

# Evaluation summary - Review of Safety and Security Standby Services

---

From: Transport Canada

Standby Services are performed by Transport Canada (TC) employees during weekday off-hours, weekends, and holidays in both headquarters and the regions. Employees on standby field calls about concerns, issues, or emergencies in TC's modes of transportation and initiate appropriate response procedures.

The Review assessed Standby Services in TC's Safety and Security Group, both in the HQ and the five TC regions.

## On this page

- [Review methods](#)
- [What we found](#)
- [Recommendations and management actions](#)

## Review methods

Standby hours, the number of interactions, and the type of overtime broken down by mode, region, and year.

## Document review

- Standard Operating Procedures

- Call logs
- Situation Centre (SITCEN) notifications
- 2013 Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP) documents
- Past internal audits

## 94 Interviews

- 84 interviews with TC staff in HQ and the regions
- 10 interviews with representatives of other government departments

# What we found

## There is an ongoing need for standby services in the Safety and Security Group

- Nearly the same volume of notifications sent in the off-hours as during regular work hours
- Overtime for standby accounts for 45% of total overtime in the Safety and Security Group

The pressure to react to events in off hours in a timely and effective manner and to move information quickly through the organization at times **strains the capacity** of current standby arrangements.

**The current standby practices are inconsistent between modes and across regions within the same mode** due to diverse operating contexts, management styles, and lack of a national approach or policy for standby.

Modes and regions **track standby hours, costs, and interactions inconsistently and there are varying practices of logging overtime.** Without consistent tracking of key data, sound decision-making about standby nationally will be challenging.

The current standby approaches require significant competence of and commitment by those few key employees who are at the intersection of 'operational' and 'information flow' needs when an incident occurs in the off hours. The **standby system is extremely reliant on these few individuals**, which in effect renders the system vulnerable in cases where they may be unavailable or leave their positions.

**A number of other federal government departments have similar standby arrangements to TC** and grapple with similar issues of consistency and employee well-being. These departments have also recently examined or modified their standby practices, **but there is no radically different standby approach** that TC could emulate.

There are **two key consequences** to inconsistent standby approaches, which render the current standby practices unsustainable in the long term:

- Uneven workload and compensation leading to perceptions of unfairness
- Elevated and/or continual stress levels leading to adverse impacts on some employees' well-being

## Recommendations and management actions

### Recommendations

1. In the short-term, **implement interim measures to address key risks** identified in this review, namely perceptions of unfairness resulting from uneven workload and compensation, and high stress levels for some employees as a result of their standby duties.
2. TC's Safety and Security Group should **develop and implement a comprehensive national standby policy**.

3. **Carry out a review** 18 to 24 months after the launch of the new policy to ensure adequate and consistent implementation.

## Management Action Plan

In collaboration with regional and HQ partners, including Corporate Services (Human Resources, Finance), Transport Canada's Safety and Security Group will:

1. **Develop and distribute** interim direction to address key risks identified in the review (completed)
2. **Establish an EX-level Working Group** with representation from each mode of transportation within Safety and Security, key HR partners, and each region to deliver on the recommendation (completed)
3. **Develop a national standby policy** (to be completed by January 30, 2023)
4. **Initiate the implementation of the approved policy** across HQ and regional operations (to be completed by January 30, 2023)
5. **Develop a review framework** approved by ADM Safety and Security and ADM Corporate Services (to be completed by February 28, 2023)
6. **Submit result(s)** of the review, including, as necessary, any proposed adjustments for senior management consideration (to be completed by June 30, 2024)

**Date modified:**

2022-12-15

Was this page helpful?

