it compromises the NRT's core responsibilities in their assigned neighbourhoods. As a result, crucial issues in these communities—such as proactive problem-solving—are often neglected during major events.

- **Impact on Community Relations:** The temporary reassignment of NRT officers can weaken the relationship between these officers and the communities they serve. Residents and Councillors who rely on NRT engagement may feel the absence of these officers, potentially damaging OPS's community trust and rapport, especially in areas where NRT officers have built strong connections.
- **Heavy Dependence on Overtime Staffing**
 - **Strain on Officer Well-Being and Morale:** OPS often uses officers working overtime to staff major events, rather than drawing heavily from regular patrols and specialty units. While this approach allows for immediate staffing needs without leaving gaps in everyday policing, extensive overtime can lead to officer fatigue and burnout. Many officers struggle to balance work demands with personal time, negatively affecting their overall well-being and job satisfaction.
 - **Sustainability Concerns:** The heavy reliance on overtime raises questions about the sustainability of current staffing strategies. Continuous overtime demands can result in decreased alertness and job performance, potentially increasing attrition rates. OPS faces a challenging task of balancing adequate event security with the well-being of its officers.
- **Adjustments to Proactive Policing and Crime Prevention Efforts**
 - **Reduced Focus on Proactive Community Policing:** The reassignment of NRT officers to major events often leads to a decline in proactive neighbourhood policing activities, including foot patrols, crime prevention initiatives, and direct community engagement. This can result in an increase in lower-priority incidents in those neighbourhoods, as minor issues go unaddressed and may escalate over time
 - **Delays in Community Programs and Outreach:** Initiatives focused on neighbourhood safety, such as workshops, community meetings, and outreach programs, may be postponed, adversely affecting ongoing efforts to foster public trust and cooperation. Delays in these activities can undermine the effectiveness of OPS's long-term crime prevention strategies.

- **Impact on Traffic Enforcement:**
 - The reassignment of Traffic officers to support major events and demonstrations significantly impacts enforcement efforts. With resources diverted, proactive traffic enforcement operations—such as impaired driving checkpoints (RIDE programs), speeding enforcement, and other road safety initiatives—are reduced. This shift limits the unit’s ability to address ongoing traffic concerns, which can contribute to increased collisions, traffic violations, and community complaints about unsafe driving behavior. Balancing event-related demands with essential traffic enforcement remains a challenge, highlighting the need for strategic resource allocation.
 - **Operational and Logistical Adjustments to Manage Impact**
 - **Use of Support Staff and Civilian Resources:** OPS often deploys civilian staff to handle administrative roles, allowing officers to respond to front-line demands. While this alleviates some pressure, the roles filled by civilian staff are typically limited to those that do not require extensive law enforcement training or specialization, such as logistics and staffing support.

In addition to the Traffic Unit, which includes the Marine, Dive, and Trail units, the OPS has issued general orders that require deployment from the Professional Development Centre (PDC—the training branch), the Youth NRT, the Emergency Services Unit (ESU), and several investigative units. It is important to note that the deployment of the ESU leads to significant patrol shortages, as the ESU is primarily made up of part-time patrol officers.