

Spotlight Report

**Policing of Protests and
Major Events: Public
Order Maintenance in
Ontario**

**Inspection of
Ontario Police Services
and Police Service
Boards for years 2023-
2024**

Ryan Teschner

Inspector General of Policing of Ontario
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Table Of Contents

Message from the Inspector General of Policing of Ontario	4
This Spotlight Report.....	9
Ontario's Inspector General and the Inspectorate of Policing	10
Our Inspection	12
Acknowledgments.....	13
Methodology for this Inspection	13
Changes to Ontario's Policing Legislation	15
Key Highlights	16
Promising Practices and Recommendations	19
Our Findings.....	22
Police Service Board Policy.....	22
Recommendation 1:.....	24
Police Service Agreements.....	24
Recommendation 2:.....	27
Chief of Police Procedures	28
Recommendation 3:.....	29
Recommendation 4:.....	31
Recommendation 5:.....	33
Recommendation 6:.....	35
Recruitment and Training	36
Recommendation 7:.....	37
Equipment	38
Recommendation 8:.....	39
Recommendation 9:.....	40
Deployment	40
Recommendation 10:.....	44
Recommendation 11:.....	45
Recommendation 12:.....	48
Promising Practices Towards Continued Improvement.....	49

Conclusion	53
Appendix A:.....	55
Contact Us	57





Message from the Inspector General of Policing of Ontario

Public order policing continues to be complex and is constantly evolving. Mass public events such as protests, demonstrations and riots have garnered significant public and media attention in recent years, often shining a spotlight on policing responses. In Ontario and across Canada, the volume and frequency of these events, and the ability to mobilize large groups of individuals with the ease of a smartphone, is on the rise. Whether the events are reoccurring celebrations or domestic and international protests, all of these events require adequate responses from police to maintain public order, consistent with Ontario policing legislation and Canadian legal norms. This ‘Spotlight Report’ is an example of how the Inspectorate of Policing (IoP) works to fulfill its mission of making everyone in Ontario safer. Through this report, the IoP acknowledged and profiled areas that work well within Ontario’s public order policing system, while identifying ways to drive improved performance.

Striking the balance between public order maintenance and democratic rights and freedoms

In some cases, – such as the 2022 anti-COVID-19 mandate protests – domestic or international incidents create moments where the natural tensions inherent in a democracy can surface. These events reveal deep division within communities and oftentimes pose a risk to public safety. These public events can also be dynamic, unpredictable, and rapidly evolve, requiring police officers to make on-the-spot decisions to reconcile different rights, including those protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The way police services respond greatly impacts public trust in policing. On the one hand, if the police rely too heavily on their coercive powers, many Ontarians’ rights and freedoms can suffer. On the other hand, if the police do not apply their public order maintenance powers effectively and on time, public safety, the economy and civil society can suffer. The balance can be easy to articulate in theory, but difficult to apply in practice.

Navigating this delicate balance between competing rights and safety needs is essential to prevent escalation and ensure public safety in mass gatherings that require a public order response. In potentially escalating situations, officers must be able to rely on

well-established governance policies, operational procedures, training in both operational practices and the effective application of the law, and tools that can be deployed appropriately. Recent and ongoing events in Ontario and across Canada have highlighted the importance of continuing to ensure that Canadian, provincial, territorial and municipal laws strike the most responsive balance between the public's freedom of expression and assembly and the right of others to conduct their activities safely. Given the increasing quantity and complexity of public order events in Ontario, I recommend in this report that the Ministry of the Solicitor General engage its provincial, territorial, and federal counterparts to review the legal framework governing protests.

It is time to get real about the resource demands and impacts of public order maintenance policing in a democracy

The impact of these events on police resources, budgets and the officers who engage in this serious work are now more significant. For example, the 'Freedom Convoy' in 2022 is estimated to have cost \$1 million per day, with \$800,000 for policing alone.¹ It has been publicly reported that the Ottawa Police Service incurred a total of more than \$55 million in costs associated with the policing of those protests.²

More recently, between October 2023 and April 2024, demonstrations related to the Israel-Hamas war surpassed \$12 million in policing costs, with more than 500 demonstrations in Toronto alone.³ Last year, the Toronto Police Service responded to over 2,000 unplanned events – a significant portion of which was funded through premium pay (i.e., overtime).⁴ Recurring events in other areas of the province, such as unsanctioned St. Patrick's Day gatherings, result in policing deployment needs that incur significant costs. For example, the Waterloo Regional Police Service incurred \$318,000 for the three-day St. Patrick's Day event.⁵ The demand for public order maintenance in Ontario continues to rise, with no signs of slowing down.

Police are tasked with facilitating the freedoms of those that participate in these events, while ensuring the safety of the communities around them. Police services must be adequately resourced to meet this societal imperative. Despite police service boards

¹ Joanne Chianello, "Protest Has Cost City of Ottawa More than \$30M," CBC news, February 23, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-protest-demonstration-cost-city-1.6361367>.

² These include costs associated with regular, overtime and statutory holiday hours for Ottawa Police Service members; costs associated with provision of direct supports to the City of Ottawa and loss of revenues and economic support through the City of Ottawa; payments to external policing agencies for surge capacity resources; and Ottawa Police Service operational supplies, equipment, leased space and vehicle costs.

Public Order Emergency Commission, Institutional Report of the Ottawa Police Service, February 17, 2023, pp 21.

³ Of the \$12 million total cost, almost \$5 million was overtime costs.

John Marchesan, "Police Price Tag for Protests Surpasses \$12M", City News, April 5, 2024.

⁴ Toronto Police Service Board Meeting Public Agenda (April 10, 2025), Re: 2024 Operating Budget Variance for the Toronto Police Service, Period Ending December 31, 2024: <https://tpsb.ca/jdownloads-categories?task=download.send&id=865:april-10-2025-public-agenda&catid=32>, pp. 5-6.

⁵ Waterloo Regional Police Service Board Open Agenda, Chief of Police Reports 2024-098, <http://calendar.wrps.on.ca/Board/Detail/2024-04-17-1030-Waterloo-Regional-Police-Services-Board-of-Directo/4c557755-56c5-42da-b387-b150013b9f37>, April 17, 2024.

incorporating funds for public order maintenance and related supports, police budgets are struggling to keep pace with public safety demands given increases in the sheer volume, complexity and unpredictability of this police work. Even among Ontario police services with their own public order units, members are not dedicated full-time to public order work. Instead, they perform regular policing duties and are deployed to the public order unit as needed. This means that when they are called to public order duties, their regular tasks are left unattended, creating stress on frontline policing, criminal investigations, and other functions as one area receives attention while another suffers from a service gap. Additionally, prolonged deployments to public order units increase stress for individual officers as they juggle these responsibilities with their regular duties. In many cases, too, many police services rely on overtime work to fulfill their core function of providing adequate and effective public order policing.

I recognize the risk and complexity involved in the policing of protests, demonstrations and other events. I also recognize the skill and dedication of police officers from across Ontario that engage in public order maintenance. These officers are placed under increased strain, often stretched too thin when we need them the most. In turn, this can lead to fatigue and overall challenges when recruiting officers for this important function. These trends are not sustainable, and are realities that police chiefs, police service boards, local municipalities and the province must work to confront together. The well-being of those that do the difficult work of maintaining public peace must remain a priority. Adequately resourcing police services to maintain public peace during mass events – and to look after those that do that work – is the price we should all be prepared to pay in a democracy that values our freedoms and way of life.

The coordination of Ontario's public order policing needs to be formalized to ensure its long-term effectiveness and success

Public order events are often not confined to a single municipality, and are increasingly animated by provincial, national, and international issues. This reality requires an “all of us” approach to maintaining provincial public safety. Currently, 11 police services, including the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), provide public order policing across Ontario – meaning that 33 police services rely on another service to discharge this core element of adequate and effective policing. This places a significant demand on one quarter of Ontario police services. While the “some delivering for all” model may work for Ontario, its long-term sustainability must account for the financial and human resource impacts on the services delivering this policing function across the province.

The reality is that the scope and magnitude of public order events are taking on a new shape. This new shape makes it evident that public order policing is a whole-of-province priority and responsibility. With this responsibility, comes a need to open up important discussions on how to sustain the “some delivering for all” approach to public order

policing in the long-term. To maintain the highest level of public order policing provincially amid rising demand and complexity, we need to invest in it appropriately to ensure it is not stretched too thin. The price to pay for not paying for these resources is just too great, both in terms of what the public should expect, and what police officers should expect in terms of their health and welfare. In this report, I recommend formalizing and enhancing the mobilization structure for public order units – the ‘Hub’ model approach – so that it becomes a permanent fixture of public order maintenance in this province that drives strategic coordination and consistency of response in the overall provincial public order system. I also recommend initiating discussions between the public safety sector and the province on sustainable, long-term funding for the entirety of Ontario’s public order system. Increased collection and access to data, including demand analysis, must drive these resource-allocation discussions.

Police preparedness is essential for effective public order maintenance

In Ontario, every police service needs to plan for the way in which world incidents can create local impacts. Police services, governed by local police service boards, must maintain a constant state of public order maintenance readiness to ensure public safety is delivered in a lawful, professional, and effective manner, particularly when unpredictable mass gatherings occur in local communities. Effective policing in response to these events relies on credible intelligence and preparedness. With clear insights, police can approach these gatherings with informed planning and avoid overly reactive responses that can provoke public mistrust and tension, especially in the glare of cameras. Beneficially, police preparedness can also positively impact police officer wellness during fast-paced, high-pressure situations, which is often compounded by political and community pressures that unfold in real-time. My recommendations address ways in which police preparedness and insights into these types of events can be enhanced, ultimately for the purpose of ensuring the most relevant intelligence picture and risk assessment is available to police services that are to these sometimes fast-moving and demanding public order events. My recommendations also are aimed at creating not just consistency, but increased overall effectiveness in risk assessment and information-sharing across the Ontario policing sector, ultimately for the benefit of police services, their members, and the public they serve.

Approaching the new CSPA requirements for public order maintenance policing in Ontario

While governance and operational policies, processes and practices vary across Ontario police services and the boards that oversee them, maintaining public order is a core legislated requirement in Ontario. The Public Order Maintenance requirement that

previously existed under the now-repealed *Police Services Act* (PSA)⁶ and its revoked *Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Services Regulation*, now exist under the new *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* (CSPA),⁷ with specific requirements outlined in the new *Adequate and Effective Policing (General) Regulation*. These requirements came into force on April 1, 2024. The statutory requirements are designed to ensure that police services' Public Order Units (POU) possess the necessary ingredients to adeptly manage a range of situations and facilitate expressive rights alongside public order maintenance. In this report, I make various recommendations for police boards and police services to align their approaches with the new requirements under the CSPA to bring them into compliance.

