



OFFICE OF THE
POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSIONER

British Columbia, Canada

NEWS RELEASE

June 13, 2022

OPCC 2022-21776

OPCC Orders Independent Investigation into BC Municipal Undercover Program Training Course

Victoria – The Police Complaint Commissioner has initiated an investigation pursuant to the *BC Police Act* into the conduct of 19 police officers from the Abbotsford Police Department, Vancouver Police Department, New Westminster Police Department, Delta Police Department, Surrey Police Service, Saanich Police Department, Metro Vancouver Transit Police and Victoria Police Department.

Due to the number of municipal agencies involved in this matter and the serious nature of the alleged misconduct, the OPCC has employed an infrequently used provision in the *Police Act* to seek the appointment of one or more Special Provincial Constables to complete this investigation independent of any BC police agencies. Special Provincial Constables must be appointed by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. The Independent Investigations Unit (IIU) of Manitoba has been identified as the investigating agency and arrangements between the provinces are being finalized.

Background:

Based on information received by the OPCC, a number of concerns were identified during a BC Municipal Undercover Training Course on May 2, 2022, that included participants from BC municipal police and other agencies. The conduct was reported to the BC Municipal Chiefs of Police by the RCMP who had officers present in an observer role. It was then reported to the OPCC and an order of investigation requested.

The actions of some municipal police officers while performing various physical acts and activities in some of the scenarios, caused concern that their actions could be defined as

Clayton Pecknold
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

potential misconduct under the *Police Act*. The nature of the allegations includes serious and concerning conduct performed in front of course supervisors and other course participants. The scope of this investigation will include municipal police officers who were candidates as well as municipal police officers in supervisory positions. Chief Constable John Lo of the West Vancouver Police Department has been appointed as the Discipline Authority.

Please note that at this stage these allegations have not been proven. While the matter is underway the OPCC will not be making any further comment.

About the OPCC

- The Police Complaint Commissioner is a civilian, independent Officer of the Legislature overseeing complaints, investigations and discipline involving municipal police in British Columbia. For more on the OPCC, visit <https://opcc.bc.ca/about-us/>
- Investigations into all forms of police misconduct and resulting disciplinary processes are performed by the police themselves under the independent, civilian oversight of the OPCC. The OPCC has the power to direct investigations be completed by Special Provincial Constables, who are appointed by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- The OPCC has the authority to provide investigative advice and direction to ensure investigations are thorough and complete.
- Senior ranking police officers are required under the *Police Act* to make determinations regarding the investigation and discipline of police officers alleged to have committed misconduct.
- At certain stages of the complaints process, the Police Complaint Commissioner can appoint retired members of the judiciary to act as a check and balance of decisions made by the police.
- In 2019 a Special Committee of the Legislature recommended the Commissioner be given the authority to appoint a Retired Judge earlier in the complaint process. To date that recommendation has not been acted upon by government.

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Media Contact: Andrea Spindler, Deputy Police Complaint Commissioner
1-250-356-7458

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