



OFFICE OF THE
POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSIONER

British Columbia, Canada

NEWS RELEASE

November 17, 2025

2024/2025 Annual Report

OPCC's Annual Report shows growth in police complaints, investigations, and use of early resolution of complaints

Victoria – The total number of files opened by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner (OPCC) grew by nearly five per cent, investigations increased by 10 per cent, and the use of early resolution spiked last fiscal year according to the office's 2024/2025 annual report tabled in the Legislature today.

"Our data shows that the demand for OPCC oversight continues to grow -a trend we expect will persist as our mandate expands, both as a complaint oversight body and as a catalyst of systemic change," said Prabhu Rajan – B. C's Police Complaint Commissioner. "In response, we have focused on improving efficiencies and achieved a remarkable 89 per cent increase in files resolved through complaint resolution. This approach strengthens public trust in policing by avoiding lengthy investigations and fostering constructive dialogue by bringing parties together to resolve issues, provide healing for complainants, and create learning opportunities for officers."

Awareness and accessibility to the complaints process is also key to improving how the OPCC supports public confidence in police. "We must be responsive to the needs of British Columbians in their expectations of civilian police oversight, and we are grounding our efforts with an intentional commitment to listen, learn, and then act," added Commissioner Rajan.

Recognizing the importance of independent reviews of police misconduct, the office has increased its referral of matters to retired judges when in the public interest including cases involving uses of force on marginalized people, treatment of persons in custody, and sexualized misconduct in the workplace. "This power is essential to maintaining public confidence in the oversight system, ensuring that decisions are impartial, transparent, and free from institutional bias," said Commissioner Rajan.

As part of the OPCC's commitment to transparency and accessibility of disciplinary decisions resulting from the police complaint process under the *Police Act*, the annual report includes substantiated allegations of misconduct such as abuses of police powers, neglect of duty, and conduct that would discredit the reputation of the police agency.

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Additionally, the OPCC launched its [Discipline Decisions Digest](#) last year which allows anyone to search through substantiated allegations of misconduct and corresponding disciplinary measures for the 15 municipal police agencies that fall under the OPCC's jurisdiction.

About the OPCC:

- The OPCC is a civilian, independent office of the Legislature overseeing complaints, investigations and discipline involving municipal police in British Columbia.
- The OPCC operates independently of government and police and may accept complaints from the public or independently order investigations into allegations of police misconduct. The *Police Act* also requires the Commissioner to order a mandatory external investigation into any police-involved incident resulting in serious harm or death.
- The Police Complaint Commissioner may appoint retired judges as discipline authority and to conduct reviews and adjudications.
- The Police Complaint Commissioner may call public hearings, refer matters to Crown Counsel for consideration of prosecution and make recommendations to police boards or to government regarding policies, practices or systemic issues that may contribute to the misconduct.
- In 2024, amendments to the *Police Act* expanded the mandate of the OPCC, granting the Police Complaint Commissioner the authority to conduct systemic investigations in the public interest. Following an investigation, the OPCC will provide recommendations where needed to prevent police misconduct, prepare and release public report(s), and inform the public and other interest holders of findings.
- The Police Complaint Commissioner is required under the *Police Act* to publish an [annual report](#) each year.

A backgrounder follows.

Learn More:

For more information about the OPCC, visit: www.opcc.bc.ca

Background

Additional statistics of note from the 2024/2025 year include:

- Total number of police complaints received reached a five year high with Vancouver Police Department, Victoria Police Department, and the Surrey Police Service receiving 71 per cent of complaints. More than half (53 per cent) of total files opened were registered police complaint files – the most resource intensive files for the OPCC.
- With the prioritization of early resolution processes for complaints, almost 40 per cent of all admissible complaints reached a successful resolution.
- Half of all allegations of misconduct forwarded for investigation involved police abuses of authority, with the majority of those relating to excessive uses of force.
- The second highest category of misconduct, *Neglect of Duty*, involved failures to comply with departmental policies, concerns related to inadequate investigations by police, unsafe operation of police vehicles, and failures to provide assistance or medical attention.
- Last year saw the highest percentage of misconduct findings (21 per cent), where two-thirds were resolved through a pre-hearing conference with the member accepting responsibility for their actions.
- Reportable injuries are at their lowest level in five years with significant decreases seen in injuries resulting from the use of less lethal options such as the ARWEN/bean bag shotgun, Taser, and OC spray. Strikes, punches, kicks, and takedowns accounted for the highest proportion of injuries, followed by ARWEN/beanbag shotgun, and police dog bites.
- The number of Adjudicative Reviews increased from 15 to 27 in 2024/2025 and, in part, reflects key changes to the *Police Act* in 2024 allowing the Commissioner to order a public hearing or appoint a retired judge earlier in the complaint process if considered to be in the public interest.

