



Quality Assurance Review Report - 2017

Policing Standards and Contract Management
Department of Public Safety



New Brunswick
Brunswick

Saint John Police Force

Overview

Pursuant to paragraph 1.1(2)(c) of the New Brunswick *Police Act*, the Minister of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) may establish a system of inspection and review of police forces. The *Policing Standards – New Brunswick* are issued as ministerial directives pursuant to subsection 1.1(3) of the *Police Act*. The Standards set out the police force Quality Assurance (QA) program in ORG 5 with the current QA Program in place since 2013. The system of inspection and review of police forces is conducted by policing consultants of the Policing Standards and Contract Management (PSCM) branch of the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

While the QA program follows a cyclical process, it is flexible enough to respond to any newly identified risk activities facing municipal police forces. The program examines facts and realities facing modern day law enforcement agencies to identify gaps as well as best practices.

Objective

The purpose of the QA review is to assess adequacy and effectiveness of the policing services provided by the police force by examining common risks to police agencies on behalf of the Minister.

The report is intended to summarize the data collected from the police force, analyze the findings, identify gaps, and present any recommendations and observations that could improve police service to the Director of Policing Standards and Contract Management.

Scope

The QA Program operates on an annual cycle beginning in the fall when the PSCM Director announces to the New Brunswick Association of Chiefs of Police (NBACP) those activities that are mandatory to risk. The 2017 risk activities announced were:

- Sex crimes investigations;
- UCR scoring (data integrity); and
- Community policing.

Members of the police force in collaboration with the PSCM review team conduct a fall risking exercise that examines the mandatory risk activities and any police force specific risks that could benefit from an examination.

In January police forces begin their reviews using either review guides created by the PSCM review team or developed by the police force. The police force can also employ any other review technique they deem appropriate. All documentation is submitted to the PSCM review team.

In the spring of 2018, the PSCM review team conducted an internal risking exercise to identify municipal police forces that will be scheduled for an on-site review.

This report serves as an overview of the police force QA program performance for the 2017 cycle to ensure the management of selected risk activities is in compliance with the *Policing Standards – New Brunswick*, the Municipal/Regional Police Forces Operational and Administrative Manuals (Operational Manual and Administrative Manual, respectively) and legal requirements. The PSCM review team monitors recommendations to completion.

A snapshot of the reviewed activities is summarized in this report (see table 2) and includes a rating based on the following scale (table 1).

TABLE 1	
Rating	Description
Needs Improvement (NI)	Practices and controls are not adequate to ensure the objectives are achieved effectively in this activity.
Meets Expectations (ME)	The activity's management meets current provincial policing requirements. Any issues/opportunities for improvement noted are not major in that they do not affect the ability to achieve its objectives.

Findings

TABLE 2 - Summary of findings		
NI	ME	Comments
Review by PSCM		
Community policing		
		SJPF deliver services at a contemporary/ contemporary plus level. The Chief follows an evidence-based community consultative approach supported by four police officers embedded in three parts of the city. Officers work with other agencies to advance services for city residents. <i>No recommendations</i>
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)		
		There is an assigned IPV coordinator and victim service referrals are always completed. The <i>Intimate Partner Violence QA checklists (P126)</i> , revised in June 2017, is not being used as per OPS 2.1 which is a provincial policy requirement. <i>See recommendations #1 and 2</i>
Sex crimes		
		Most investigations are conducted by the Family Protection Unit. SJPF has a dedicated full-time victim services coordinator. A review of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) on file conclusion and consistent use of the “occurred between” field in the records management system is warranted. ViCLAS submission is not always indicated on the investigative file. <i>See observation #1</i> <i>See recommendation # 3</i>
Exhibits		
		SJPF have a modern and well managed bond room. SJPF recently conducted an internal review of drug and currency exhibits. SJPF are guided by internal policies and accurately manage the exhibit chain of custody. Improvements should be made to address the timely disposal of found property. <i>See observation # 2</i> <i>See recommendation # 4</i>

Review by PSCM

Community policing

Objective:

To ensure that the police force responds to the needs of the community based on the principles of partnership, ownership and problem solving with a focus on delivering quality service. The police force will maintain an ongoing dialogue by working in collaboration with others for the purpose of remaining proactive and will strive to achieve a contemporary community policing service delivery model that is evidence based, flexible and responsive.

