Evaluation of the RCMP Operational Communications Centres

Royal Canadian Mounted Police   Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada

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Acronyms

CM	Civilian Member
OCC	Operational Communications Centre
OCC NSS	Operational Communications Centre National Support Services
PSE	Public Service Employee
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RM	Regular Member
ROCC	RCMP Operational Coordination Centre
ULQA	Unit Level Quality Assurance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The RCMP is responsible for the administration of the Operational Communications Centre (OCC) program. The OCCs play a vital role in front-line policing by providing critical operational support to RCMP regular members (RM) in the field, and are also the first point of contact for the public requesting police assistance in both emergency and non-urgent matters. OCCs are critical to the safety of police and the public.

The RCMP is responsible for 15 provincial and territorial OCCs, two federal OCCs (Ontario and Quebec), and the RCMP Operational Coordination Centre (ROCC) at National Headquarters.

Evaluation Objective and Scope

The objective of the evaluation was to examine the performance (effectiveness and efficiency) of the RCMP's OCCs in accordance with the Treasury Board Policy on Results.

This evaluation was national in scope and focused on the governance and delivery of the OCC program. RCMP divisions and the OCC National Support Services were engaged through interviews and a survey.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation focused on four questions:

1. Does the current structure of the OCC program support effective delivery?
2. Does the OCC program have the appropriate human resources to support program delivery?
3. Is the OCC program achieving its objectives?
4. Is the OCC program operating in an efficient manner?

Key Findings:

1. While there is a governance structure in place for the OCC program, limited national oversight has impacted program delivery.

2. Many OCCs lack sufficient personnel to maintain program delivery over the long term.

3. OCC training is preparing operators to perform the core duties; however, barriers exist to better preparing employees for the role of an OCC operator.

4. OCC operators are experiencing high levels of work-related stress, resulting in employee burnout and an increased number of vacancies.

5. Current mental health and wellness resources are insufficient for OCC employees and are inconsistent across divisions.

6. The OCC program provides effective support to RCMP RMs; however, staffing shortages limit the overall effectiveness of service delivery.

7. While some OCCs have realized efficiencies in certain areas, there may be opportunities to achieve greater program efficiency overall.

Recommendations:

1. Examine the governance of the OCC program with a view to enhancing national oversight of its design and delivery, including establishing and communicating clear roles, responsibilities, and authorities within the OCC program.

2. Establish a national recruitment and retention strategy that incorporates the sharing of lessons learned and best practices, and encourages collaboration across the program.

3. Update training to ensure it better prepares operators, fulfills the needs of all OCCs, and reflects the recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission and other reviews.

4. Establish an OCC-specific health and wellness strategy to ensure employees are receiving sufficient and consistent support.

5. Strengthen the approach to performance measurement with the objective of enhancing program efficiency, supporting decision-making and monitoring program effectiveness.

Approach

Evaluation Objective and Scope

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2. Does the OCC program have the appropriate human resources to support program delivery?

3. Is the OCC program achieving its objectives?

4. Is the OCC program operating in an efficient manner?

*The evaluation did not include analysis of municipal or private OCCs that serve the RCMP.

Data sources

Interviews: 43	Program Data	Document Review: 37
In-person and video interviews were conducted with: • OCC managers (19) • OCC personnel (7) • OCC senior management (8) • OCC municipal employees (2) • OCC clients (7)	Available RCMP administrative and financial data was collected and analyzed: • Performance data from OCC NSS • Performance data from OCCs • Overall expenditures for OCC program	Internal documentation was reviewed, such as: • Internal reports • Media articles • Foundational documents (e.g., Standard Operating Procedures) • Union guidance documents • Meeting minutes and records of decision • Annual reports • Reviews and assessments • Presentations and briefings

Site Visits	Survey	
The evaluation team visited 9 of 17 OCCs, and the ROCC, during the course of the evaluation. • H Division (1) • J Division (1) • O Division (1) • F Division (1) • E Division (4) • M Division (1) • ROCC	Two online surveys were conducted between May and June 2024 to gather insights about the effectiveness and efficiency of RCMP OCCs, and explore opportunities for continuous program improvement. Operator Survey – All OCC operators (753) received an invitation to participate in the survey. 268 individuals responded – for an overall response rate of 36%. OCC Client Survey – The survey was sent to district, detachment and unit commanders, who were asked to share with other potential respondents. As a result, a response rate cannot be calculated, but 232 responses were received.	