My conclusion on the overall state of public order policing in Ontario

Following this inspection and based on its findings, **my conclusion is that the state of public order policing in Ontario is strong**. The legal and governance infrastructure that should surround POUs and their operational work is, generally, in place in the form of police service board policy and governance, Chief of Police procedures and direction, and operational planning processes. Ontario POUs have proven themselves to be generally responsive to emerging and evolving conditions, where they can deploy effectively in both planned and unplanned circumstances. This has led Ontario's POUs to establish a 'Hub model,' which allows multiple POUs from across the province to coordinate deployments on a larger scale.

There are also signs that the system is becoming stretched due to demand and complexity, and that this trend is increasing. Therefore, in this report, I have identified areas – **both in relation to compliance and long-term effectiveness – that the public order policing system in Ontario should focus on to improve its overall performance and strengthen Ontario's position as a national leader in this space**. Given my statutory responsibility to oversee adequate and effective policing in the province, the IoP will continue to monitor the operation of the public order system in Ontario, with a view to evaluating the system's ability to manage evolving demands and ensure the maintenance of public safety.



Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing of Ontario

⁶ Police Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.15,

⁷ Community Safety and Policing Act, S.O. 2019, c.1, Sched.1. <http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/19c01>

This Spotlight Report

In the context of more recent public order events across Ontario, the IoP chose to embark on an inspection of compliance with provincial Public Order Maintenance requirements, with a focus on POU requirements, by all municipal police services in the province, as well as the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). The inspection was conducted while the PSA remained in force. The inspection identified areas of compliance with the now-repealed PSA, as well as recommendations for improvement in some cases. Overall, we observed a significant rise in the demand for deployments of POUs in Ontario, a trend anticipated to continue, emphasizing the need for continuous provincial oversight to ensure consistent adherence to public safety standards across the entire province.

This is the IoP's first Spotlight Report, which places our inspection findings in a broader, Ontario-wide context. In this report, we highlight our findings as factors the policing sector can consider in improving policing performance and governance in relation to their public order maintenance functions and its delivery. The report only includes these factors as 'recommendations' because the inspection was not conducted under the now-in-force CSPA, which provides the Inspector General (IG) the authority to issue binding 'directions' for non-compliance. While our inspection primarily focuses on compliance with the requirements of the now-replaced PSA and regulations, **our goal in this report is to encourage the sector to apply still-pertinent findings to their work as they transition to Ontario's new policing legislation, under the CSPA, and to promote efforts towards continuous improvement.** Sharing the insights learned from this inspection is not only vital to the sector, but also in the interests of public transparency and accountability.

We are committed to publishing future Spotlight Reports to further develop the overall provincial picture of policing and police governance in various areas of interest to the policing sector, the government, and the public. We will shine a constructive light on any compliance shortfalls we discover, identify how to improve compliance overall, and promote leading and promising practices across jurisdictions so that Ontario can continue to distinguish itself as a leader internationally. Importantly, in line with the legislative commitment to transparency, and to enhance the public's understanding of key aspects of policing delivery in our province, all our reports will be publicly available on the IoP's website: www.iopontario.ca.

Ontario's Inspector General and the Inspectorate of Policing

In Ontario, now Chief Justice of Ontario's the Honourable Michael H. Tulloch's 2017 review of the provincial police oversight system provided recommendations on improving transparency, accountability and effectiveness in police service delivery and its oversight system. These recommendations, along with input from various sources including independent reviews, policing and police governance stakeholders, social services, and diverse Ontario communities, emphasized the need to modernize the laws that govern police service delivery in the province. This led to the establishment of the CSPA and its regulations, which came into effect April 1st, 2024.

The CSPA replaced the PSA– which was over 30 years old – and aims to ensure that policing practices remain responsive to contemporary challenges and community needs. One of the more significant elements of the CSPA is the new role of the IG, who is responsible for ensuring that adequate and effective policing and police governance is provided to all Ontario communities. The IG is supported by the IoP, an arm's-length division of the Ministry of the Solicitor General, created to provide the operational support necessary to fulfill the IG's mandate under the CSPA.

The IG's duties, powers and responsibilities are described in Part VII of the CSPA. The IG, supported by the IoP, serves the public interest by promoting improved performance and accountability in the policing sector, while ensuring compliance with the CSPA and its regulations. Under Ontario's CSPA, the IG is empowered to:

- Independently assess and monitor legislated policing entities;
- Provide advice and support to legislated policing entities on governance and operational matters by sharing evidence-based research and data related to performance;
- Monitor and conduct inspections of policing services, develop, maintain and manage records and conduct research to ensure compliance with the CSPA and its regulations;
- Investigate complaints concerning the delivery of policing services and the conduct of police service board members;
- Issue directions to ensure compliance with the CSPA and its regulations, and if necessary, impose measures if there is a failure to comply; and,
- Publicly report on the activities of the IG, including publishing inspection results and an annual report.



The IG is responsible for overseeing the following Ontario policing entities:

- Municipal police services and police service boards;
- Chiefs of Police;
- The Ontario Provincial Police and OPP detachment boards;
- First Nations OPP boards and First Nations police service boards that opt-in to the CSPA;
- Any entity providing policing by an agreement authorized by the CSPA;
- Any public sector body that may be prescribed to provide policing; and
- Organizations that employ special constables.

The IoP remains committed to engaging all these entities to consider the diverse needs of the public as we work to improve policing performance that makes everyone in Ontario safer.

The CSPA marks a pivotal step towards enhancing policing and police governance delivery in Ontario. By establishing the IG and the IoP, the CSPA ensures a modernized framework for oversight, accountability, and support of excellence in policing across the province. The IG and the professionals in the IoP are responsible for upholding the public interest, working to ensure that every person in Ontario feels safe in their community and has confidence in the policing and police governance they receive, regardless of who they are or where they live.

Our Inspection

Maintaining public order is a core legislated requirement for police services in Ontario. This requirement previously existed under the now-repealed PSA and its revoked Ontario Regulation 3/99 *Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Services* regulation,⁸ and now exists under the CSPA, with specific requirements outlined in the Ontario Regulation 392/23 *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)*,⁹ which came into force on April 1, 2024.

At the time of our inspection (May 2023 – February 2024), the PSA continued to be in force and therefore, this public order maintenance inspection was completed under the authority and requirements of the PSA. The CSPA has changed some of the requirements applicable to public order maintenance and POUs in Ontario. While the general delivery options of public order maintenance are fairly similar, the CSPA sets out more prescriptive standards and procedural requirements, along with more prescriptive requirements for entering into policing agreements with another police service board or the OPP, and the delivery of temporary assistance.

As with any inspection, the conclusions we reach represent the circumstances and context at a point in time – in this case, previously in-force legislation that has since been modernized. While the initial objective of the inspection was to determine technical compliance with the requirements at that time, the reporting phase of the inspection has been modified to highlight general themes that may support police service boards (the “boards”), police services (the “services”), Chiefs of Police (the “Chief”),¹⁰ and the OPP Commissioner as they transition to the new requirements set out under the CSPA.



⁸ O.Reg. 3/99: Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Services. <http://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/990003>

⁹ O.Reg. 392/23: Adequate and Effective Policing (General). <http://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/230392>

¹⁰ It should be noted that both the PSA and CSPA define “chief of police” as a chief of police of a police service maintained by a police service board or the Commissioner of the OPP and includes an acting chief of police.

Acknowledgments

The IoP thanks all boards, chiefs of police and the members of their police services in Ontario, including the OPP and the Commissioner, for their assistance and cooperation during this inspection process.

Methodology for this Inspection

The IoP's Policing Inspections Unit inspected all 43 municipal police services and the OPP for compliance with previously in-force Ontario Regulation 3/99 – *Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Services*, which at the time of the inspection, prescribed specific requirements that boards and chiefs, and the OPP Commissioner must fulfill.

The Regulation required police services to have their own POU, or instead of having its own POU, have this function fulfilled by the POU of another police service or on a combined regional, or co-operative basis among more than one police service.

The Regulation also set out the legal requirements for:

- board policy concerning POU (sections 18[1] and 29),
- Chief's procedures concerning POU (sections 18[3] and 19), and
- composition and training related to POU (sections 19 and 33[iii]).

To support boards and Chiefs with their understanding and implementation of these requirements under the PSA, the Ministry of the Solicitor General maintained the Policing Standards Manual (PSM) which contained sample board policies and guidance for chiefs in developing and maintaining their procedures. The samples and guidelines contained in the PSM highlight key components of governance policies and procedural steps that may be considered when undertaking a policing function, like public order maintenance. It is important to remember that the PSM was only a tool to assist, and that its guidance must be applied and adapted to reflect the needs of the community receiving policing services and its local context.

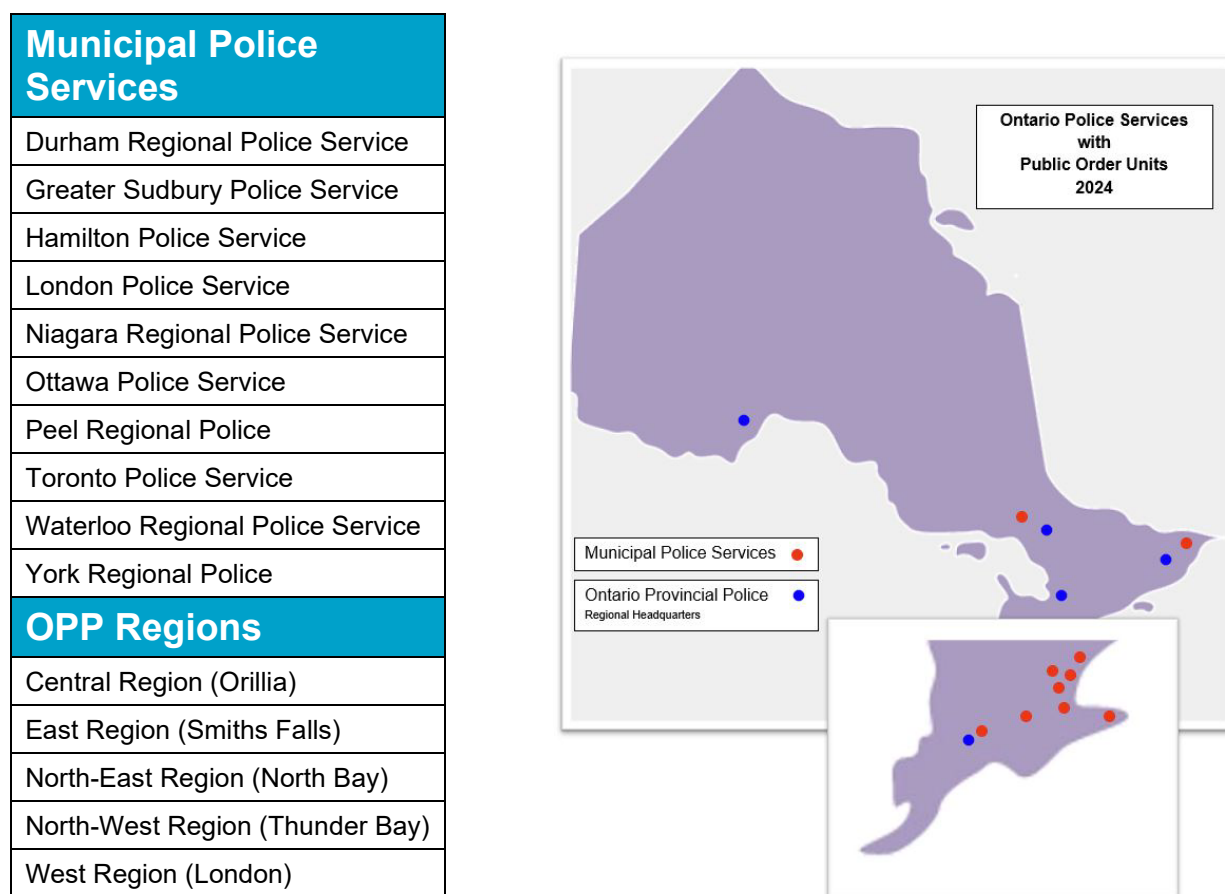
As part of the inspection, the IoP considered the extent to which ministry guidance on public order maintenance (PO-001) provided through the PSM was incorporated into the board policy, Chief's procedures, public order manual, training, and equipment. Ministry guideline content that did not address statutory or regulatory requirements was considered advisory in nature.