Findings:

The PSCM review team used their review guide as the evaluation tool. Appendix A of the guide describes the four levels of contemporary policing service delivery; SJPF deliver services at a contemporary and contemporary plus level.

The Chief places importance on an evidence-based approach to core policing functions that includes crime reduction and prevention. A dedicated four-person team consisting of a sergeant and three constables work out of three community offices in west, central and north ends of the city. The review team interviewed one of the three constables, participated in a tour of the city neighborhoods and interviewed two community resource specialists who work closely with SJPF delivering programs to reduce victimization.

SJPF employ a civilian crime analyst to develop evidence-based initiatives known to reduce crime. The analyst tracks chronic and prolific offenders and contributes to patrol strategies designed to interrupt criminal behavior by increasing police presence in crime hot spots.

Evidence of modern police approaches includes being fully engaged at the community level to address the drivers of crime in Saint John; mental health, poverty, employment, housing and literacy. The list of organized community based groups working with the police fills an entire page and includes the domestic violence community action group, a sex trade action group, a neighborhood action group, the West Side Police and Community Together (P.A.C.T.) and the group called One Change.

The police force has a strong partnership with mental health workers from the department of health. SJPF utilize social media with a news feed to keep residents informed. Youth at high risk and in contact with police are diverted where possible. SJPF has a dedicated traffic enforcement team and the police force is proficient in addressing impaired driving by drugs.

Intimate partner violence (IPV)

Objective:

To ensure that appropriate investigative procedures and established protocols are followed and documented and that where appropriate, charges are laid in cases involving intimate partner violence (IPV).

Findings:

The PSCM review team utilized their QA guide and matrix. They reviewed a sample of incidents; 29% of the files reviewed were not flagged within the RMS as per OPS IPV policy 2.1 issued May 2017 and revised April 2018. Consistent and accurate use of study codes informs the development of a coordinated, multi-agency risk management response to IPV and tracks New Brunswick's impact on reducing incidents of IPV. SJPF have an assigned IPV coordinator that submits quarterly statistics to the provincial government however if the incidents are not flagged the submitted statistics may be inaccurate and under reported.

IPV calls are high risk and first responder safety is paramount. SJPF always have more than one responder attending and response to these incidents is a high priority. Referrals to Social Development are made where appropriate and documented in the file; the SJPF Victim Services Coordinator is routinely involved in investigations. The IPV Operational Manual policy (2.1) and *Intimate Partner Violence Quality Assurance Checklist*, was initially released on June 20, 2017. The reviewers did not find any IPV checklists attached to the files as required by provincial policy. SJPF has an internal *Woman Abuse* policy effective September 24, 2014 that addresses all operational steps to be taken from receiving a call, dispatching, pre-entry considerations, immediate actions, investigations, injury and arrest.

Recommendation – PSCM # 1:

The Chief or delegate will ensure that all IPV files are flagged as per the *Policing Standards – New Brunswick OPS 8* and the *Intimate Partner Violence Operational Manual* policy 2.1.

Recommendation- PSCM # 2:

The Chief or delegate will ensure investigating officers and IPV coordinator are using the *Intimate Partner Violence Quality Assurance Checklist* as per the *Policing Standards – New Brunswick OPS 8* and the *Intimate Partner Violence Operational Manual* policy 2.1.

Sexual crimes**Objective:**

To ensure that appropriate investigative procedures and established protocols are followed, documented and where appropriate, charges laid in cases surrounding sexual crime incidents.

Findings:

The PSCM review team examined a random sample of SJPF 2017 sex crime investigations from the 1300 UCR series. Investigations are thorough and well documented with most of them being investigated by the Family Protection Unit. The Victim Services Coordinator is engaged and her involvement is documented on the file. There is no mechanism for the reader to easily determine whether a ViCLAS booklet is required or whether one has been completed and subsequently sent to ViCLAS. Very few of the sex crimes files reviewed indicated that a ViCLAS booklet had been completed and sent to the provincial coordinator. In those files where CCJS flag for Cybercrime was required, there is nothing on the incident report to indicate the file was flagged as such. Referrals to Social Development are consistently made. In all cases, attempts were made to interview the complainant, the victim,

the suspect and relevant witnesses including efforts to obtain all disclosure statements. Victims are kept updated on the status of the investigation.

Observation – PSCM #1:

Closer attention by senior reviewers of sex crime investigative files to UCR scoring, clearance of files and ViCLAS submission would improve quality of data.