Limitations

| Limitation	Mitigation
Survey response rates	
• Participation was voluntary and may have been influenced by respondents' shift and leave schedules. • There may have been survey fatigue, as there were multiple surveys scheduled over the same period.	• Reminder emails were sent to notify potential respondents of the limited survey administration period. • The surveys were left open for as long as possible to ensure ample time for respondents.
Limited data	
• There was limited data available related to program outcomes / program outcomes were not easily quantified.	• Multiple data sources were used to validate findings, including perspectives of key stakeholders through interviews and a survey.
Gender-based Analysis Plus	
• There was limited equity, diversity and inclusion data available to inform a comprehensive analysis.	• Interviews were used to determine if there were issues or barriers to specific groups.

Context

Program overview

The OCCs play a vital role in front-line policing by providing guidance to members of the public and ensuring police officer safety. Unlike other federal call operators, OCC operators work within a high-stress operational environment, require specialized training to handle emergency situations, and fall under a distinct occupational group in recognition of their unique role. OCC operators are the first person a caller speaks to when calling 9-1-1. Operators are required to keep callers calm, get as much information as they can, relay the information to front-line members, and calmly reassure the public that help is on the way. Operators are also vital to officer safety as the communications link to on-duty police officers, and they use a variety of police systems to assist and provide valuable information to members in the field.

OCC NSS is the national policy and support centre for all OCCs. OCC NSS oversees OCC standard operating procedures and national policy, manages the national training and awards programs, facilitates the knowledge transfer and sharing of best practices across divisions, and consults in upgrading OCC technology.

OCC expenditures
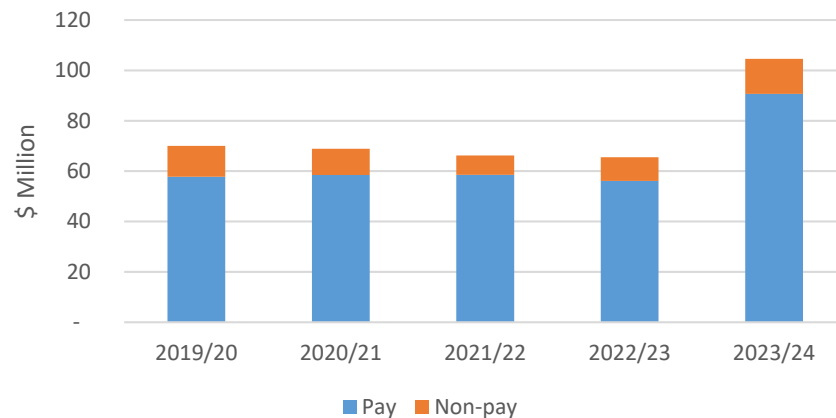
Note: Fiscal year 2023/24 includes back pay resulting from the collective agreement for Telecommunications Operators, which was signed in 2023.

OCCs in contract divisions

RCMP OCCs serving contract divisions serve two primary functions:
1. The OCC is the first point of contact for the public requesting police assistance in both emergency and non-urgent matters.
2. The OCC provides critical operational support to RCMP members in the field, by dispatching them to calls, monitoring their safety through regular check-ins, and providing them with timely and accurate information.

OCCs in federal divisions

RCMP OCCs serving federal divisions rarely answer calls from the public or police for emergency purposes. Instead, these OCCs support RCMP members in federal policing roles and often work with other government departments in support of public safety. For example, federal OCCs work with local police and the Canada Border Services Agency on border integrity issues, respond to queries from other government departments, and monitor security cameras and secure location alarms.

The ROCC

The ROCC contributes to developing and maintaining situational awareness for senior management and consists of three distinct components:
1. An external and internal point of contact for all RCMP business lines.
2. A strategic information management center for decision-makers.
3. A national level emergency operations centre.

The RCMP has approximately 750 OCC positions to provide emergency and administrative services in 17 contract and federal OCCs across Canada, as well as in the ROCC.

OCC employees have, historically, been civilian members (CM), but positions are being transitioned to public service employees (PSE) as CMs leave the OCC.

In 2023, the first collective agreement covering employees in the Law Enforcement Support and Police Operations Support groups was signed between the Treasury Board and the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 104. This agreement was with a newly created occupational group (Telecommunications Officer – LES-TO and PO-TCO), which includes both CMs and PSEs. However, the two categories of employee are subject to different terms and conditions of employment.