Commencing in May 2023, the inspection launched with two initial inspections of municipal police services that have their own POUs, and further expanded to the remaining 41 municipal police services and the OPP. The IoP also hosted three virtual

pre-brief meetings which were open to police services and boards that did not have their own POU to answer any questions with respect to the POU inspection.

Each inspection included an off-site review of relevant documents, such as board policies, chief's procedures, and where applicable, the police service's POU manual, training records, deployment records, and municipal agreements for sharing police services (which could be entered into between boards and/or the Commissioner under section 7 of the PSA, and now under section 14 of the CSPA). The Inspection also included an on-site component for the 11 police services that maintain their own POU. This included 10 municipal police services and the OPP, represented by all five of its operational regions:

Fig 1: Map of Ontario police services that maintain a public order unit



On-site assessments included interviews of board members and police service members, tours of police facilities, and checks of POU-issued equipment. The on-site inspections were generally one week in length, adjusting to accommodate operational needs of the police service when required. Each on-site inspection also consisted of a pre-brief with the Chief and/or their designated command staff, the board Chair or their designate, as well as a de-brief with the same individuals at the conclusion of the on-site inspection.

During the initial stages of the inspection, the IoP learned of the Ontario Public Order Hub model through the Ontario Public Order Advisory Committee (OPOAC), a subcommittee of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP). The Hub model is an initiative-taking approach to collaboratively coordinate planned public order deployments in Ontario and can also assist in coordinating deployments for unplanned POU events. The Hub model is an excellent example of the policing sector taking a leadership role in sharing resources, information and supporting the delivery of adequate and effective public order policing across the province. As the Hub model was outside the scope of this inspection, limited analysis was undertaken. However, the IoP can say that the Hub model does show promise with respect to coordination of POU response in Ontario and should continue to play this across-province coordinating role to support effective and responsive public order deployments.

Changes to Ontario's Policing Legislation

As stated, on April 1, 2024, the CSPA came into force, repealing and replacing the PSA. Public Order Maintenance requirements under subsection 11(1) of the CSPA are comparable to the old subsection 4(2) of the PSA.

Ontario Regulation 392/23 is the *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)* Regulation under the CSPA, and replaces the previous regulation of this type under the PSA. Here, it is important to note, the content with respect to Public Order Maintenance has changed. Police service boards and services will need to be mindful of these changes as they review and revise their policies and procedures. These changes are highlighted within the “Our Findings” section of this report and **Appendix A: Comparison of Legislative Requirements for Public Order Maintenance**.

In addition, and importantly, similar to section 7 of the PSA, section 14 of the CSPA allows for a board or the OPP Commissioner to provide a policing function in an area for which they have policing responsibility by entering into an agreement with another board or the Commissioner to provide that policing function. Under the PSA, and we expect now under the CSPA, these agreements will allow one police service to provide its public order maintenance resources to a police service that does not have this dedicated capacity in circumstances where that policing function must be delivered.

Key Highlights

1. In Ontario, POU deployments have increased 183.72 per cent between 2018 and 2022.

- There is a notable increase in public order deployments over the five-year period between 2018 to 2022 according to the data sample reviewed, as well as a continued increase in 2023 deployments, as revealed during the onsite interviews conducted during the inspection. Recent world events have had an unprecedented impact on the deployment of POUs¹¹.
- With the recent increased demands, police services that have their own **POUs are actively looking to increase complements to balance potential officer fatigue and strain on current resources.**

2. There were no situations where current POU resources – either from the ‘home’ police service or a cooperating police service – were unable to respond within a reasonable amount of time.

- The CSPA now expands the criteria for what is a “reasonable time” to deploy POUs. Boards and services – both those with their own POUs and those who rely on other services for POU resources – should **analyze these new requirements to determine what a ‘reasonable time’ for POU deployment should be locally**, in different sets of public safety risk circumstances, in accordance with the new CSPA factors. Ultimately, going forward, it is the IG who will determine if the reasonable time standards are met.

3. In Ontario, public order maintenance is delivered through 11 dedicated POUs, which are currently provided across the province by ten municipal services and the OPP.

- At the time of this inspection, one additional municipal police service was actively working towards creating their own POU to become the twelfth in the province. This leaves **32 municipal police services in Ontario that rely on another police service to deliver this function** through an agreement with another police service. Of those police services, **28 rely on the OPP for POU services when required, with the remaining three having an agreement with another municipal service.** Beyond these agreements, the CSPA allows Chiefs the ability to request temporary

¹¹ Under the former *Police Services Act*, POUs must be able to be deployed in a reasonable time. The now in-force *Community Safety and Policing Act* expands on this by requiring POUs to be able to be deployed in a reasonable time having regard to specific criteria that helps define the reasonableness requirement.

assistance in providing adequate and effective policing from another police service on an *ad hoc* basis, in the absence of such an agreement as required for events that may impact their resources (e.g., in April 2024, officials in Niagara Falls, Ontario were expecting up to one million visitors to witness a total solar eclipse directly over Niagara Falls¹²).

- This mechanism to access another police service's POU capacity on a temporary and *ad hoc* basis is particularly noteworthy for both the 28 police services that relied on the framework agreement with the OPP under the PSA, and those that sought the OPP's assistance outside of that agreement. For the years this report covers, 2023 and 2024, the OPP absorbed approximately 70% of the costs associated with its deployment of public order units to assist other police services. **The IoP was advised that the OPP is developing a new approach to assessing and evaluating the potential impacts of any new agreements on its ability to meet its own and others' demands.**
- **The 11 POUs in Ontario all met the minimum complement requirements as per the PSA.** Most services exceeded the minimum and had resources reflective of the size and needs of their communities. It was clear that many of the police services were in the process of selecting additional members to add to their public order strength to allow for increased demand, better down time, succession planning, and compliance with the new CSPA.
- With the addition of the twelfth police service, **every municipality that showed a need for deployments within the five-year window analyzed will have an operational POU.**
- As the demand for public order policing increases and is more complex in nature, there is benefit in exploring other potential service delivery, funding and deployment models over the short, medium and long-term to ensure Ontario's public order policing system remains responsive to public safety needs across a large and disperse geography.

4. The inspection discovered a few challenges with respect to POUs throughout Ontario.

- All Ontario police services staff their POUs by deploying police officers from their regular duties to this work as circumstances require. This model leads to increased strain on those officers who fulfill multiple functions, and results in other core policing functions – and the public that depend on them – suffering from gaps in service.

¹² Niagara Falls Solar Eclipse, "April 8th Solar Eclipse in Niagara Falls" <https://niagarafalls.ca/pdf/eclipse/cnf-solar-eclipse-important-information-businesses-detailed.pdf>.

- With increased POU deployments, **officer fatigue is an ongoing challenge for some police services** and in particular POU members. This has also led to some **challenges with general recruitment of prospective new POU members**.
- The IoP found examples of outdated and/or **minor inconsistencies between the Chief's procedure and the local board's policy**, including three instances where either a policy or procedure was not maintained in compliance with the Regulation. This reinforces the importance that boards and Chiefs regularly review their quality assurance process relating to compliance with the legislation.
- Five police services **did not have a debriefing process** as suggested in the Ministry of the Solicitor General's PSM guideline. While this guidance was advisory in nature under the PSA, the requirement has now been prescribed in regulation under the CSPA.
- There were three police services that **did not address the circumstances in which a POU should be deployed in their procedure** as required by regulation. This requirement continues under the CSPA.

5. Police services are actively transitioning to new legislative requirements under the CSPA.

- While this inspection was conducted under the PSA between May 2023 and January 2024, **the inspection notes consideration of, and progress underway by police services concerning the new requirements under the CSPA**. Whether delivering public order services to another jurisdiction, or receiving public order services from another police service, police service boards should pay particular attention to ensure compliance with the new requirements for policing agreements under section 14 of the CSPA.



Promising Practices and Recommendations

1. Ontario's Public Order 'Hub' model should be formalized and made permanent.

- The inspection noted an effective communication and coordination strategy throughout the province to mobilize public order deployments, known as the Ontario Public Order Hub. After the historic events in January of 2022 related to the Freedom Convoy, the OPP in collaboration with municipal police public order units, initiated the POU Hub model to ensure public order units could be concurrently deployed across the province in an integrated, strategic, and risk-based manner to prevent injury, preserve life, and protect critical infrastructure.

At the time of this inspection, the Ontario Public Order Hub included all 11 individual police service POUs within Ontario. These services are also represented at the OPOAC, a sub committee of the OACP. that meets regularly, and its members share recent public order experiences, best practices, upcoming service needs, and discuss how the various POUs can assist one another. We have learned that the success of the Hub model has generated interest by other police services outside of Ontario, including among the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

- To expand upon this success, the **IG strongly recommends that the current Hub model to be formalized and enhanced to ensure its long-term sustainability, effectiveness and permanence. This includes:**
 - The Ministry of the Solicitor General considering making the Hub model a permanent entity within Ontario's public order maintenance system, through amendments to the relevant Regulations under the CSPA.
 - Establishing clear Terms of Reference for, and a defined access path to the Hub that would enhance its operation and ensure ease of access for police services across the province; and,
 - Formalizing the responsibilities for the Hub within the OPP, with an OPP representative serving as its Chair, and retaining the discretion of each Hub member to accept or not accept a specific request for POU assistance.

2. A standardized Public Order Risk Assessment Tool should be developed to support effective decision making for public order deployments.

