



# SAANICH POLICE DEPARTMENT **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**





*We acknowledge that the District of Saanich lies within the territories of the ləkʷəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples represented by the W̱JOḺELP (Tsartlip), BO̱KÉĆEN (Pauquachin), S̱ÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nations.*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Welcome to the Saanich Police Department's 2023 Annual Report! We are very pleased to provide you with updates on many ongoing and exciting initiatives, as well as highlight various key accomplishments that were achieved in the past year. Every day, I experience moments where I am moved and heartened by how dedicated, passionate, and committed our officers, civilian staff, and volunteers are as they report for duty and serve our community. I am also mindful that these same people are required to adapt and respond to the rapidly changing demands, pressures, threats, and challenges that they face as they keep others safe.

With the launch of our new 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, you will notice that we have taken a more focused approach by identifying four strategic priorities that contribute to community safety and wellbeing. These priorities strike a healthy balance that ensures our goals and objectives identify and address internal and external needs as we move forward. Maintaining this balance is critical for growth, modernization, and employee health and wellness.

In 2023, a combination of external factors created challenging internal pressures that were adversely impacting staff in all areas of the organization – frontline operations, investigations, and administration. In response, key historic and innovative changes were identified in late 2023 and implemented early 2024. These changes in combination with organizational growth and ongoing community support provide us with great optimism as we continue to strive to provide the highest level of policing and public safety to the people of Saanich.

As you review this report, it is my hope that you will learn something new and gain a deeper understanding about our people, culture, and the vital public safety services that we provide every day and night.



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Saanich Police Board operates under the authority of the *BC Police Act*. It serves as the oversight and governance body of the Saanich Police Department (SPD), while remaining independent from municipal government. The Board includes the Mayor of Saanich (Chair), and up to six members who reflect the diversity of the community we serve. The Board focuses its oversight and direction on strategies that reflect and respond to the best interests and needs of the community through a value-driven, diverse, transparent, accountable, and public safety lens.

The Board is the employer of all SPD sworn and civilian staff. In consultation with the Chief Constable, the Board develops the annual SPD budget. The Board and Chief Constable consult with stakeholders to establish policies for the delivery of policing, community safety and outreach services to our community.

The Board and its committees meet regularly to ensure that strategic objectives are met, to review progress reports, and to provide oversight and guidance to SPD as it carries out daily policing operations in Saanich as part of a network of integrated policing units in the region.

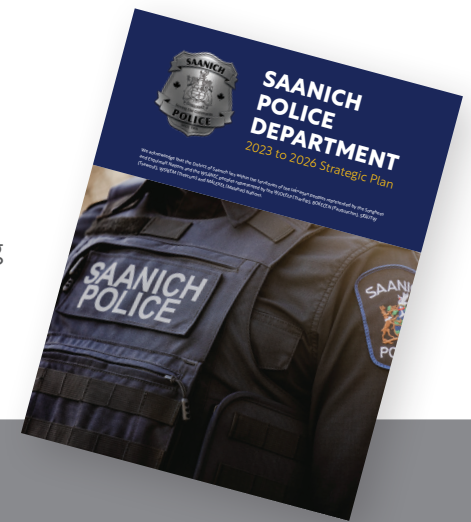
We sincerely thank Chief Constable Duthie, all sworn and civilian staff, and all volunteers for their professionalism, commitment, courage, and resilience as they continue to work hard to earn and maintain our community's trust and confidence through the delivery of professional, respectful, and compassionate policing services to all who live, work and play in Saanich.





# STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2023, SPD published a new Strategic Plan to lay the groundwork for the next few years. The following four strategic priorities and their accompanying sub-strategies outline where we are focusing our efforts during this time.



## SERVICE EXCELLENCE

1. Ensure Investigative Excellence
2. Address Interpersonal Violence
3. Enhance Road Safety
4. Provide Victim & Witness Support

## ENHANCE COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

1. Engage with Youth
2. Further Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion
3. Maintain Open Communication

## ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE & GROWTH

1. Promote Health and Wellness
2. Invest in Training & Development
3. Seek Appropriate Resourcing
4. Sustain Internal Communications

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & INNOVATION

1. Facilitate Collaboration & Partnerships
2. Enable Effective and Efficient Services
3. Advance Crime Prevention







# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## DIVISION RESTRUCTURE

Under the supervision of the Officer in Charge of the Community Engagement Division, Community Liaison Officers are responsible for delivering crime prevention initiatives and community education programs to the citizens of Saanich. In 2023, SPD restructured our Community Engagement Division to enhance our relationships and build opportunities in the community with a focus on youth, LGBTQ2S+, older adults, and diverse populations in Saanich.



# PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

A primary mandate of our Bike Section is to conduct daily patrols of our parks and green spaces to engage with persons experiencing homelessness, check their welfare, connect them with services, and ensure compliance with the District of Saanich's Parks Management and Control Bylaw. For many of these vulnerable persons, our Bike Section officers are the most consistent group of people checking in on them, and through these relationships we have been able to achieve some notable outcomes for unhoused persons in our community.

In the spring of 2023, Community Engagement members hosted a seminar in partnership with the Alliance to End Homelessness in the Capital Regional District. The seminar was designed to hear the experiences of person's facing homelessness and their relationship with police in the region. Through the seminar, a better understanding of perspectives was achieved and was deemed a success by all involved.

**42**  
referrals were provided to persons experiencing homelessness related to housing, mental health, shelters, medical support, and other necessities

**2,857**  
park checks conducted in 2023

**88 (3%)**  
park checks conducted as a result of a complaint

**Of those sheltering at a park when asked to leave**





## YOUTH GANGS

In response to a noted increase in individuals involved in Lower Mainland gangs engaging with youth at local area schools in 2023, the Saanich Police Community Engagement Division in partnership with Victoria, Oak Bay and Central Saanich Police have launched an educational series to protect youth.

The information provided to parents, caregivers, youth, and other concerned community members was intended to educate in the areas of local gang related activity, early risk factors, social media use, substance use, and resources available to assist.

## FREE GANG EDUCATION & TRENDS - SEMINAR



**REGISTER  
NOW!**

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17TH  
6:30 - 8:30PM  
ROYAL OAK MIDDLE  
SCHOOL

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS TO BETTER  
UNDERSTAND GANG TRENDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

- Understand current and local gang-related activity
- Identify early risk factors
- Awareness and education on social media/substance use trends

- Importance of accessing community-based supports
- Parent Resources and Guides
- Live Q&A
- Prize Draw - Free One Time Saanich Rec Drop In Passes**

Saanich Police in collaboration with Central Saanich, Oak Bay, Victoria Police Departments and partnership with Saanich Community Services Youth Division.







communityengagement@saanichpolice.ca    www.saanich.ca/youth    250.475.7600



## COMMUNITY SAFETY SERIES

Our role in some Saanich schools has changed as a result of the School District 61 Trustees decision ending police educational programming and support in schools. We have reassigned some of our School Resource Officers to implement alternative engagement strategies to connect and deliver crime prevention information for youth and other diverse community groups.

Working in partnership with Saanich Recreation, we delivered a series of educational talks called the Community Safety Series. The sessions included:

- New Driver Education
- Relationship Safety for Youth
- Halloween Safety
- Beat the Fraudster
- Older Adult Road Safety



# CRIME AND ENFORCEMENT

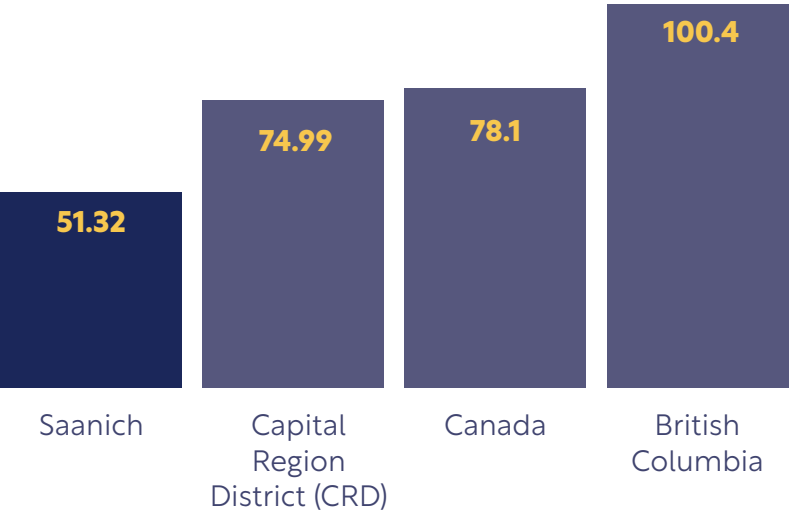
## CRIME RATE

[Click here to view our Quarterly Reports.](#) These reports provide statistics on violent crime, property & financial crime, traffic incidents, and non-criminal events.