Proportion of CMs vs. PSEs
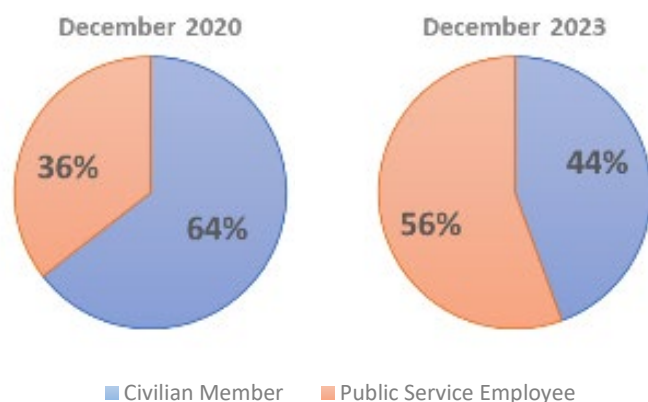
RCMP Operational Communication Centres
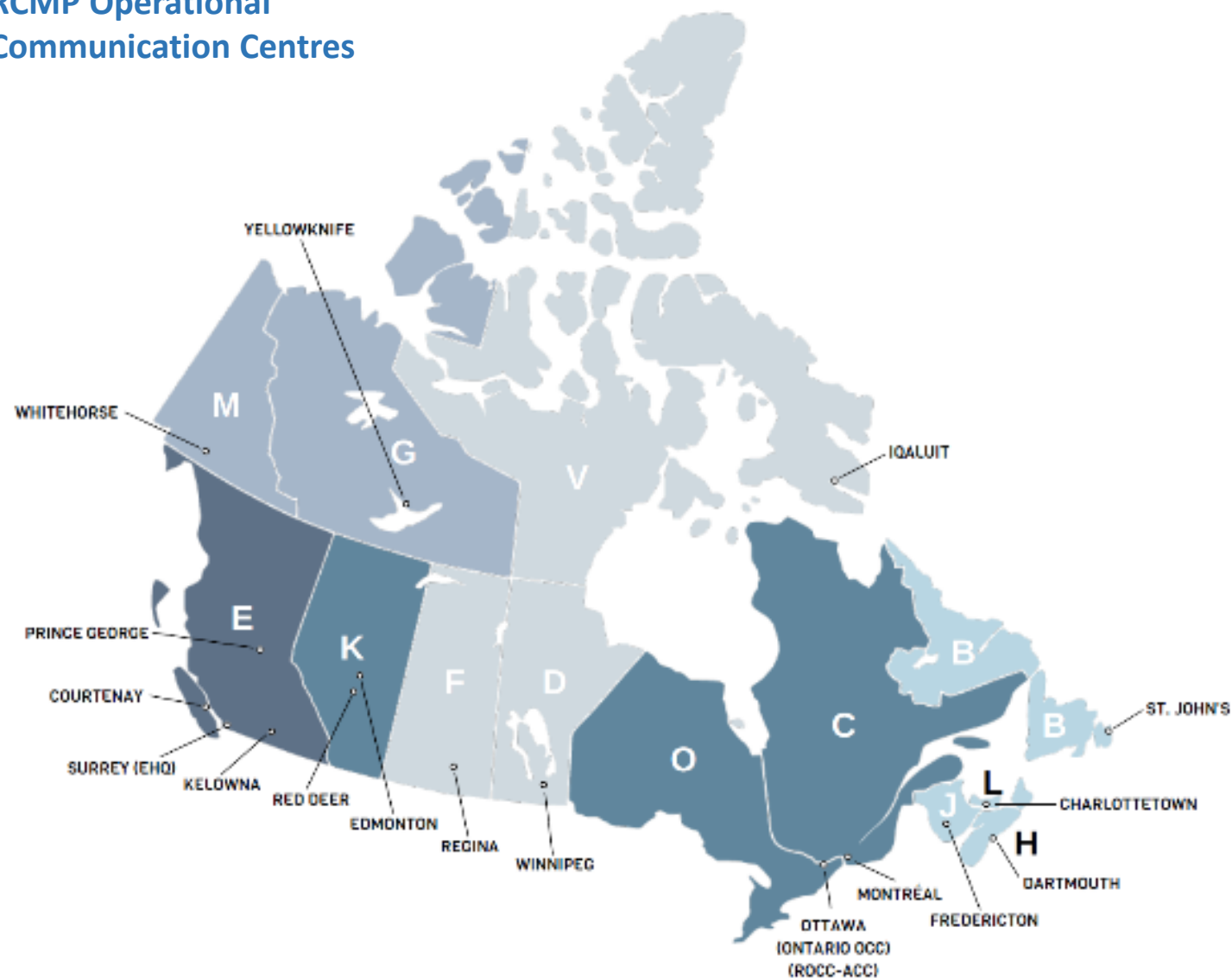
Key Findings

Governance

FINDING #1

While there is a governance structure in place for the OCC program, limited national oversight has impacted program delivery.

Roles and responsibilities of OCCs are not clearly understood across the RCMP.

- Many OCC managers suggested that while the roles and responsibilities of OCCs are well understood within the the OCC program, external program stakeholders have varying degrees of understanding. For example, others are not always clear on the specific responsibilities of OCCs or assume that the OCC is a catch-all for queries and requests.

- A few OCC managers noted that their OCC is not always included in pertinent discussions with other RCMP partners, which can create gaps in information as well as misinformation regarding the OCC's core duties.