- An additional area of standardization that could continue to drive improvements is **the development of an overall public order risk assessment tool to be used by all police services across the province.**
- A consistent assessment tool used by all Ontario police services would assist in decision-making standardization across provincial POUs that considers risk levels and appropriate levels of response. The tool should be designed in a way that takes relevant local factors into consideration, but the overall approach to how POU deployments and risks are determined should be consistent across the province.
- **The IG strongly recommends that the Ontario Public Order Hub and the Ministry of the Solicitor General collaborate in the development of this tool. Once a tool is developed, the IG strongly recommends that its consistent use by police services become a compliance requirement under the CSPA's Regulations.**

3. Additional training offerings should be made to assist police officers who engage in Public Order functions.

- Following the conclusion of the inspection, the IoP became aware that additional training was being provided to officers about the historical and political reasons behind recent protests. The IG is supportive of this supplemental training, as it may assist with supporting policing approaches that are culturally sensitive that further support effective communication and management during public order events.
- In addition, **the IG strongly encourages police services to continually access and contribute to the continued development of training to assist police officers performing public order functions in properly applying the full range of existing provisions in the *Criminal Code*, provincial law, and municipal by-laws in circumstances where hate-based offences and other offences related to protests, demonstrations and occupations are occurring.** While much attention is paid to the hate speech provisions in the *Criminal Code*, there are a range of other offence provisions that police could apply in appropriate protest, demonstration or occupation situations (e.g., mischief to property; mischief relating to religious and other property connected to an identifiable group; blocking or obstructing a highway; disguise with intent to commit an indictable offence; etc.).

4. Specialized resources and technology should be further integrated into Public Order Response.

- Although it was not a focus, the inspection did note additional promising practices and resources utilized by Ontario's POUs:
 - Police Liaison Team (PLT) officers work with demonstration organizers or groups to maximize the peaceful facilitation of events. Police services that had PLT officers routinely expressed their value with regards to helping to manage public order events. This role was profiled during the 2022 Public Order Emergency Commission as being a front-facing tool to look at strategies, planning, and building front-end relationships with participants during demonstrations.¹³ The inclusion of a PLT, with consistent training in building trust, engaging demonstrators, and understanding crowd-dynamics could provide a valuable tool for intelligence and managing demonstrations to ensure lawful, peaceful and safe events. Given their promising results and the importance of their role, the **IG recommends that chiefs of police embed PLTs into their public order training to support their readiness for integration into public order responses, where appropriate.**
 - Most POU services had external partners such as Fire services, Paramedic services, and other medical professionals. Partnering with external emergency services and medical professionals required enhanced training but increased public and police safety during deployments. The police services that did use Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in particular spoke of their positive contributions to their POUs. **The IG is supportive of police services continuing to develop and enhance their partnerships with external emergency services and medical partners and recommends that Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) detailing the nature and expectations in these partnerships become a body of work that the Ontario Public Order Hub explore with these external partners, with assistance from the Ministry of the Solicitor General.** The IG also recommends to the Ministry of the Solicitor General that **these MOUs eventually become a compliance requirement contained in Ontario Regulation 392/23 *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)*.**
 - Finally, the inspection noted that POUs are utilizing a blend of new and old technology, with the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems to issuing fluorescent ball caps to their POU members on the ground, all with the aim to improve visibility and the management of POU operations.

¹³ Public Order Emergency Commission, "Interview Summary: Inspector Marcel Beaudin (Ontario Provincial Police), February 17, 2023, <http://publicorderemergencycommission.ca/files/exhibits/WTS.00000037.pdf>

Our Findings

Police Service Board Policy

Provincial Compliance Requirements

Section 18(1) of the PSA's Ontario Regulation 3/99 *Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Services* required a police service to have a POU, or instead of having its own POU, section 18(2) permitted a board to enter into an agreement to have the service of public order provided by another police service. Regardless of whether the police service maintains its own POU, Section 29 of the Regulation required a board to have a policy on POU services.

The ministry guideline, PO-001, included a recommended sample board policy for both contracted delivery of public order maintenance policing, or for a direct, combined, regional or cooperative delivery method. The sample policy included elements for the board to give direction to the chief on the method of POU services, composition, reasonable time for deployment, equipment, and training. Alternatively, where a board has an agreement to receive public order maintenance from another service, the sample policy suggests identifying the contracted board and including directions to the chief to establish procedures in consultation with the chief of the police service being contracted to provide the services of POUs.

The requirement for a board to have policies with respect to public order maintenance is continued, with modifications under the CSPA and its regulations, including the requirements that all board policies must be publicly posted.

The IoP's Findings

The inspection found that 10 board policies had not been reviewed or revised since they were initially created and/or had minor inconsistencies with the other documents, including board agreements or chief's procedures. Of that number, seven were boards that did not have their own POU and relied on a police service agreement under section 7 of the PSA.

Our inspection found that most boards appear to either copy the sample board policy from the PSM verbatim or had used a board policy from a comparable board. While the sharing and access of these templates is a good practice to drive some standardization and consistency for certain components (particularly as some boards do not all have full-time, professional policy staff) it does reveal risks of complacency and lack of oversight resulting in a policy that provides little or no relevant local governance direction to the chief. Put another way, to the extent that a board policy is legally

required to govern the operational decision-making of the chief, governance done this way is weak, at best. One example that may seem minor, but is illustrative, is a board policy that references the police service from which the policy was obtained, rather than naming the police service for which the board has governance responsibility.

Further, of the three board policies whose services maintain their own POU, the inspection found minor inconsistencies, mainly around the naming of their POU. For example, over the years, POUs have been renamed several times, such as Crowd Management Units, Public Safety Units, Public Safety Teams, among others. Some of the board policies referenced their services POUs by a previous name and not the name currently used. Again, while a minor issue on its face, this highlights deficiencies in the board's approach to reviewing, updating, and assuring the quality of its policies in providing appropriate governance to the Chief, and through them, to the service. Of course, where similar minor issues exist due to lack of regular review and updating of governance, the potential for a more significant governance gap to manifest becomes more probable.

In analyzing this further, the inspection noted that several of the board policies had a review date scheduled. However, upon further inquiry many of those policies had not been reviewed as per their schedule. It is essential that boards follow a process to review and update board policies on a regular schedule. However, despite these minor inconsistencies and/or lack of review, the issues identified did not appear to impact police operations as required under legislation.

Boards should have a process to continually review their policies with regards to updates that may flow from new or amended legislation, or in response to local issues and experiences that give rise to a need for governance reform. The Chief should be engaged and consulted in the board's policy-making work, as the governance infrastructure boards put in place through policy sets parameters on the Chief's operational mandate.

Recommendation 1:

Boards should update public order maintenance policies to create more effective governance

Boards should **review and update their public order maintenance policies in light of new requirements in the CSPA and its regulations**. More specifically, boards must maintain up to date policies for every matter that a chief is required to establish procedures for maintaining the public peace under section 8 of Ontario Regulation 392/23: *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)* of the CSPA.

As part of the strategic planning requirements, boards whose service maintains a POU, and the OPP Commissioner, must ensure adequate resource planning of public order services. **Greater analysis of deployment trends, assistance requests, public order intelligence, current capacity training and equipment requirements will assist to understand operational needs for police service board budget and resource decisions.**

To support the discharge of the board's responsibility to ensure adequate and effective policing is provided within its jurisdiction of responsibility, those public order maintenance policies should include ongoing communication with, and reporting by, the chief in relation to significant public order events. Among other things, this may include **annual reporting on the use of a POU by the service, or in support of another service, as well as trends in the delivery of public order maintenance policing**, so the board can continue to monitor the delivery of adequate and effective policing and apply this information to board decision-making (e.g., operating and capital budget decisions).

To maintain the accuracy and relevance of its policies, boards should have a process to **continually review** their public order maintenance policies to ensure they can account for evolving community needs and continued compliance with the CSPA and its regulations.

Police Service Agreements

Provincial Compliance Requirements

As previously noted, section 18(2) of Ontario Regulation 3/99, under the PSA, allowed a board to enter into an agreement, pursuant to section 7 of the PSA, to provide the services of a POU through another police service or on a combined, or regional, or co-operative basis. This is a sensible legislative approach that means a smaller police service does not have to operationalize its own POU, so long as it has the necessary agreement in place to access a POU from another police service when public order maintenance is required.

The ability to enter into an agreement with another police service board, or the OPP to provide public order maintenance is continued, with modification, under section 14 of the CSPA and its regulations.

The IoP's Findings

Currently in Ontario, public order maintenance is delivered through 11 dedicated POUs provided across the province by 10 municipal services and the OPP. At the time of this inspection, one additional municipal police service was actively working towards creating their own POU and will become the twelfth in the province. This translates into 32 municipal police services in Ontario that rely on another police service to deliver this function through a police service agreement. Of those services, 28 rely on the OPP for POU services, with the remaining have an agreement with another municipal service. Of the police services that rely on the OPP for POU capacity, none of the 28 police services are charged back for the OPP's assistance.

The IoP confirmed that each of the 28 municipal police service boards had entered into an agreement (under the PSA) with the OPP to have the services of a POU provided to their police service. This agreement, referred to as the Framework Agreement, commenced in 2001, for a term of five years, with an option for renewal for another five years. In 2013-2014, the OPP issued letters to all boards that had this agreement to indicate that the OPP would continue to provide the services listed within, including that of a POU. The IoP received confirmation that the OPP will continue to provide these services until revised police service agreements are implemented in accordance with the new requirements of section 14 the CSPA. Some of the 11 operational POUs police services also maintained an agreement with other boards or with the OPP to augment their own local capabilities.¹⁴

As Ontario has now transitioned to the CSPA, the IoP stresses the importance for the 33 municipal police services relying on another services' POU have their boards review their policies and policing agreements, with particular attention to ensure compliance with the new requirements for policing agreements under section 14 of the CSPA, and put the necessary new agreements, board policy, and Chief's procedure(s) in place to ensure they continue to have a legal mechanism for the provision of public order, whether through another board or the OPP Commissioner. This same analysis and updating also applies to those police services that do have their own POUs, but also have agreements with other police services for assistance to augment their own police services capabilities. The requirements for these CSPA section 14 agreements are

¹⁴ It should be noted that section 19 of the CSPA has a mechanism whereby any board may request temporary assistance from another board, the Commissioner, or an entity that employs First Nations officers.

outlined in subsection 14(6), with further details found under Ontario Regulation 398/23 – *Alternative Provision of Police Functions*.

