



## 3 Public Safety Broadband Network

### What is a PSBN?

A PSBN is a secure, high-speed wireless data network designed specifically for emergency responders and public safety personnel. It enables seamless communication and data sharing across jurisdictions during emergencies and routine operations, supporting the mission-critical voice and data services frontline responders rely on. Canada's first responders still depend on fragmented radio systems and commercial cellular networks that can fail or become congested during major emergencies and in rural, remote, and Arctic regions.

### Why Do We Need a PSBN?

Recent events, from the 2014 Moncton and Parliament Hill shootings to the 2020 Nova Scotia mass casualty, the 2022 James Smith Cree Nation attacks, Hurricane Fiona, and escalating wildfires and floods, have exposed gaps in communications that slow response, impede coordination, and put both responders and the public at risk. Other countries, including the United States and Australia, are significantly ahead of Canada in deploying PSBN-type networks, while FPT partners here have been studying the issue for over a decade.

### How Would a PSBN Be Implemented?

Research by FPT partners (through the Temporary National Coordination Office) and Defence Research and Development Canada has confirmed that a PSBN is feasible, cost-effective, and best delivered by leveraging existing 4G/5G infrastructure and a multi-operator model rather than building an entirely separate network. This approach treats the PSBN as mission critical national security infrastructure while avoiding the cost and delay of a greenfield build. International experience shows that using commercial infrastructure with priority access can cut costs by billions compared to a standalone network, while still delivering secure, resilient, and interoperable communications for public safety. A national PSBN would support RCMP contract and federal policing, enhance Arctic and northern security, and enable better coordination with municipal and Indigenous policing and emergency services, making it a nation building project on par with other strategic investments in transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure.

**Costing Analysis:** The estimated cost for a PSBN in Canada, based on leveraging existing infrastructure and multi-operator collaboration, is \$3 billion.

### Case Comparators:

- Australia:** In 2016, the Australian government estimated that building a dedicated network would cost \$6.2 billion over 20 years, while leveraging existing infrastructure would cost \$2.2 billion; a 2022 revised estimate reduced this to \$1.7 billion over 24 years.
- United States:** A 2010 estimate indicated a commercial model would cost \$6.5 billion over 10 years, compared to \$15.7 billion for a standalone network.

## NPF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commit an initial \$1 billion investment to launch the PSBN by leveraging existing infrastructure, focusing on governance, early coverage and hardening gaps (especially in rural, remote and Arctic regions), and initial user adoption, and endorse a total projected cost envelope of approximately \$3 billion, with federal partners directed to refine the phased infrastructure and investment profile (including cost-sharing with provinces, territories and other partners) and report back with a detailed plan.

### Who We Serve

From coast-to-coast-to-coast, the RCMP provides policing services at the community, provincial, territorial, and federal levels.

The RCMP is also the police service for approximately 550 Indigenous communities: 450 First Nations, 40 Inuit and 58 Métis communities.

Our Members serve many Canadians from about 700 detachments across Canada.

They also provide specialized services to over 500 law enforcement agencies and police and peacekeeping services to 27 countries.

### Canadians Support the RCMP

**76%** of residents in communities served by the RCMP are satisfied with their RCMP policing services

\*Pollara Strategic Insights, January 2025

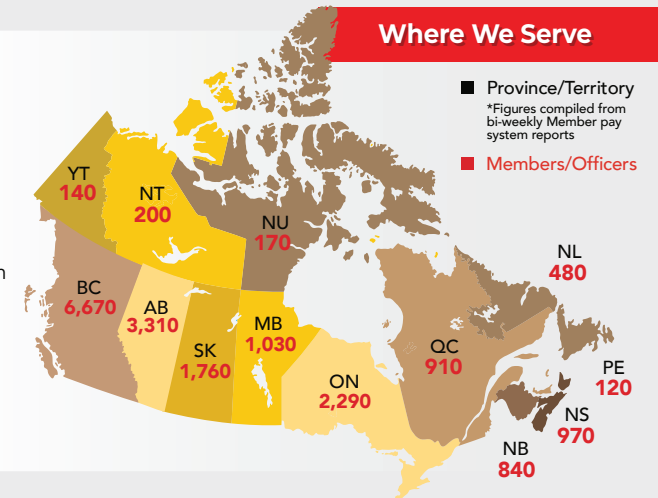
### Key Statistics

RCMP Occurrence Report – 2023 (rcmp-grc.gc.ca)

- 2.9+ million calls for service each year
- 127,000+ well-being checks
- 148,000+ Mental Health Act related calls

### Specialized Roles:

- Serious Crime
- Homicide Investigations
- Police Dog Services
- Crisis Response
- Emergency Response Team
- Border Security
- Human Trafficking
- Cyber Security
- Financial Crime



### About the National Police Federation

The National Police Federation (NPF) is the sole certified bargaining agent representing close to 20,000 Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) across Canada and internationally. The NPF is the largest police union in Canada. Our mission is to provide strong, fair, and progressive representation to promote and enhance the rights of RCMP Members and communities across the country.