Examples of substantiated allegation found in the annual report's appendix include:

- **Vancouver Police Department** - Upon request from the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), the Commissioner ordered an investigation into the conduct of a VPD member. It was reported that the member, who was a supervisor and senior male member, was engaged in a sexual relationship with a junior female member and had not disclosed their relationship as required by VPD policy. Allegations included having sex while on duty at the female member's home. During the investigation, the Commissioner determined it was in the public interest that an external police agency conduct this investigation and designated an external Discipline Authority. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Discipline Authority found that the member appeared to have

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committed misconduct. A prehearing conference was offered and accepted. After reviewing the prehearing conference report, the Commissioner did not approve the proposed disciplinary or corrective measures and as a result, the matter proceeded to a discipline proceeding where the member admitted to the allegations (with some exceptions). The member subsequently resigned from the VPD. Despite his resignation, the member's service record of discipline will reflect dismissal (the highest penalty available) from the VPD.

- **Victoria Police Department** – The OPCC received a complaint about two members of the Victoria Police Department (VicPD) during a traffic stop in which the complainant was the passenger. The complainant reported they were, without reasonable grounds, arrested and searched on suspicion of drug possession for the purpose of trafficking. The OPCC reviewed the complaint and determined that an investigation was required. At its conclusion the Discipline Authority found the members did not commit misconduct. After reviewing the investigation and the Discipline Authority's decision, the Commissioner determined there was a reasonable basis to believe that the decision was incorrect in relation to the allegations of Abuse of Authority. The Commissioner appointed a retired Provincial Court Judge, to act as an adjudicator to review the matter and arrive at his own decision based on the evidence. The Adjudicator found that one of the two members did not commit misconduct but also found an appearance that the other member committed misconduct by arresting and searching the complainant without good and sufficient cause and imposed discipline. As allowed under the *Police Act*, the member requested a Review on the Record. The Commissioner reviewed the request and the disciplinary decision and determined that further review was not required and that the discipline imposed of a four-day suspension for the unlawful arrest and a one-day suspension for the unlawful search of the complainant. In addition, the member was directed to undertake counselling to determine why the misconduct occurred and to prevent its recurrence.
- **Surrey Police Service** - At the request of the Surrey Police Service (SPS), the Commissioner ordered an investigation into the conduct of an SPS member who, while off-duty, was stopped by a Delta Police Department (DPD) member and provided a breath sample that resulted in a "Fail" reading on an Approved Screen Device. This resulted in a 90-day Immediate Roadside Prohibition being issued. The member was also driving with an expired driver's license and identified themselves as a police officer to the investigating DPD member while making numerous requests to be released with a warning only. At the end of the investigation, the Discipline Authority found the member appeared to have committed misconduct. A prehearing conference was offered and accepted by the member but after reviewing the prehearing conference report, the Commissioner did not approve the proposed disciplinary or corrective measures as they were not considered to reflect the seriousness of the misconduct. As a result, the matter proceeded to a discipline proceeding where the member admitted to the allegations. The Discipline Authority imposed a five-day suspension without pay in relation to driving while impaired, a written reprimand in relation to driving with an expired driver's license, and a three-day suspension without pay (to be served concurrently) in relation to seeking preferential treatment. The Commissioner reviewed the outcome of the

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discipline proceeding and determined that a Review on the Record was necessary in the public interest as the disciplinary or corrective measures proposed by the Discipline Authority still did not reflect the seriousness of the misconduct. The Commissioner appointed a retired BC Supreme Court Justice to act as an Adjudicator and arrive at their own decision on disciplinary and corrective measures based on the evidence. At the review on the record, the Commissioner and the member made a joint submission on appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures which was accepted by the Adjudicator and resulted in a five-day suspension without pay for driving impaired, a two-and-a-half day suspension for driving without a valid license to be served consecutively and a written reprimand for requesting special treatment.

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