## CRIME SEVERITY INDEX

Saanich has one of the lowest Crime Severity Indexes (CSI)\* in the province – an important measure of community safety.

The Crime Severity Index (CSI) uses police-reported crime data to measure the impact of crime in a geographic area by tracking both the prevalence of crime and the seriousness of the offences being committed.



**24,889**  
TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE IN 2023

## USE OF FORCE

In 2023, 99.4% of our calls were resolved without the use of force. The majority of operational policing responses in Saanich, that involve use of force, are limited to a police weapon being displayed\*\* without application/discharge. When required, force options are employed to gain control of an armed or violent subject using no more force than necessary. Officers are required to complete a provincially mandated Subject Behaviour Officer Response (SBOR) report after they use any of the following force options:

Use of physical control	Application of a vascular neck restraint
Intermediate weapon display, discharge or application	Firearm display or discharge
While in charge of a police dog, the dog bites a person's body or clothing	Use of a weapon of opportunity

There were 152 SBOR Reports completed in 2023. These reports facilitate oversight and supervisor review to ensure that the use of force employed was in accordance with the *Criminal Code*, the British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS), and SPD policy and training.

\*2023 Crime Severity Index data not available at the time of publishing; Data retrieved from Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas (statcan.gc.ca)

\*\*The act of pointing, aiming or showing an intermediate weapon or a firearm at or to a person without discharging it, for the purpose of generating compliance from a person.

## ILLICIT DRUG ENFORCEMENT

We are continuing to work in support of provincial harm reduction strategies to reduce overdose deaths. Protecting young people by keeping drugs out of our schools and public spaces is of equal importance. Our Street Crime Unit (SCU) led the first organized vape sale investigation in Canada under the new *Tobacco and Vaping Product Act* legislation. This investigation interrupted the illegal sale of vapes to youth and resulted in the seizure of over \$100,000 in products.

In 2023, SCU was active in more than 40 investigations resulting in the seizure of over 30 kg of illegal drugs, over \$55,000 in Canadian currency and numerous firearms.

*\*The data on this page are subject to change and represent the file information at time of data retrieval.*

**As a result of our proactive drug files, we seized:**

**1.2 kilograms**  
of cocaine

**28 kilograms**  
of psilocybin

**877 grams**  
of metham-  
phetamine

**658 grams**  
of fentanyl





# VICTIM AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

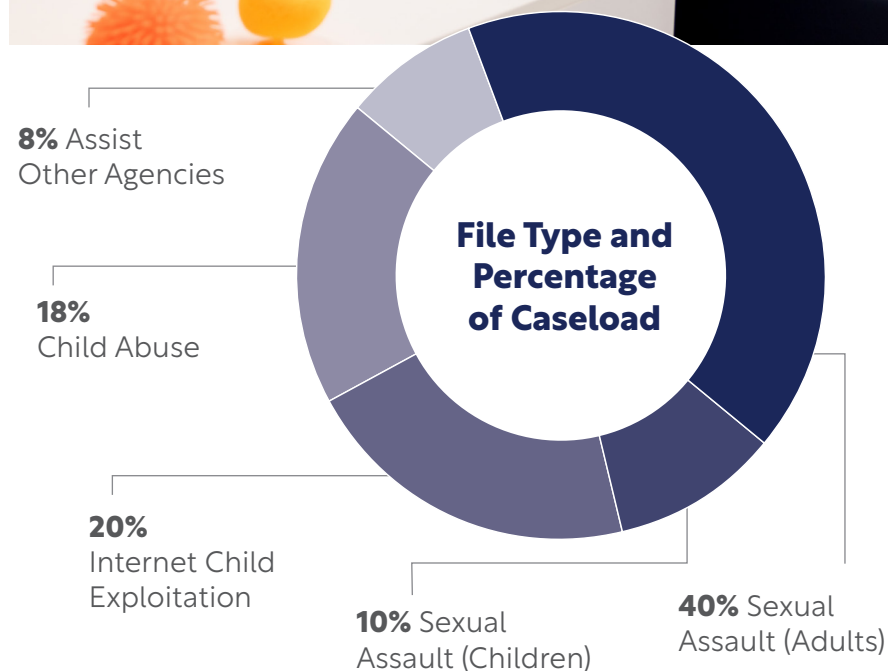
## SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION (SIS)