While undertaking a review of their existing policies, boards also need to recognize the increased demands for public order when entering an agreement to receive services or to deliver services to another board. This is particularly noteworthy for the 28 police services that relied on the framework agreement with the OPP under the PSA. The IoP was advised that the OPP is developing a new approach to assess and evaluate the potential impacts of any new agreements on its ability to meet its own and others' demands. The IoP commends this, as it will provide both the OPP and those police services that currently rely on the OPP for public order support a realistic supply versus demand picture. Alongside the OPP's ongoing evaluation, boards should also consider potential capacity issues given how many services the OPP supports from a public order perspective. Boards, in close consultation with their Chief, may wish to consider other police services as alternative options to the OPP when considering entering into an agreement for POU services. By law, boards are required to ensure adequate and effective policing for the local community the police service delivers policing to. An adequate level and effective operation of public order maintenance (or under the CSPA, maintaining the public peace) is one of the core policing functions boards are responsible for ensuring the adequate and effective delivery of. This includes adhering to the standards set out in Ontario Regulation 392/23 *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)* for minimum complement capacity and ability to deploy in a reasonable time. A proper assessment of how well previous arrangements are meeting evolving needs in this area, as well as the Chief's operational perspective, will assist boards in evaluating whether current arrangements should be maintained, or new/enhanced arrangements should be considered. Given the IG's mandate to monitor the delivery of adequate and effective policing across the province, this will inevitably be an area that the IoP will continue to pay attention to – including by obtaining and analyzing data related to POU demand, POU supply and the ability of the provincial POU model to meet the whole-of-province need.

The increased demand in public order has also seen police services more proactively addressing issues arising from multi-jurisdictional and prolonged public order events, which has led to the Ontario Public Order Hub model to support the coordination and facilitation of information sharing among all of Ontario's POUs.

Recommendation 2:

Boards should enter into section 14 agreements to ensure adequacy of POU resources

Where a police service does not maintain its own POU, the board must ensure it has a valid agreement in place, in compliance with section 14 of the CSPA, to have another board or the OPP Commissioner provide POU services.

Boards should ensure they update any previous agreement under the PSA to comply with section 14 of the CSPA and applicable regulations. This should be undertaken after thorough consultation with the chief, with consideration for what a **‘reasonable time’ for POU deployment should be locally**, in different sets of public safety risk circumstances, having regard to the new CSPA factors, namely:

- i. the policing needs of the community,
- ii. the geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the police service’s area of policing responsibility,
- iii. the total population and population density of the police service’s area of policing responsibility,
- iv. the presence of critical infrastructure in the location where the POU is to be deployed,
- v. information about public order incidents in the police service’s area of policing responsibility within at least the previous three years, including information about the scope and severity of the incidents, and,
- vi. best practices in relation to response times for POUs.

Boards and Chiefs should also consider past/current practice and known or predictable capacity issues (informed by data and trend analysis) that may arise from the ability of the police service that historically provides POU services to meet current and evolving demands. A copy of any policing agreement made under section 14 must be provided to the IG.

Chief of Police Procedures

Provincial Compliance Requirements

Section 19 of Ontario Regulation 3/99: *Adequate and Effectiveness of Police Services*, of the PSA, requires the Chief to establish procedures on POU services that:

- set out the circumstances in which a POU, or a squad within a unit, may be deployed;
- require that if the police service maintains its own POU, the police service's procedures on public unit services are contained in a manual that is available to all members of the unit; and,
- ensure that a person who is a member of a POU has the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide that service.

The PSM guideline, PO-001, also provided advice on what the procedures, public order manual, and skills development and learning plan should address, along with a list of designated equipment and facilities.

While our inspection largely found chief's procedures to be compliant with PSA regulatory requirements, the IoP found some instances requiring attention or further consideration, including:

- inconsistencies within the procedures;
- no procedural steps outlining a debriefing process;
- not providing circumstances in which a POU can be deployed; and,
- instances of not maintaining a Public Order Manual.

The requirement for the chief to establish procedures on public order maintenance is continued, with modification, under the CSPA and its regulations. Multiple advisory features from the PSM are now prescribed requirements for the purpose of establishing written procedures on public order maintenance, including, but not limited to:

- debriefing a public order incident; and
- setting out circumstances for deployment.

Both are important elements, and the current state of compliance in relation to them, are discussed further in this section.

The IoP's Findings

i) Inconsistencies

Our inspection found four police services with inconsistencies in their respective Chief's procedure. The inconsistencies were minor in nature (such as the Chief's procedure not referring to its own police service, but to the originating service that provided its procedure) and appear to be a result of copying verbatim the police service guidelines provided in the PSM or from a chief's procedure from another service.

There was also an example of references to other procedures that have since been renamed or assigned updated reference numbers. Similar to issues identified in board policy, these inconsistencies signal gaps in the service's quality assurance process and suggest that further internal assessment is required to ensure regular maintenance of procedures that align with board direction and police service practice. While the minor inconsistencies and/or lack of review did not appear to alter the understanding of the Chief's procedure and did not impact police practices, it signals a lack of attention to details that can matter. This attention to detail is important: it ensures the service will identify more significant issues and adjust to address them before they manifest into more serious problems that can disrupt the effective delivery of policing locally.

Our inspection also noted that several procedures from different police services had a review date scheduled, however, upon further inquiry, we determined that many of those procedures had not been reviewed in line with this schedule. It is essential that police services follow a process to review and update procedures on a regular schedule.

Recommendation 3: **Chiefs should review and update their public order maintenance procedures to ensure compliance**

Chiefs should review their respective public order maintenance procedures through the lens of the CSPA to ensure consistency and accuracy with their service delivery practices for maintaining the public peace.

Chiefs should implement a process to **continually review** their procedures to ensure they maintain focus on the evolving community needs and continued compliance with the CSPA and its regulations, as well as board policy.

ii) Debriefing Process

Continuous improvement in police service delivery comes with honest evaluation of what worked well, and what could be improved. When it comes to policing operations, debriefing practices allow for a deconstruction that can highlight strong practices and areas for improvement. Ensuring a debriefing process is captured in the procedural steps following all major incidents in which a POU is deployed is vital. However, our inspection found the Chief's procedures of five police services did not include a debriefing process.

While the incorporation of a debriefing process following all major incidents within the Chief's procedures and public order manual was discretionary under the PSA, the requirement for debriefing a public order incident is now mandatory and regulated in Ontario Regulation 392/23 of the CSPA under subsection 8(3). A robust debriefing is required following the deployment of a POU that must include the preparation of a summary of information regarding the incident, analysis of the outcome of the incident including what worked well and recommendations for improvements and matters to be addressed through changes to procedures or training.

The five police services that did not have a debriefing process outlined in their Chief's procedure were services that did not have their own POU and relied on agreements with another police service or the OPP Commissioner to provide POU services. Regardless of whether the police service has their own POU, the legal requirement for a debriefing process to be part of the service's procedure does not depend on which service is responsible for the deployment of the POU. Although one service may rely on another for the POU itself, the local service of jurisdiction must still assess its own decision-making to access that POU and then evaluate the delivery of public order maintenance locally. The IoP did find that all 11 police services that maintain their own POU had a debriefing process included in their Chiefs procedure. Interviews with members of police services confirmed that a debriefing was conducted at the conclusion of each POU deployment. Debriefs are also shared at OPOAC meetings where the group shares any tactics observed or used that assisted in resolving the incident. Debriefs are discussed at every quarterly meeting.

Recommendation 4:

Chiefs should ensure that procedures include a debriefing within the police service following a public order incident

Chiefs should review procedures to ensure they include a debriefing of public order incidents within the police service following the deployment of a POU (regardless of whether they utilized their own POU, or a POU from another police service accessed through an agreement), as now required under section 8 of Ontario Regulation 392/23: *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)* of the CSPA.

The **debriefing process should include**, at a minimum, a summary of information regarding the incident, including:

- i. the nature of the incident;
- ii. the date, time, and location of the incident;
- iii. the environment in which the incident occurred; and,
- iv. the details on the response to the incident by the POU. The debriefing should also include an analysis of the outcome of the incident, including what operationally worked well, as well as recommendations for improvement, as well as matters to be addressed through changes to procedure and training.

While the term “following the deployment” suggests that the debriefings occur soon after a POU deployment is possible, there may be instances where there is reason to believe that a public order incident may give rise to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) invoking its mandate. **In those instances, the police service should liaise with the SIU to determine whether a debriefing could complicate their investigation into the incident and should therefore be delayed.**

Note, the debrief mentioned above refers to an internal process within the police service. These are distinct from after incident reporting requirements found under Ontario Regulation 393/23 *Active Attacker Incidents* and the Extreme Incident Response Plan, referenced under Ontario Regulation 392/23 *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)*.

Furthermore, **through the Ontario Public Order Hub, the sector is encouraged to facilitate the sharing of in-service debriefs** so that different POUs can learn from tactical examples applied, with a focus on assessing future needs and enhancing interoperability in joint service public order deployments. **This information should also be shared with the Ontario Police College to assist in the continuous improvement of its POU training curriculum.** This will improve future practices and operations in POU tactical decision-making across the province.

iii) Circumstances for Deployment

There were three police services whose Chief's procedures were found non-compliant with the requirement to identify circumstances in which a POU may be deployed. The three police services did not have their own POU and all of them relied on a PSA section 7 of the agreement.

Again, regardless of whether the police service has its own POU or relies on an agreement with another board to provide POU services, subsection 19(1) of Ontario Regulation 3/99: *Adequate and Effectiveness of Police Services* under the PSA required every Chief to, "...establish procedures on public order unit services which set out the circumstances in which a public order unit may be deployed." The inspection did find that police services that maintained their own POUs were all compliant with this requirement.

Of note, this requirement is further expanded under the CSPA Ontario Regulation 392/23 to now require that the Chief establish procedures respecting the deployment of a POU for both planned and unplanned incidents, including setting out the circumstances for deployment, specifying the process for authorizing deployment, and identifying operational responsibility for authorizing deployment. The IoP encourages these procedures to also include a consistent assessment tool used by police services in evaluating the risk level and an appropriate level of response, including whether to request temporary public order assistance from another service.

Recommendation 5:

Chiefs should include deployment circumstances in POU procedures, and the sector should develop a standardized risk assessment tool for effective POU deployment decision-making

Chiefs should review their procedures to confirm they include a catalogue of circumstances in which a POU should be deployed. More specifically, the procedures should address the deployment of a POU for planned and unplanned public order incidents, including setting out circumstances for deployment, specifying the process for authorizing deployment, and identifying operational responsibility for authorizing deployment.

The Ontario Public Order Hub and the Ministry of the Solicitor General sector is encouraged to collaborate on the development of a single risk assessment tool to standardize the factors and risks to be considered for POU deployments in Ontario. The tool should guide decisions around consistent relevant points and should support and not run contrary to the Chief's ultimate authority of deciding whether and how to deploy a POU locally.

Upon completion of this work, **police services that maintain a POU are further encouraged to incorporate the risk assessment tool into their procedures** as part of their decision-making process to determine the risk level and an appropriate level of response, including whether to request assistance from another service through an agreement or temporary assistance under section 19 of the CSPA.

