



Office of the
Police Complaint Commissioner

British Columbia, Canada

Monday, December 3, 2012

**AUDITOR GENERAL RELEASES REPORT
ON AUDIT OF THE POLICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM AND
THE OFFICE OF THE POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSIONER**

Victoria – Today the Auditor General released his audit of the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner and police complaint system to the Special Committee to Inquire into the Use of Conducted Energy Weapons and to Audit Selected Police Complaints.

In his report Auditor General John Doyle states:

My office concluded that police complaints are being processed in compliance with the Act. The complaints and investigations we audited were found to be well-documented and comprehensive – providing sufficient evidence that complaints are respectfully addressed and that all investigations are conducted in a thorough manner. We observed that none of the complaints we reviewed were treated as trivial.

The audit report went on further to conclude:

The Auditor General has concluded that, overall, police complaints are being managed in compliance with the Act. The Commissioner promotes thorough and competent investigations of police complaints by exercising discretion as provided by the Act, and the OPCC has taken steps that are consistent with the Act to increase public awareness of the police complaint process.

Police Complaint Commissioner Stan Lowe appeared before the Committee today and stated:

I can confidently advise the Committee that to date there has been a cultural shift in terms of a demonstrated willingness amongst the executive management in policing and police unions and associations to accept the authority of civilian oversight...

... I hasten to add, there is still work to be done to ensure this cultural shift continues and the gains in terms of police acceptance of oversight are sustained over the long term.

Stan T. Lowe,
Police Complaint Commissioner

5th Floor, 947 Fort Street,
PO Box 9895, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, British Columbia, V8W 9T8
Tel: (250) 356-7458 / Fax: (250) 356-6503

Background

On May 13, 2012, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia had appointed a Special Committee to Inquire into the Use of Conducted Energy Weapons and to Audit Select Police Complaints. The Auditor General of British Columbia was appointed by the Special Committee to conduct the audit which was to be completed prior to January 1, 2013.

In the Committee's Terms of Reference the Auditor General was appointed to audit the outcome and resolution of randomly selected complaints and investigations. The Audit Objectives and Scope were to answer the following questions:

1. Are police complaints addressed in compliance with the Police Act ("the Act")?
2. Does the Police Complaint Commissioner promote thorough and competent investigations of police complaints by exercising discretion as provided by the Act?
3. Has the Police Complaint Commissioner taken steps consistent with the Act to ensure increased public awareness and to ensure complainants are treated fairly and receive proper assistance when making complaints?

The Auditor General's Report made the following key findings:

KEY FINDINGS

- Police complaints are being addressed in compliance with the Act.
- The Commissioner promotes thorough and competent investigations of police complaints by exercising discretion as provided by the Act.
- The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner (OPCC) has taken steps consistent with the Act to ensure increased public awareness of the police complaint process.

Media Contact:

Rollie Woods
Deputy Police Complaint Commissioner
Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner
250-356-7912