Consisting of two sergeants and seven constables, the Special Investigations Section (SIS) is responsible for investigating and supporting victims of crimes pertaining to current and historical sexual offences against all persons, offences against children, and Internet Child Exploitation (ICE). SIS specialists review all intimate partner and family violence investigations and Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS) reports, completed by frontline officers, which helps investigators detect links between crimes and identify serial crimes and criminals.

In 2023, SIS managed 214 new files: 40% of the investigations involved allegations of sexual assault involving adults, 10% involved allegations of sexual assault against children, 20% involved allegations of internet child exploitation, 18% involved allegations of child abuse, and 8% consisted of requests for assistance from other agencies. Other file types included disobeying court orders, sexual online extortion, and intelligence investigations. These files required more than 20 production orders, 10 search warrants and over 300 witness and survivor interviews.

The Saanich Police Department has recently increased the number of its Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) interview rooms to three. Members of SIS have advanced and specialized interview training including Stepwise 360 Child Interviewing and Stepwise 360 Interviewing Trauma Survivors courses. The skills and techniques gained from this training, in addition to the use of the TIP interview rooms, enable officers to conduct evidence-based, trauma-informed, and survivor-led investigations.

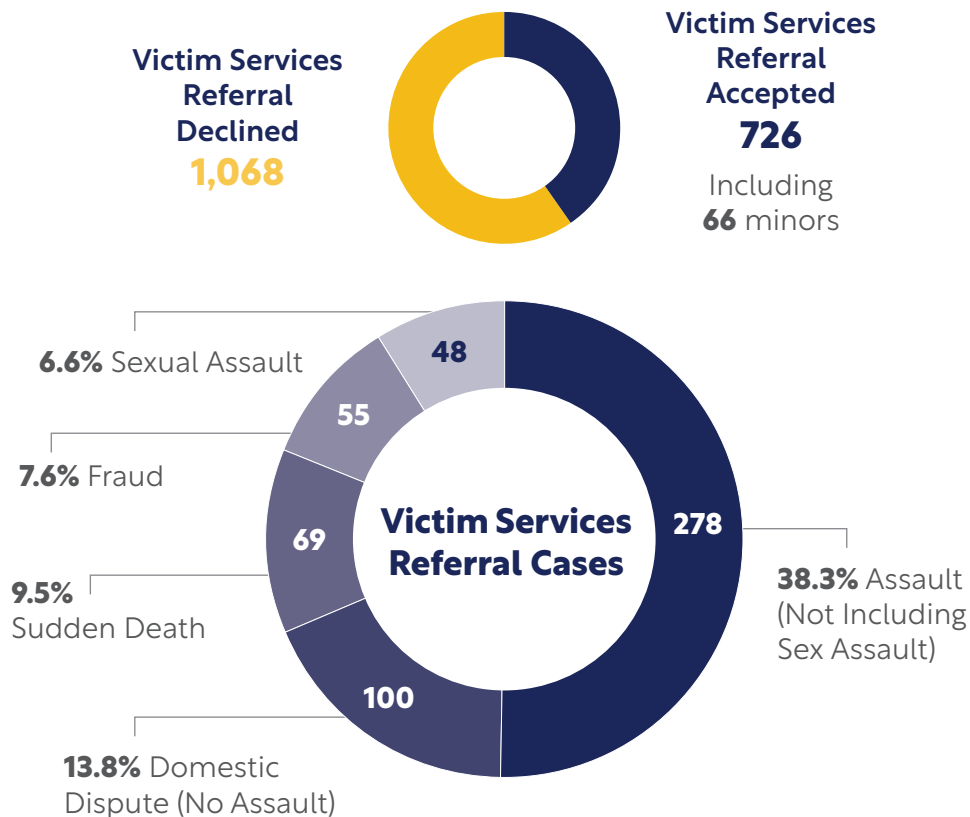
The investigations conducted by SIS are often complicated and prolonged which can have a heavy and lasting impact on the investigator and survivors.