Once a tool is developed, the IG strongly recommends of its consistent use by police services to become a compliance requirement under the relevant CSPA Regulation.

iv) Public Order Manual

Up until April 1, 2024, police services were required to ensure that procedures on POU services were contained in a manual made available to all members of the POU. This requirement was contained within Ontario Regulation 3/99: *Adequate and Effectiveness of Police Services* of the PSA, and further guidance on the content of the public order manual was provided in the PSM.

While the requirement to maintain a manual is no longer prescribed under the CSPA, the IoP does note considerable value in maintaining a public order manual that is available to members of the POU. The IoP recommends that police services that maintain their own POU continue the practice of maintaining a public order manual that is specific to the individual police service. The manual should include the guideline items that were listed in the PSM public order guidelines (PO-001), such as:

- the unit's mandate, functions, and members' responsibilities;
- deployment and reporting relationships;
- command and control;
- communications with unit members;
- crowd management procedures, including response levels and negotiation;
- incident assessment;
- provision and use of equipment;
- operational training;
- the circumstances and processes for liaising with appropriate officials for the purposes of Sections 63 - 68 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, regarding unlawful assemblies and riot situations;
- use of training, operational and equipment logs;
- debriefing process; and,
- the selection process for members of the POU to ensure that the members have the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide the services of the POU; and,
- the recording and reporting of incidents involving a POU.

Recommendation 6:

Chiefs should ensure their POU manuals are maintained, up to date and reflect guidance from the Ministry of the Solicitor General

Chiefs of police services that have their own POU should **continue maintaining a public order manual and making it available to all members of the POU**. This manual should be specific to needs and procedures of individual police services that have a POU, with consideration to include common training provided by the Ontario Police College and other provincial initiatives.

It is recommended that the content of the public order manual continue to reflect guidance from the Ministry of the Solicitor General's PSM public order guidelines (PO-001), until such time that updated guidance may be provided.

Recruitment and Training

Provincial Compliance Requirements

Section 18(3) of PSA Ontario Regulation 3/99 requires every POU to consist of a unit supervisor and at least four squads of seven officers, including a squad leader.

In addition, section 33(c)(iii) of the Regulation requires every police service to have a skills development and learning plan that addresses members of a POU.

Complement requirements for POUs have increased under the CSPA Ontario Regulation 392/23 and its regulations, with standardized initial and ongoing training now prescribed under regulation. Further details concerning these requirements are included under the Deployment section of this report.

The IoP's Findings

At the time of the inspection, police services with a POU appeared to have a sufficient number of trained POU members, with many services indicating ongoing efforts to expand on their own complement of POU members. Basic POU member training is now mandated under the CSPA to be delivered by qualified instructors through the Ontario Police College (OPC). Previous training was provided by the individual police services and was developed with input from the OPOAC. Importantly, this previous training was part of the foundation of the new OPC curriculum.

All the POUs work closely together with respect to training. A basic public order training class will be hosted by a police service and will quite often consist of members from different police services. In addition, the OPOAC supports the communication of training details to support ongoing training needs.

Additionally, another finding indicates that through the inspection that there are smaller to mid-size police services that, although they do not maintain their own POUs, are providing a limited number of members with POU training. Those police services do not have the resources to provide a complete POU on their own but utilize trained members to complement other police services that do have a POU. We remind boards and services that, while combining resources with another service is permitted, the combined POU must comply with legislation, including training and equipment standards.

Recommendation 7:

Police services should access supplementary training relevant to POU context and this training should be centrally coordinated to best prepare Ontario POUs

The CSPA now requires that every police officer assigned functions of a POU must complete mandated training provided by OPC. OPC now provides training on safe crowd management and maintaining public order, supervision of a POU and tactical command. **In addition, police services are encouraged to continue additional, ongoing joint training and learning between services. It is recommended that such initiatives be identified centrally and coordinated through the Ontario Public Order Hub.**

Further, **services should consider supplementing mandated training with education that is specific to the context in which they are policing.** For example, further education to improve relations, foster cultural understanding and historic injustices experienced by Indigenous communities, and the historic and/or geo-political subtext driving current demonstrations and protests, may assist with approaches that are culturally sensitive to further support effective communication and management of such events.

Police services should continually access and contribute to the **continued development of training to assist police officers performing public order functions in properly applying the full range of existing provisions in the *Criminal Code*, provincial law, and municipal by-laws** in circumstances where hate-based offences and other offences related to protests, demonstrations and occupations are occurring.

These **events are not confined to Ontario but often cross provincial boundaries**, requiring coordinated responses across the country. This underscores the importance of ensuring that Canadian, provincial, territorial, and municipal laws strike a responsive balance between the public's freedom of expression and assembly and the right of others to conduct their activities safely. Accordingly, the **Ministry of the Solicitor General should engage provincial, territorial, and federal governments to review the legal framework governing protests in Canada to ensure this framework remains relevant and responsive, having regard to more recent experience and learnings across the country. This review should consider expertise from a range of sectors that can provide advice, including policing, legal, civil liberties, and other sectors.**

Equipment

Provincial Compliance Requirements

Section 38 of the PSA Ontario Regulation 3/99: *Adequate and Effectiveness of Police Services* requires that a municipal police service shall be provided with adequate equipment and facilities. Guidance about public order equipment was provided in the PSM under the ministry's Designated Equipment List. However, the quality, age, and manufacturer of the equipment varied from service to service. Therefore, the equipment issued and available to POU members across the province varies considerably.

While the ministry's Designated Equipment List in the PSM is advisory only, Ontario Regulation 392/23 of the CSPA now has a prescribed list of required equipment as of April 1, 2025 (the Regulation builds in a transition timeline for the acquisition of this required equipment).

The IoP's Findings

Although the equipment used by different POUs is similar in type – for example, shields, batons, helmets, etc. – it is the manufacturer of the equipment that varies considerably from police service to police service. With that comes different manufacturers' recommendations with respect to maintenance, longevity, and overall state of the equipment. Given the varying recommendations from manufacturers, it is critical that police services track and test the equipment on a regular basis and consistent with manufacturer's recommendations, to maximize officer safety and instill user confidence in the equipment.

At the time of this report, global economic uncertainty is impacting material costs and supply chains. Police services are not immune to these impacts. Rising material costs may impact the manufacturing and availability of public safety equipment. Given the significance of this issue and the importance of ensuring policing equipment is available to Ontario services, the Ministry of the Solicitor General, the OACP, and the Ontario Association of Police Service Boards (OAPSB) should monitor supply chain issues and engage other orders of government where their jurisdiction may assist in resolving issues that arise.

Recommendation 8:

Chiefs should maintain a system for tracking issued protective apparel and equipment

Chiefs should maintain a system for tracking issued protective apparel and equipment in a manner that is consistent with the manufacturers' suggested specifications, and regularly **inspect and re-assess** the equipment according to manufacturer specifications to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

Furthermore, **the Ministry of the Solicitor General, OACP, and OAPSB should collaboratively monitor supply chain impacts to ensure police services can procure the necessary public order equipment** prescribed under Schedule 1 of Ontario Regulation 392/23 *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)* and engage other orders of government where their jurisdiction may assist in resolving issues that arise.

The PSM guideline for public order also suggested that POU members' emergency medical information be made available for rapid information sharing in appropriate situations. However, our inspection revealed that not all POUs had put in place an approach to facilitate this sharing of medical information. That said, many services require the POU member to carry their own medical information in a consistent location of their uniform (for example, front body armour pocket).

With the surge in POU demand and more multi-jurisdictional deployments, there is increased risk and concern with regards to potential delays in finding emergency medical information in a timely manner – especially if the approach to facilitating quick access to this information varies from service to service. The IoP strongly urges the POU sector, through the Ontario Public Order Hub, to agree upon a consistent format and location for the carrying and access to this information. This will ensure minimal delay in retrieving such vital information, even during combined and cross-jurisdictional events. To mitigate privacy concerns, the information should be secured by the individual in the prescribed location upon their own uniform, only to be drawn upon in the event of a medical emergency.

Recommendation 9:

All Ontario POUs should ensure consistent location and access to medical information for members

Chiefs should ensure that all POU members' emergency medical information be carried in a consistent location for rapid sharing in emergency situations. The sector is encouraged to ensure that all POUs agree to a consistent format and location of medical information to ensure minimal delay in retrieving such vital information, particularly during combined and cross-jurisdictional events. To mitigate privacy concerns, the information should be secured by the individual in the prescribed location of their uniform only to be drawn upon in the event of a medical emergency.

The **POU sector, through the Ontario Public Order Hub, should agree on a consistent format and location for the carrying and access to this information** and work to facilitate the integration of the agreed-upon approach across all Ontario POUs.

Deployment

Provincial Compliance Requirements

Section 18(3) of PSA Ontario Regulation 3/99 required that every POU, whether maintained by one police force or on a combined or regional or co-operative basis:

- a) shall consist of a unit supervisor and at least four squads of seven officers, including the squad leader; and,
- b) must be able to be deployed in a reasonable time.

The CSPA has expanded slightly the complement requirement with Ontario Regulation 392/23, stating that a POU shall have the capacity to deploy to a public order incident, at a minimum, a section of the unit consisting of,

- a) at least 32 police officers, including a section leader; and,
- b) a public order commander.

The CSPA requirements also now identify considerations that bear on the reasonable time for deployment criteria for POUs, stating that the POU must be able to be deployed in a reasonable time to ensure:

- the policing needs of the community;
- the geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the police service's area of policing responsibility;

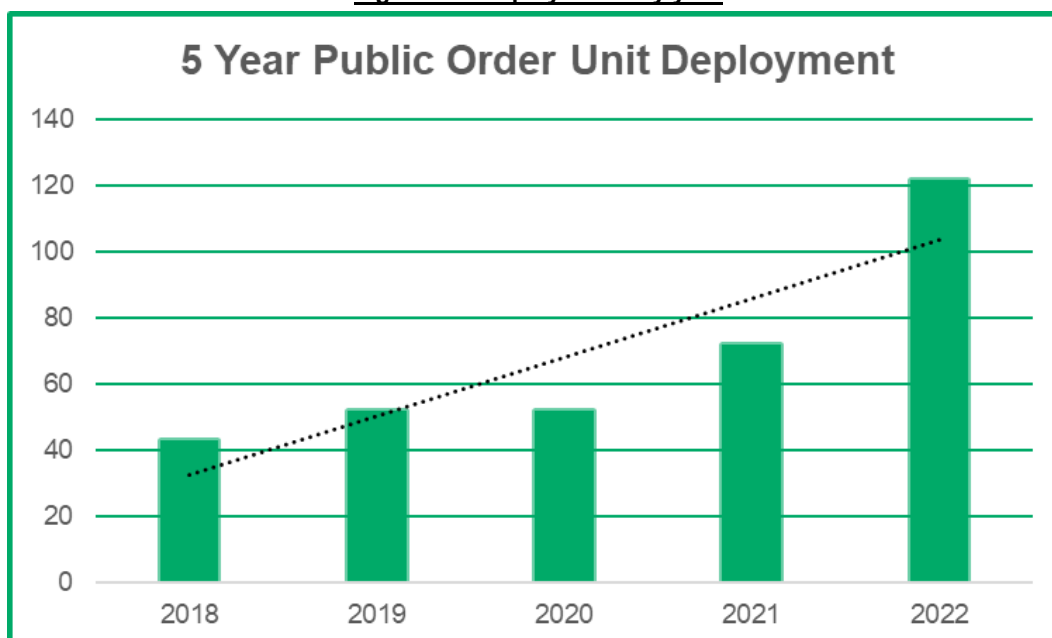
- the total population and population density of the police service’s area of policing responsibility;
- the presence of critical infrastructure in the location where the POU is to be deployed;
- that information about public order incidents in the police service’s area of policing responsibility within at least the previous three years, including information about the scope and severity of the incidents; and,
- best practices in relation to response times for POUs.