# 1 Fixing RCMP Procurement

Canada's national police service is routinely left using expired or obsolete equipment because federal procurement processes are built for civil projects, not time-sensitive public safety needs. The RCMP's service pistol replacement has taken over a decade from lifecycle expiry to contract award, while comparable police services completed similar projects in under two years, and Members continued to carry sidearms and wear body armour beyond recommended lifecycles. Body-worn cameras have faced similar multi-year delays, repeated RFIs/RFPs, and fragmented lifecycle planning, driving up costs and leaving officers and communities exposed to avoidable risk.

**Across service pistol and body-worn cameras alone, procurement delays have cost Canadian taxpayers an estimated \$6.15 million in avoidable inflation, redundant tendering, and legacy maintenance costs.**

At the same time, the federal government has launched the Defence Industrial Strategy (DIS) to strategically manage military capabilities and procurement, with clear priorities, dedicated governance and tailored processes that deliver critical equipment more quickly and efficiently. Budget 2026 is an opportunity to expand that strategic, safety-first approach to RCMP and public safety procurement, so Members are never again left relying on expired gear.



## NPF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commit to establish a Public Safety Procurement Secretariat and a Public Safety Industrial and Procurement Strategy, parallel to the Defence Industrial Strategy, focused initially on RCMP equipment and scalable to other public safety agencies.
- Require that this Public Safety Industrial and Procurement Strategy be explicitly aligned with the Defence Industrial Strategy tools (e.g., "build-partner-buy" logic, capability road-mapping, industrial benefits), so that domestic policing equipment is treated as part of Canada's broader security and sovereignty toolkit, even if the RCMP is not formally placed under the DIS.
- Direct PSPC, Treasury Board and the RCMP to create an expedited procurement stream for safety-critical equipment (pistols, carbines, body armour, body-worn cameras and related digital systems) with clear service-standard timelines and risk-based oversight, modelled on the urgency and flexibility afforded to defence procurement.
- Mandate a standing-offer, lifecycle-managed model for core RCMP equipment (sidearms, carbines, armour, BWCs, vehicles and digital evidence systems), including National Master Standing Offers, interoperability requirements, and a continuous replacement plan so equipment is renewed before expiry, not years after.

# 2 1,000 New RCMP Sworn Positions

Budget 2025 acknowledged that Canada's national police service needs more federal policing capacity to tackle transnational organized crime, money laundering, financial and cybercrime, foreign interference, and growing threats in the Arctic and along our borders. It committed \$1.7 billion over four years to hire 1,000 new RCMP personnel between 2026-27 and 2030-31, described as expanding frontline federal enforcement "where Canadians need it most." Since then, the RCMP and federal government have indicated that only 750 of these positions will be Regular Members (RMs), with the remaining 250 classified as public servants, even though the work is clearly law enforcement in nature and require police authorities.

The RCMP has struggled to meet its obligations in contract policing, federal policing, and national security simultaneously, and any reallocation of existing Members into "new" roles through lateral transfers should not count towards the "new" 1,000 officers. This risks diluting the impact of the investment and repeating the cycle of "robbing Peter to pay Paul" by backfilling critical gaps with lateral transfers instead of truly expanding capacity.

To deliver the enforcement impact Budget 2025 promised, particularly against sophisticated financial crime, cybercrime, and foreign interference, Canada needs more sworn officers with police authorities, not more administrative capacity. Expanding and modernizing the Special Constable (S/Cst) program is a practical, fiscally responsible way to achieve this. S/Csts are law enforcement support roles that carry police authorities but operate on a different training, deployment and compensation model, allowing the RCMP to attract highly specialized talent (e.g., financial crime, cyber, Arctic and critical infrastructure security) without forcing them through a full general-duty pathway that can erode niche skills. This approach would both honour the commitment to 1,000 new sworn positions and align with the federal government's emphasis on Arctic sovereignty by ensuring deployable sworn capacity, not public service positions, can respond to emerging threats across Canada, including in the North.



## NPF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commit that all 1,000 positions will be sworn law enforcement roles (RMs and S/Csts), and not public service positions, so that the additional capacity has the authorities required to disrupt organized crime, financial crime, cybercrime, and foreign interference.
- Direct the RCMP and Public Safety Canada to expand and modernize the Special Constable program as a core policing tool, including a tailored recruitment stream for specialized skills (financial forensics, cyber, and complex fraud), a reformed training model that preserves specialized expertise, and clear deployment pathways into federal investigative units.
- Require transparent annual reporting to Parliament on progress toward hiring the full 1,000 sworn positions (broken down by RMs and S/Csts), their deployment by function and region, and confirmation that growth has not been offset by reductions in contract policing or other core RCMP mandates.