## VICTIM SERVICES\*

Victim Services support is offered to all victims of crime and our officers make the referral if requested by the victim. Victim Services is operated by the Greater Victoria Police Victim Services (GVPVS) and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Support from GVPVS volunteers empowers people to make well-informed choices about what will best assist them on their path to recovery. Highly trained staff provide emotional and practical support and share information on police files, police procedures, the court system, referrals to community supports, assistance with Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) applications and victim impact statements.



\*The data on this page are subject to change and represent the file information at time of data retrieval.





## MENTAL HEALTH\*

### Mental Health Calls for Service

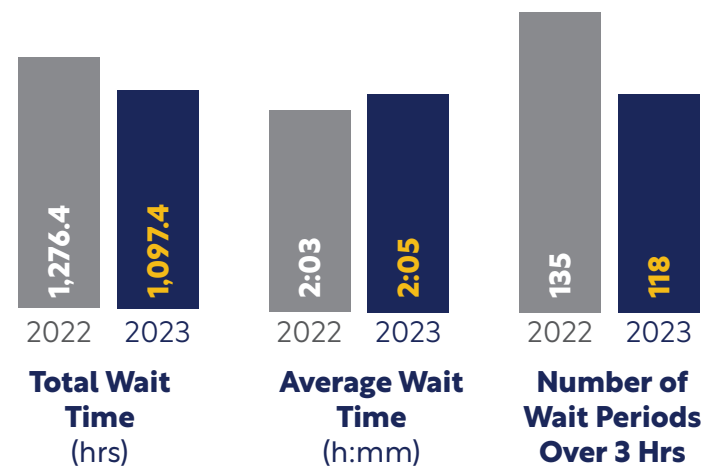


## HOSPITAL WAIT TIMES

Police officers often encounter people with mental illness or requiring urgent treatment based on their mental wellbeing. A mental health apprehension occurs when an officer believes an individual must be assessed by a medical professional because they are a danger to self or others and believed to be suffering from a mental illness. In 2023, SPD made 621 *Mental Health Act* apprehensions. When a person is apprehended, an officer transports them to a hospital and waits with them until they have been assessed by a physician.

In 2023, our police officers spent an average of **2 hours and 5 minutes** waiting in hospitals (per visit) for apprehended persons to be examined by a medical professional, for a total of **1,097 hours** over the year. This is a significant amount of time that our officers are not available for other public safety functions.

We are working with our partners at Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) to reduce wait times and improve services for people in crisis. Over the next two years, we will implement new technology that will assist our officers in assessing mental health and selecting the appropriate level of intervention.



# PATROL, SPECIALITY UNITS, AND INTEGRATED TEAMS

## PATROL DIVISION

The Patrol Division is the largest operational division in our organization and provides frontline, uniform police services to the municipality of Saanich 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When the community requires assistance and calls the police, it is our patrol officers who respond. This includes emergency response to crimes in progress, investigating offences such as thefts, break and enters, robberies, assaults, assisting people experiencing mental health crises, investigating missing person reports, sudden deaths, noise complaints, domestic disputes and more.

The community's calls for service have increased over time and so has the complexity of each call, resulting in a need for more resources to resolve these situations. The nature of the calls has also changed. Police officers not only respond to calls relating to criminal offences and public safety, but they are often the first (and sometimes the only) level of response to many complex social issues including homeless encampments, addiction, and mental health related issues.

To address the increased workload and maintain our high standard of service without compromising the health of our staff, we are working to expand the Patrol Division by adding new police and Community Safety Officer positions.

## In 2023, the Patrol Division:

- Developed a more robust and collaborative approach to planning for large scale operational and community event deployments.
- Enhanced community relationships with:
  - » The University of Victoria
  - » The Albina Street Supportive Housing Initiative
  - » Victoria Pride Society
  - » African Arts & Cultural Society – Issamba Centre







## TRAFFIC SAFETY UNIT (TSU)

Our Traffic Safety Unit (TSU) members respond to collisions and traffic safety related calls for service. They also conduct proactive enforcement to combat impaired, distracted, and dangerous driving and they protect vulnerable road users through targeted road safety initiatives and public safety campaigns.