The IoP’s Findings

Our inspection revealed that there is a 184 per cent increase in POU deployment in Ontario between 2018 and 2022 (see “Fig 2”). Recent world events have had an unprecedented impact on the deployment of POUs. With the increased deployments of POUs over the last five years, many Chiefs, the OPP Commissioner, and boards are becoming more focused on the increased demands on their POU members. These events, and the public order maintenance they require locally, significantly impact police resources and budgets. Importantly, our inspection revealed that despite this increase in demand, there have been no situations where current POU resources were unable to deploy within a reasonable amount of time.

The IoP takes note that police services that have their own POU are actively looking to increase complements to balance potential fatigue of current resources, especially as members are redeployed from their regular duties to POUs. In other words, the long-term sustainability of the current resource landscape is a matter that requires ongoing attention.

Fig 2: POU deployments by year



i. Composition of a Public Order Unit

As previously noted, under the PSA a POU had to consist of a unit supervisor and at least four squads of seven officers, including the squad leader (28 police officers in total). Under the CSPA, a POU must now deploy, at a minimum, a section of the unit consisting of at least 32 police officers, including a section leader, and a public order commander. POU commanders that were interviewed recognize the change in POU composition from the PSA to the CSPA. Additionally, some services are taking proactive steps to augment their current public order complement through other emergency response units that take part in annual public order maintenance training and can be more readily deployed to augment their numbers.

ii. Deployment in a Reasonable Time

The IoP recognizes that the requirement to deploy a POU within a “reasonable time” necessarily includes subjective determinations. There is no set requirement – in terms of hours within which deployment must occur – to use as a benchmark. The varying geography within the province will interpret that what is reasonable in one context, may not be reasonable in another context. For example, what might be considered a reasonable deployment time within an urban centre may not be reasonable for deployment in rural areas of the province.

POU members were asked in their interviews about their ability to deploy in a reasonable time. The inspection revealed no situations where current resources were unable to react within what the IoP considers a reasonable amount of time, having regard to the factors now applicable through the CSPA. Operational POUs are constantly in contact with each other, including through the Hub, to minimize any potential delays in required deployment.

As mentioned above, subsection 18(3) of the now revoked Ontario Regulation 3/99 only required POUs to be “able to be deployed in a reasonable time.” The CSPA expands on this by requiring POUs to be able to be deployed in a reasonable time having regard to specific criteria that helps define the reasonableness requirement. The IoP strongly suggests that these new requirements should spur analysis and collaboration by boards and services across the province – both those with their own POUs, and those that rely on other services for the POU resources. Boards and services should work to determine what a ‘reasonable time’ for POU deployment should be locally, in different sets of public safety risk circumstances, with consideration of the new CSPA factors. Those services that rely on another’s POU should necessarily integrate that service into this analytical process so that that service’s capacity issues are taken into account. Of course, ultimately, the IG is mandated under the CSPA to determine whether the ‘reasonable time’ standard is met in a specific situation, either in response to a public

complaint, a proactive inspection, or a determination under section 20 of the CSPA about the adequacy and effectiveness of policing locally. That said, boards and chiefs collaborating in determining local service standards for POU deployment is both consistent with boards' governance role and may well inform any evaluation the IG ultimately conducts.

When it comes to real-time deployment, our Inspection found that different police services use different platforms to notify members of public order events and that both on-duty and off-duty members are required. Although there are different platforms used, they were all effective platforms that addressed unique local needs to facilitate POU deployment in a reasonable time.

Services are encouraged to go beyond the minimum and find ways to incorporate effective planning, intelligence-gathering and analysis resources when preparing to deploy for a particular public order event. During the inspection, the IoP was impressed by the work of PLTs. A more organized PLT network between services could share intelligence, identify collaborative strategies to engage demonstrators, and promote education on issues relevant to the public order context.



Recommendation 10:

To ensure POUs can deploy at a reasonable time, Boards and Chiefs should consider the factors under the CSPA and build capacity of PLTs to support planning strategies, as appropriate

Police service boards should confirm with their Chiefs that the service is, at a minimum, and pursuant to subsection 7(2)(1)(i) of Ontario Regulation 392/23 of the CSPA, meeting the deployment requirements in terms of the complement of their POU. This includes deploying a minimum of one section consisting of 32 police officers including a section leader and a POU commander in a reasonable time.

Boards should ensure that a POU is able to be deployed in a reasonable time, having regard to the new factors set out in the CSPA, namely:

- i. the policing needs of the community,
- ii. the geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the police service's area of policing responsibility,
- iii. the total population and population density of the police service's area of policing responsibility,
- iv. the presence of critical infrastructure in the location where the POU is to be deployed,
- v. information about public order incidents in the police service's area of policing responsibility within at least the previous three years, including information about the scope and severity of the incidents, and,
- vi. best practices in relation to response times for POUs.

The IG encourages services, boards and stakeholders to cooperate in developing some type of analytical approach to determining what a reasonable time is. The IG would ultimately determine in the future whether the reasonable standard is met, but a cooperative approach now can assist in creating some consistency in the model.

In addition, PLT network between services could, where appropriate, share intelligence, combine strategies to engage demonstrators, promote education and work towards lawful, safe and peaceful events. To aid in this approach, **Chiefs of Police are encouraged to embed PLTs into their public order training to support their readiness and involvement in public order responses, where appropriate and at the discretion of the service.**

Furthermore, **the Ministry and Chiefs of Police should collaborate to ensure consistent training for PLTs across the province to support interoperability between services on joint service public order responses.**

iii. Embedded Fire and Paramedic Emergency Medical Services

The IoP observed that many POUs effectively embed fire and paramedic services as part of their POUs. These fire and paramedic members receive initial training and participate in annual POU training. Recognizing this could be more challenging for fire and paramedic participation in regional services and for the OPP, those that do have fire and paramedics embedded in their POUs speak favorably of their involvement and increased public and police safety during deployments. Although not mandated, continued work by police services to include and integrate these vital partners enhance a police service's ability to more fulsomely respond to public and officer safety issues that can arise in public order maintenance deployments.

Recommendation 11: Police Services should continue developing and enhancing their partnerships with local Fire and Emergency Medical Services to facilitate integration into their public order deployments, as appropriate

Most POU services had external partners such as fire services, paramedic services, and other medical professionals. The services that did use fire and EMS spoke of their positive contributions to their POUs and the enhancements they bring to public and police safety.

Chiefs of Police should continue developing and enhancing their partnerships with external emergency services and medical partners through integrated training, where feasible.

The Ministry of the Solicitor General should also examine options to coordinate and enhance the integration of Fire services in public order deployments, as appropriate.

The Ontario Public Order Hub should explore putting in place a MOU detailing the nature and expectations of these partnerships. The IG also recommends to the Ministry of the Solicitor General that if the Hub is able to develop a model MOU, these MOUs become a compliance requirement contained in Ontario Regulation 392/23 *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)*.

iv. Ontario Public Order Hub Model

During the events in 2022 related to the Freedom Convoy, the OPP was required to respond to many convoys, demonstrations, and blockades that were consistently and repeatedly emerging in communities across Ontario. This included requirements to concurrently deploy public order units to large scale protests occurring simultaneously in Ottawa, Toronto, and Windsor.

To effectively manage the simultaneous public order events, coordinated support was required from municipal police, the OPP, and RCMP public order units.

As a result, in collaboration with municipal police public order units, the OPP initiated the Ontario Public Order Hub model to ensure public order units were concurrently deployed across the province in an integrated, strategic, and risk-based manner to prevent injury, preserve life, and protect critical infrastructure.

Ultimately, the Hub model enabled the execution of an integrated planning process that facilitated the deployment of multiple public order units from not just Ontario, but throughout Canada, to effectively manage the operational priorities and respond to the Freedom Convoy occupation.

There are currently three Hubs in Ontario (East, West, and Central). The Chair of each Hub is contacted when assistance is required for POU incidents. Typically, these are planned events that are known in advance. The Hub assists by mobilizing POU deployments to public order events throughout Ontario, both in circumstances where the local police service has its own POU, but the event is beyond the scope of what they can manage with their own POU assets – and in circumstances where the public order event is occurring in a jurisdiction where the local police service does not have its own POU. The Hub model facilitates near-constant exchange of information and allows for collaborative and coordinated operational response to dynamic situations such as recent Israel and Hamas war-related demonstrations that have occurred in various locations across the province. The Hub provides immense value for POUs to collaborate, pool resources, and manage deployments in an intelligent fashion that supports a local police Chief's deployment decision-making.

However, the Hub is not formalized as an entity within Ontario's public order policing landscape. It is important to address this, and ensure that the coordination, information-sharing and policing support that it offers becomes a permanent fixture of Ontario's public order policing system. It is vital that through this formalization, police services that are part of the Hub are able to both deliver adequate and effective public order policing locally in their 'home' jurisdiction and provide effective support to others when called on to do so.

This inspection identified an increase in demand for public deployment in Ontario, that is expected to continue trending upwards. Coupled with the complexity of events witnessed in recent years that transcend jurisdictions, including areas of federal jurisdiction (e.g., international borders), these factors risk putting very real pressures on existing POUs and their services without a sustainable approach. Ontario's Public Order Hub model offers a strategic and scalable solution that not only supports Ontario but can be adopted at a national level.

Recommendation 3 in the *Report of the Public Inquiry into the 2022 Public Order Emergency* states that:

“Police and other law enforcement agencies [to] develop, in conjunction with affected governments, protocols around requests for additional law enforcement resources, where a police service is unable to respond on its own to major events, including certain protests” (Recommendation 3)¹⁵.

The Ontario Public Order Hub is the framework to bring the Inquiry's recommendation into practice, as it will address the imperative for coordination of public order resources during major events. In addition, given that public order needs are increasingly crossing jurisdictional boundaries, all orders of government should work together to find sustainable funding solutions or risk potentially greater pressure on the current system and its ability to effectively ensure public safety.

