
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Province invests in specialized, rural police services

VICTORIA – The Province is taking action to deliver stronger public safety services to protect people in urban, rural, and remote communities across B.C. through new funding that will help specialized units and rural police forces staff up and help keep streets safer for everyone.

As part of the Safer Communities Action Plan, the Province is enhancing investments in core police funding that will sustain and strengthen enforcement and crime prevention capacity throughout British Columbia.

The funding will ensure adequate and effective levels of policing and law enforcement, particularly in rural, remote and Indigenous communities, and in a wide variety of specialized teams that investigate and prevent complex, violent and organized crimes. The funding will also provide support to prosecutors and probation officers with respect to violent, high-risk offenders.

“Everyone deserves to feel safe, and my government is working on every front to protect our communities and make them stronger,” said Premier David Eby. “As part of our Safer Communities Action Plan, we will help ensure that the RCMP can operate to its full capability to keep people safe. The actions today will help stabilize policing and provide our provincial police force with the staff resources they need to address public safety concerns head on.”

Through an investment of \$230 million over three years, the Province will tackle key public safety issues, including:

- filling long-standing vacancies in rural police detachments in communities of less than 5,000 people;
- allowing provincially funded regional RCMP units to reach their fully authorized staffing levels of 2,602 officers;
- hiring additional officers in specialized units, such as the major crimes section, the sexual exploitation of children unit, and the BC Highway Patrol. These units serve rural and urban communities throughout the province and can help alleviate some work of municipal police forces, freeing them up to focus on other crime; and
- creating a strong foundation to address anti-money-laundering recommendations from the Cullen Commission.

Staffing up these units will improve public safety by increasing the overall capacity of homicide and missing persons investigations where foul play is suspected, and deterring the causes of motor vehicle fatalities, such as speeding, distracted driving and impairment.

“This historic commitment to invest in core RCMP police funding is a massive undertaking that took two years to achieve,” said Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor

General. “Sustained core funding will provide a strong foundation for police resources, enabling the police to focus on violent crimes and other pressing public safety issues, while also actioning the implementation of the Safer Communities Action Plan and other public safety initiatives.”

Since 2017, government has taken steps to prevent money laundering and organized crime that fuels the toxic drug crisis by providing resources to police, reversing cuts to sexual assault centres, increasing crime prevention and victim support services funding, and making record investments in housing, mental health and poverty reduction.

Quick Facts:

- The Safer Communities Action Plan lays out concrete steps at the provincial level to make communities safer under two tracks: enforcement and intervention services.
- The plan improves co-ordination between law enforcement, community service organizations, justice system actors, health providers and people who are recovering from addiction and mental-health challenges in a collaborative, co-ordinated approach to address the issues people are seeing in their communities.
- The Safer Communities Action Plan also includes:
 - launching new repeat violent offender co-ordinated response teams, made up of police, dedicated prosecutors and probation officers;
 - expanding mental-health crisis response teams into more communities, so police can focus on crime and people in crisis are met early by health-care workers and community members; and
 - building public confidence in the prosecution system with new direction from the attorney general to prosecutors to implement a clear and understandable approach to bail for repeat violent offenders within the existing federal law.

Learn More:

To read more about the Safer Communities Action Plan, visit:

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/safer-communities>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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What people are saying about investments in core police funding

Deputy Commissioner Dwayne McDonald, commanding officer, BC RCMP, Surrey –

“We wholeheartedly welcome this unprecedented multi-year investment in the provincial RCMP budget, as it will have a direct impact on delivering public safety to the communities we proudly serve. This commitment from the provincial government provides funding that addresses a number of growing financial pressures and ensures that key areas within our provincial business line, such as core policing, investigative services, emergency deployments, specialized provincial units and programs, proactive community outreach, and training will receive critical support. The funding increase also signals a strong commitment to our police officers and employees who work tirelessly to keep our communities safe.”

Jen Ford, president, Union of B.C. Municipalities, Whistler councillor –

“Today’s announcement is excellent news for communities and will strengthen policing services throughout the province. Local governments have been calling for renewed provincial investment to restore RCMP staffing levels, and this commitment will achieve that goal. Increased resources for specialized units will also provide critical support to municipal police forces by targeting complex and organized crime. These new measures support work hand-in-hand within the Safer Communities Action Plan to provide a comprehensive renewal of protective services in our province.”

Leonard Krog, mayor, Nanaimo –

“Community safety and security is top of mind for people in Nanaimo. We are glad that the B.C. government is investing in the safety of our community and the safety of nearby towns by ensuring the RCMP detachment is fully staffed and serving the people in our region. As a medium-sized municipality with more than 102,000 people, we will benefit from the regional resource, BC Highway Patrol and provincial specialized investigative team increases, which means faster response times for people in trouble, for businesses in need and for reviving public confidence in our public-safety system.”

Mike Hurley, mayor, Burnaby –

“This foundational investment in community safety will provide the police with the resources they need to keep people safe here in Burnaby and across the province. From faster response times to being able to recruit more diverse officers, this investment will have an immediate positive impact on our growing city.”

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