### In 2023:

- TSU members worked with Speed Watch volunteers to provide education and awareness prior to enforcement of the District of Saanich's 9 identified priority corridors where speed limits were reduced as part of the District's Speed Limit Establishment Policy Safe Speed Studies.
- TSU was actively involved in the following external committees:
  - » Administrative Traffic Committee
  - » Saanich Road Safety Action Plan Steering Committee
  - » CRD Traffic Safety Commission
  - » TSU also attends the Annual BCACP Traffic Safety Committee conference

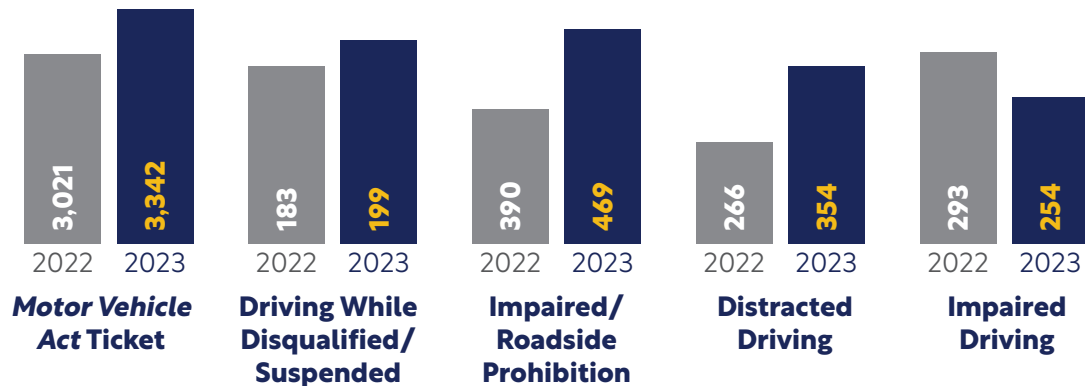


## ROAD SAFETY

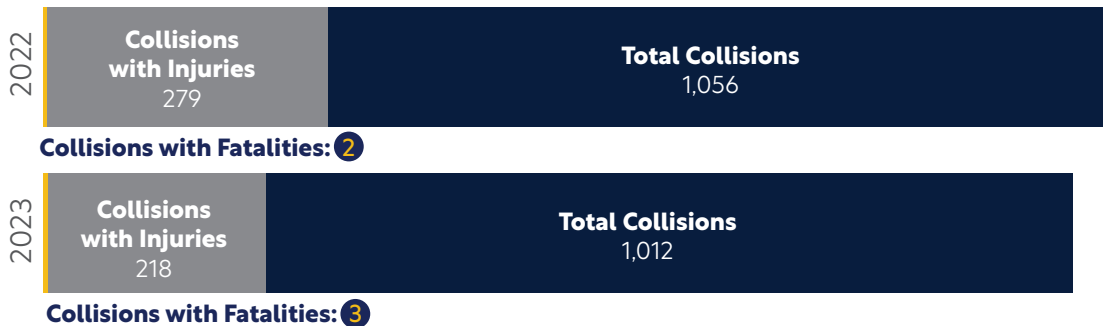
[Click here to see our Road Safety Dashboard.](#)

Road safety is a top priority, and we continue to invest in resources and initiatives that protect all road users. In 2023, there was a significant reduction in the number of collisions and the severity of resulting injuries. We helped to achieve this through strategic road safety initiatives, education, enforcement, and stakeholder collaboration. We have undertaken proactive enforcement to combat impaired, distracted, and dangerous driving. We will continue protect vulnerable road users through targeted enforcement and public safety campaigns.

### Enforcement\*



### Collisions



\*The data on this page are subject to change and represent the file information at time of data retrieval.





## COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICERS (CSO)

Community Safety Officers (CSOs) hold the designation of sworn Special Municipal Constable. CSOs assist regular police officers by completing lower-risk, lower-priority tasks, and functions that do not require a sworn police constable. CSOs also complete proactive tasks within the approved guidelines of the position and assist with community and public events throughout Saanich.