Given the IG's mandate to ensure compliance with the CSPA, the Ontario Public Order Hub model should consider the new requirements in the CSPA when entering into policing arrangements (under section 14) or making requests for temporary or emergency assistance (under section 19). There are also new requirements to provide notification to the IG where these arrangements or requests occur. It is vital that any public order maintenance collaboration directly between police services or through the Hub comply with these new requirements.

¹⁵ The Honourable Paul S. Rouleau, “Report of the Public Inquiry into the 2022 Public Order Emergency” Volume 1: Overview. (2023): pg. 252.

Recommendation 12:

The Ministry of the Solicitor General should formalize and enhance the Ontario Public Order Hub model by making it a permanent and sustainable fixture of public order policing in the province

With a view to strengthen Ontario's public order policing system so it can meet evolving challenges and deployment needs, **the IG recommends:**

- i. **That the Ministry of the Solicitor General formalize the current Ontario Public Order Hub model to ensure its long-term sustainability, effectiveness and clarity in operations. This formalization should occur through amendments to the relevant Regulations in the CSPA** that address the following:
 - A clear operational framework, with the OPP serving as Chair of the Hub and with representation from all Ontario police services that maintain a POU;
 - A single pathway for police services to request POU assistance through the Hub;
 - A coordinated approach among Hub member police services with a POU that includes the discretion for each individual police service to decide whether to provide assistance based on their own ability to continue to deliver adequate and effective public order policing locally in their 'home' jurisdiction; and
 - Mechanisms for effective planning, intelligence-gathering and resource analysis on public order policing matters, including through an organized PLT network within the mandate of the Hub.
- ii. **That the operations structure of the Ontario Public Order Hub provides appropriate notifications to the IG**, given the IG's statutory responsibility in section 20 of the CSPA to oversee and act to ensure the delivery of adequate and effective policing in the province.

Formalizing the Hub will enhance the effectiveness of Ontario's Public Order policing system, improve the coordination of resource deployments, and facilitate information-sharing that improves outcomes. This formalization will also ensure that the Hub becomes a permanent fixture of Ontario's policing system.

Promising Practices Towards Continued Improvement

Beyond evaluating compliance with the CSPA, the IoP is committed to identifying leading practices that are working well in policing, assisting the sector in embracing these practices, and raising the overall performance bar. While inspecting for compliance with the PSA, the IoP was also able to observe promising practices within police services as they relate to public order maintenance. The IoP strongly encourages boards, Chiefs' and the OPP Commissioner to consider adopting these promising practices as they move towards compliance with the CSPA and its regulations concerning public order maintenance.

Continued Development of Training

The inspection revealed that every police service in Ontario either met or exceeded the previous training guideline provided in the PSM. Initial POU training is now regulated in the CSPA's training regulation (Ontario Regulation 87/24), which includes mandatory training for members, supervisors of POUs, and tactical commanders of a POU.

There are some services that are supplementing mandated training, such as cultural sensitivity training, that is specific to the context in which they are policing, to aid those POU members in understanding the best approach to these events. One example the IoP learned of is Toronto Police Service POU members receiving additional *"Foundations of Islam and Addressing Islamophobia, Community Trust and Allyship in Policing"* training through an online course available on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) platform. While it is beyond the scope of the inspection to evaluate any specific training of this kind, this is one example of culturally relevant training that police services are providing to their members to make them more aware and effective when engaging in public order maintenance. The IoP views this approach as promising to promoting effective management of events through awareness and education. The IoP also encourages services to share their approaches to training enhancements to drive improved overall performance of public order maintenance across the province.

Additional Resources

During the on-site inspections, the IoP found that many POUs in the province use varying community resources and physical resources as part of their POUs. These include:

j) Police Liaison Teams

Although it was not the central focus of this inspection (as it is not a requirement under the PSA or CSPA), police services that had PLT officers routinely expressed their value in helping to mitigate issues that can arise in public order events. This role was highlighted during proceedings of the federal Public Order Emergency Commission as being a front-facing tool to look at strategies, planning and building front-end relationships with participants during demonstrations. The inclusion of a PLT, with a consistent focus on building trust, engaging demonstrators and understanding crowd dynamics, provides a valuable tool for better managing demonstrations to ensure lawful, peaceful and safe events for the participants, the broader public and the police officers on the ground.

There are currently several POUs that use PLTs. These teams interact with event organizers prior to the public order event, and often can open and maintain positive dialogue and interface capability that yields positive public safety results. The IoP strongly encourages those POUs that do not currently incorporate PLTs in their approach to consider them and consult with services that use PLTs to gain the benefit of their experience.

Given their promising results and the importance of their role, the IoP would recommend that the formal inclusion within the mandate of the Ontario Public Order Hub.



ii) Mounted Police Units

Two police services continue to maintain mounted police units, with other services taking steps towards establishing a mounted unit. Although there are few units currently, the option exists for police services to request assistance from these Mounted Police units from other police services when their support may be deemed beneficial.

Among other duties, these units can be used to supplement POUs and assist in responding to crowd management situations. Due to the tall stature of officers on horseback, they create a presence with a unique observation perspective, an expanded field of vision, while also providing the ability to move large crowds and effect crowd control.



iii) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems

Many POU are utilizing Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) and have seen success with them. The RPAS provides real-time, 'birds-eye' view of mass gatherings. It features the ability to zoom closely on any area of interest to provide vital information in dynamic situations that may otherwise not be available. This information can assist POU in effectively identifying public safety risks that may not be visible, as well as serve as a command tool to observe, manage and direct POU operations. The value of RPAS technology is now cemented in the requirement under CSPA Ontario Regulation 392/23, where every POU shall be provided with an RPAS.

iv) Fluorescent High Visibility Ball Caps

POUs are often deployed in large crowd settings with public order members dispersed within the large crowds. Both given the nature of these dispersed deployments, and what will become the increasing use of RPAS, a few services opted to issue fluorescent ball caps to their POU members to improve visibility on the ground for members of the public, and from above for the police service managing the POU's operations.

The overall feedback from services that used fluorescent ball caps were positive, noting that members of the POU are easily identified and can be tracked during a fluid and evolving deployment. This was beneficial at large events with multiple POU's present. The fluorescent ball caps make easier for command staff to visualize where their members were within the crowds, both by traditional observation or new RPAS assistance, and then better manage and respond to evolving public order events.



Conclusion

Over the course of recent years, Ontario experienced a surge in protests, demonstrations, and civil disobedience to express dissatisfaction with government policy, local matters, and world events. As displayed in 2022, with the vaccine anti-mandate protests and blockades, these events can become complex and span multiple jurisdictions across the province. The ability for police to maintain their preparedness to effectively manage these events in a lawful, peaceful, and safe manner is crucial.

Overall, Ontario's police services continue to adapt to address public order situations. Collaboration among POUs in Ontario, facilitated through the Ontario Public Order Hub model, is one such example. Formalizing, clarifying the mandate, and strengthening the governance of the Ontario Public Order Hub model will better support the coordination and mobilization of resources across Ontario jurisdictions and stands out as an approach that should continue to be strengthened. This Spotlight Report includes the IG's recommendations for several enhancements to Ontario's Public Order policing system that will serve the broader provincial interest.

Also, it is encouraging that boards and police services demonstrate a high degree of compliance with the inspected sections of the PSA and its regulations, up to the transition to the CSPA. The inspection did not reveal situations where current resources were unable to react within a reasonable amount of time. Although the factors to consider in defining what is a 'reasonable time' have evolved under the CSPA, this is an encouraging finding.

The CSPA and its regulatory requirements concerning public order maintenance now better position boards, police services and the IoP to assess the extent and manner to which policing services are meeting the needs of Ontario communities. This work appears to be underway, with services that have POUs actively reviewing their needs to increase complements to balance potential fatigue of current resources. At this time, it is recommended that all police services and boards expedite a review of their procedures and policies to ensure compliance with both CSPA and its regulations, all with a view to putting in place the necessary governance and operational direction to ensure the delivery of adequate and effective policing.

Beyond compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, and as we have outlined in this report, there are several areas where boards and services must use data and trend analysis to ensure they are as prepared as possible to deliver adequate and effective policing locally. Whether a police service has its own POU, or relies on another service's POU, the dynamic nature of public order maintenance requires advanced planning and the necessary mechanisms in place to meet what is clearly an increasing

need for these resources. To this end, boards must also consider the specific financial needs associated with public order maintenance as part of their mandate to ensure adequate and effective policing is being delivered locally.

Given the IG's mandate to monitor the delivery of adequate and effective policing across the province, the IG and IoP will continue to pay attention to public order maintenance in Ontario. Through its continued activities, the IoP is committed to equipping police services and boards with evidence-based research and data to support their efforts in providing the best possible policing services to their communities.

The IoP looks forward to unlocking the improved performance that can come from the implementation of the specific recommendations made in this Spotlight Report.

Appendix A:

Comparison of Legislative Requirements for Public Order Maintenance

Prescribed requirements under **Police Services Act** vs **Community Safety and Policing Act**

Note: This is a high-level summary of the requirements only. For detailed information, please refer to the legislation.

	Police Services Act <i>(Repealed)</i> <u>Ontario Regulation</u> <u>3/99</u>	Community Safety and Policing Act <i>(In Force)</i> <u>Ontario Regulation</u> <u>392/23</u>
Responsibilities of the Board	Shall have a POU or have an agreement with another board/OPP for the service Shall establish a Policy	Shall have a POU or have an agreement with another board/OPP for the service Shall establish a Policy
Responsibilities of the Chief of Police / OPP Commissioner	Shall have establish Procedure: • Circumstances for deployment • Labour disputes Shall have Manual available for all members Ensure POU members have the appropriate skills, knowledge and abilities Must have skills development and learning plan for members of a POU	Shall establish Procedure: • For functions and responsibilities • Deployment of POU • Debriefing following deployment • Labour disputes • Protests, demonstrations & occupations Ensure training as per Ontario Regulation 87/24 and the Ontario Police College: • Public Order Operator • Public Order Section Lead • Public Order Commander Must have a skills development and learning plan for members of a POU as per Ontario Regulation 399/23

Public Order Unit

Shall consist of a unit supervisor and at least four squads of seven officers, including the squad leader

Must be able to be deployed in a reasonable time

At a minimum, a section of the unit consisting of at least 32 police officers, including a section leader, and a public order commander.

Must be able to be deployed in a reasonable time, having regard to,

- i. the policing needs of the community,
- ii. the geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the police service's area of policing responsibility,
- iii. the total population and population density of the police service's area of policing responsibility,
- iv. the presence of critical infrastructure in the location where the POU is to be deployed,
- v. information about public order incidents in the police service's area of policing responsibility within at least the previous three years, including information about the scope and severity of the incidents, and
- vi. best practices in relation to response times for POU.

Contact Us



Inspectorate of Policing
777 Bay Street, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2C8



Tel: 1-888-333-5078



www.loPOntario.ca

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