Recommendation- PSCM #3:

The Chief or delegate will ensure that ViCLAS booklets are submitted to the provincial coordinator within 30 days and ensure criteria listed in the provincial ViCLAS policy is met as per the *Policing Standards – New Brunswick OPS 3* and the *ViCLAS Operational Manual* policy 3.15.

Exhibits

Objective:

To ensure articles seized or otherwise coming into police custody are properly reported, securely stored, and properly disposed of.

Findings:

The PSCM review team examined SJPF's exhibit handling practices using the PSCM review guide and matrix that included an examination of the bond room.

There are video cameras capturing the entrance to the bond room and within the bond room. The control of key entry is limited to the designated bond room custodians and their back-up. In an alcove outside the main bond room is a clean and well-stocked exhibit preparatory workstation and temporary lockers used to secure incoming exhibits. Gun ties are available for members use with seized firearms to ensure they are safe prior to being stored in the bond room. There are additional temporary lockers used solely for exhibits requiring analysis by the Forensic Identification Section (FIS). A small lockable refrigerator is used by investigators for exhibits needing to be kept cold until handled by the exhibit custodian of FIS.

SJPF's bond room was neat, clean, free of odor and well organized. One secure room within the bond room is environmentally controlled to handle drug exhibits. SJPF operates a modern bar-coding system to store and maintain evidence continuity of exhibits.

SJPF employs two civilian bond room custodians, one of whom has been doing the role for seven years. A drug and currency exhibit review was recently completed by SJPF Accounting Specialist with training in police exhibit room auditing. The Chief indicated he will continue periodic exhibit reviews throughout the year on an annual cycle.

The PSCM review team identified a random sample of exhibits for examination that included articles, alcohol, hazardous materials, found property, firearms and biological samples.

Hazardous materials such as gas and chemicals are sent to the Saint John Fire Department (SJFD) storage. These materials are disposed of by the SJFD or by FIS. FIS also handles the

storage and disposal of biological evidence. Liquor exhibits are disposed by two people and a liquor purge sheet is maintained. Firearms are stored legally within the bond room. On occasion the bond room custodian is not always able to visually determine if a new firearm exhibit has been made safe before being placed in the temporary/overnight lockers. Zip ties are available to members but the additional step of utilizing a trigger lock would be an important improvement. NWEST, FIS and an approved verifier are ensuring firearms are appropriately analyzed for potential involvement in a crime. Ammunition is stored separately as required through legislation.

The examination of found property reveals that there are exhibits in the bond room that date back many years. The *Found Personal Property Regulation - Police Act* sets out the requirements for dealing with found property which includes property with no apparent commercial value and some commercial value. The regulation states that the police force must make reasonable efforts to locate the owner of the found personal property; the review of this risk activity revealed that the attempt to locate the owner is either not occurring or not being documented. Items with some commercial value require additional considerations. Rarely should there be found property in a bond room dating back years. Found items that may potentially be exhibits related to a criminal offence should not be scored as found property.

SJPF uses the Naviline property subsystem to control the handling, storage and disposition of exhibits. There is currently no diary date or disposal review date in place for the destruction of exhibits. Incident reports are being concluded despite property being attached to the file. The bond room custodians review older exhibits as time permits to identify if an exhibit should have been disposed of but this process is both time consuming and inefficient. The bond room custodian should be made aware by investigators when exhibits are eligible for disposal. The PSCM review team notes that the disposal of exhibits and effective use of the disposal review dates within the RMS are areas that should be improved upon.

Observation – PSCM # 2:

The RMS exhibit sub system should be used to its full capacity by investigators to include completing the exhibit diary date / disposal review date for the destruction of exhibits.

Observation – PSCM # 3:

The use of a firearm trigger lock before placing firearm exhibits into temporary lockers reduces risk to bond room employees who need to handle the firearms for secure storage.

Recommendation - PSCM # 4:

The Chief or delegate will direct that a review be completed on found property in possession of the police force to ensure that the found property is disposed of and that going forward all found property is handled as per the *Policing Standards – New Brunswick SS 8*, the *Exhibits Operational Manual* policy 8.1 and the *Found Personal Property Regulation 86-76 - Police Act*.

Policing Standards and Contract Management (PSCM)

Quality Assurance (QA) Review Team

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