CSOs have played an important role in improving the efficiency of our Patrol Division, completing tasks such as subpoena service, collecting security video evidence as part of criminal investigations, collecting found property, conducting park patrols, and assisting with traffic control following a road collision or downed power lines. This allows our officers to engage in proactive crime suppression work including increased patrols, traffic enforcement and investigation.







## TACTICAL SUPPORT TEAM (TST)

Tactical Support Team (TST) officers are members of the Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team (GVERT). In addition to their GVERT duties, TST officers support SPD frontline operations by responding to calls for service and conducting proactive patrols and enforcement. These officers bring a range of skills and experience that enhance our response to critical incidents. Working with our regional partners, we have improved the effectiveness of this unit to deliver these specialized services 24-hours a day.

### In 2023, TST:

- Developed a collaborative deployment model launched in January 2024. This model is designed to reduce overtime costs and improve efficiency and response times.
- Completed over 400 hours of specialized training.
- Supported 148 GVERT operations across the region.



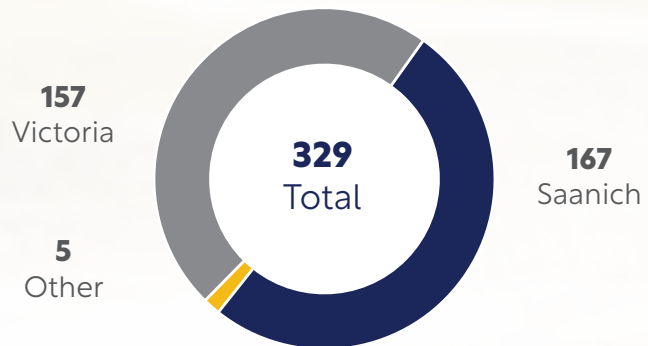
## INTEGRATED CANINE SERVICE (ICS)

In 2021, the Saanich and Victoria police departments partnered to establish the Integrated Canine Service (ICS). ICS officers and their police dogs support our frontline operations 24-hours a day. Some of the services they deliver include tracking suspects, locating missing persons, searching buildings, conducting evidence and explosives searches, and supporting GVERT in resolving critical incidents.

### In 2023, ICS:

- Selected a new canine to join their team.
- Engaged in the selection process to identify a new ICS member.
- Continued integrated training with GVERT.

### 2023 Canine Deployments



The Integrated Canine Service (ICS) operates within the day-to-day operations of both the Saanich Police Department and the Victoria Police Department. ICS members cover front-line patrol duties, handle calls, and manage self-generated files. In 2023, ICS participated in over 2,692 front-line support calls.

**79**  
Deployments  
with GVERT

**64**  
Evidence  
finds

**43**  
Captures or  
arrests

**28**  
Drug/Firearm  
searches

**11**  
Explosive  
searches

**5**  
Canine  
contacts





## PUBLIC SAFETY UNIT (PSU)

The Greater Victoria Public Safety Unit (PSU) is responsible for maintaining public safety and order during large public gatherings including celebrations, demonstrations and protests. PSU is an integrated unit comprised of 70 police officers from Saanich, Victoria, Oak Bay, and Central Saanich police departments. These officers are redeployed from their primary duties during PSU activations for roles in:

- Crowd Management Team
- Search/Canvas Team
- Tactical Team
- Obstruction Removal Team
- Police Liaison Team

Over the past three years, PSU has been deployed an average of 40 times per year across the region; a significant increase from previous years. A recent enhancement to the program is the addition of a Police Liaison Team. This team of officers will contact organizers in advance of a protest event and engage with them to collaborate and achieve an acceptable outcome for all involved. This model has contributed to recent success in balancing the right to peaceful protest with maintaining order. Recent training has been focused on improving police operations during Indigenous protest events through the development of culturally informed plans.





## ALTERNATE RESPONSE UNIT (ARU)

The Alternate Response Unit (ARU) was originally created in 2020 as part of our organization's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by minimizing in-person contacts for calls for service which can be resolved over the telephone or via online communication. This unit assists in reducing call waiting times for lower priority calls and conducts investigations from headquarters with support from frontline officers, when required to follow up or attend in person.

Another significant benefit of ARU is that it has created additional roles for officers to engage in police work when they require temporary accommodation and cannot be fully deployed (e.g., short-term injury, post-surgery rehabilitation, pregnancy etc.).





# SPD CULTURE

## JOIN SPD

Are you interested in applying for a position as a Police Officer, Community Safety Officer, or Reserve Constable? The Saanich Police Department is encouraging and inviting interested applicants to meet with members from our Recruiting Section and apply to work at SPD.

**Click here to pre-register for one of the upcoming free information sessions.**

During the information session, our team will answer any questions you may have and discuss the following:

- Why you should consider a rewarding career with the Saanich Police Department.
- Basic requirements and qualifications for becoming a Saanich police officer.
- Explain the recruitment process and ways to become a more competitive candidate.
- Wage scale, benefits, and support services.

Visit [joinspd.ca](https://joinspd.ca) for more information and **click here to watch our recruiting video.**



## BC'S TOP EMPLOYER

The Saanich Police Department has been selected as one of BC's Top Employers for 2024. As part of the selection process, employers are compared to other organizations in their field to determine which offer the most progressive and forward-thinking programs.

It is an honour to receive this designation for a third consecutive year as it recognizes our ongoing collective and shared efforts, contributions, and commitment to progressive and forward-looking initiatives that focus on modernization, relationships, and organizational health and growth.

Although this is a notable recognition, the senior leadership team fully acknowledges and appreciates that it serves as a platform for us to continuously make additional and new improvements (culture, support systems, opportunities, growth, and relationships).



# 30X30

\*Information retrieved from 30x30 initiative.



*Our first all women Constable shift was deployed in November 2023*

## 30x30 INITIATIVE

The 30x30 Initiative\* is a coalition of police leaders, researchers, and professional organizations who have joined together to advance the representation and experiences of women in all ranks of policing. In 2023, the SPD's 30x30 committee engaged in the following initiatives to enhance the experiences of our policewomen:

- Designed a survey to anonymously gauge the experiences of policewomen to further target areas affecting women at SPD.
- Met with multiple policewomen to further understand their concerns and experiences.
- Provided more avenues for the inclusion of policewomen at recruiting events.
- Guarantee that pregnant officers are assigned to more rewarding positions to further career development.
- Guarantee that policewomen who go on parental leave will return to their previous work assignments.
- Guarantee there is representation from policewomen on promotional and hiring panels.

[Click here to watch our Women in Policing video.](#)

## BEACON

In 2022, we welcomed Beacon, our Operational Stress Intervention Dog (OSID). Beacon was donated to us by Wounded Warriors Canada in partnership with Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs. Beacon completed a two-year training program before his permanent placement with SPD.

Beacon's primary role is to provide support for our staff to reduce occupational stress injuries. Beacon is routinely engaged to support witnesses and survivors during interviews.

Number of sessions, and activity that Beacon participated in:



## WELLNESS OFFICER

In 2023, SPD created a new Staff Sergeant position to serve as our organization's Wellness Officer. The Wellness Officer oversees the department's support programs including Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Peer Support, and the Re-Integration teams. Some of the highlights of this position in the first few months include:

1. Wellness Talks
  - One-on-one conversations with members from work units to explore what is working well within their team, what could be improved, identify stressors, and determine ways to move forward and manage team stress.
2. Coping & Burnout Workshop
  - Training for CISM, Peer Support, and Reintegration teams.
3. Coordinated sending members to the British Columbia Police Association (BCPA) Resiliency in Policing Program
4. Part of the team that launched the Telus Espri App
  - A convenient and accessible app with all the support services available to employees in one place.





## SPD STAFF

Staff Information (2023)	Number
New Hires: Recruits (Police Officers)*	10
New Hires: Experienced (Police Officers)*	2
New Hires: (Civilian Employees)	11
Police Officers	169
Civilian Employees	70
Volunteers	43
Reserve Constables	30
Community Safety Officers	4
Summer Students	4
Number of employees who speak a language other than English**	78

**Languages Spoken:** Afrikaans, American Sign Language, Cantonese, Croatian, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu

*\*Recruit information attributed to attrition not added strength.*

*\*\*Language information based on volunteered information.*





## **SAANICH POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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**[Saanichpolice.ca](http://Saanichpolice.ca) | [Joinspd.ca](http://Joinspd.ca)**

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