- Roles and responsibilities also vary across OCCs, which can further confuse clients and partners. For example, some OCCs deliver additional services while others focus on core duties. These variations can be the result of resource challenges, larger vs. smaller OCCs, and regional differences.

- The role of OCC NSS is to oversee the OCC program, including developing standard operating procedures and policy; assisting with knowledge transfer and sharing of best practices across divisions; supporting municipal, contract and federal OCCs; and, consulting on and taking part in upgrading OCC technology.

FINDING #1 (continued)

A lack of clear policy and central oversight has resulted in inconsistent application of policies and procedures.

- Standard operating procedures exist for operators, and there are training standards. However, there are limited policies governing the OCC program. Furthermore, the policy centre (OCC NSS) is chronically understaffed and holds no authority over the OCCs to ensure consistent and effective program delivery.
    - For example, OCC NSS has not had the capacity to conduct Unit Level Quality Assurance (ULQA) of OCCs. There is a plan to initiate ULQA in fall 2024; however, OCC NSS emphasized they lack the required authority to enforce OCC participation.

- Some divisions feel there is a lack of support from National Headquarters and they are left to figure things out on their own, which can lead to divisions working in a silo and thereby creating inconsistencies.
    - For example, OCCs conduct their own recruitment and hiring activities with little support from OCC NSS, and there are inconsistencies in the application and interpretation of policies.

- While there is some sharing of best practices amongst OCCs (e.g., monthly meetings, training coordinator working group), there is room for more information sharing opportunities in other areas, such as recruitment, human resource planning, professional development opportunities, and employee wellness support.

- Significant differences in the activities of contract OCCs versus federal OCCs and the ROCC make policy and oversight a challenge.

Performance data is collected in some divisions; however, it is not leveraged at a national level by program decision-makers.

- OCC NSS collects limited data (staffing and call numbers), but the data is not used in any meaningful way to support decision making.

- OCCs are collecting and reporting data to varying degrees at the divisional level. There are different phone systems in use across the country, and some divisions have limitations due to older/lower quality systems which make it impossible to retrieve data.

Why it matters
A decentralized approach to the OCC program has advantages in terms of reflecting local and divisional needs. However, without more coordination from a centralized authority and a strategic approach to the program, consistency and opportunities for efficiency are lost, and the organization is open to potential risk if policies and standards are not enforced.

Staffing

FINDING #2

Many OCCs lack sufficient personnel to maintain program delivery over the long term.

Staffing levels are a significant issue for the majority of OCCs.

- Program data indicates that the number of positions that are staffed have decreased by 9% across all OCCs since 2019 (pre-pandemic).

- The number of employees that were actively working, (i.e. not on leave) has decreased by 19% since 2019.
  - Contract and federal OCCs both experienced these decreases, while the ROCC remained relatively stable.

- The number of hard vacancies has doubled (up 103%) across all OCCs since 2017.
  - Contract OCCs increased by 116%, the ROCC by 100%, and federal OCCs by 20%.
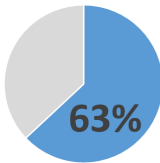
FINDING #2 (continued)

- While staffing levels have decreased, call volumes have remained the same, or increased, at most OCCs since 2020, which has increased the workload for OCC employees.
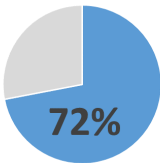
72% of contract OCC employees disagreed that their OCC has enough staff to handle the typical workload. 34% of federal OCC and ROCC respondents disagreed.

63% of employees responded that they often (27%) or sometimes (36%) work overtime.
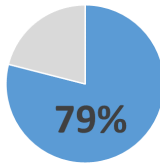
79% of supervisors responded that they often (56%) or sometimes (23%) perform duties that fall outside their job description. Almost all said it was to cover the duties of an operator due to staff shortages.

Recruitment

- Recruitment continues to be a priority for many OCCs in an effort to address consistently low staffing levels.

- OCCs are responsible for their own recruiting and the approach is inconsistent across OCCs.
  - Some (typically larger) OCCs have personnel dedicated to recruiting, but many do not. In most cases, having a recruiter comes at the expense of not having another operator on the floor.

- There has been no coordination of recruiting at a national level, such as the sharing of best practices and tools, or an analysis of which characteristics should be focused on to find people who are the right fit for the unique challenges of the job.
  - Recently, K Division (Alberta) has validated a tool that has proven effective in pre-screening candidates based on certain criteria, which may mitigate against hiring individuals who are not suitable for the job.

- Managers indicated that the pay increase resulting from the collective agreement for OCC operators signed in 2023 has helped, but there are still several barriers to recruiting and hiring new employees, including the length of the hiring process, security clearances, the typing criteria within the assessment tool (CRITICALL), and competition from other employers in some regions.
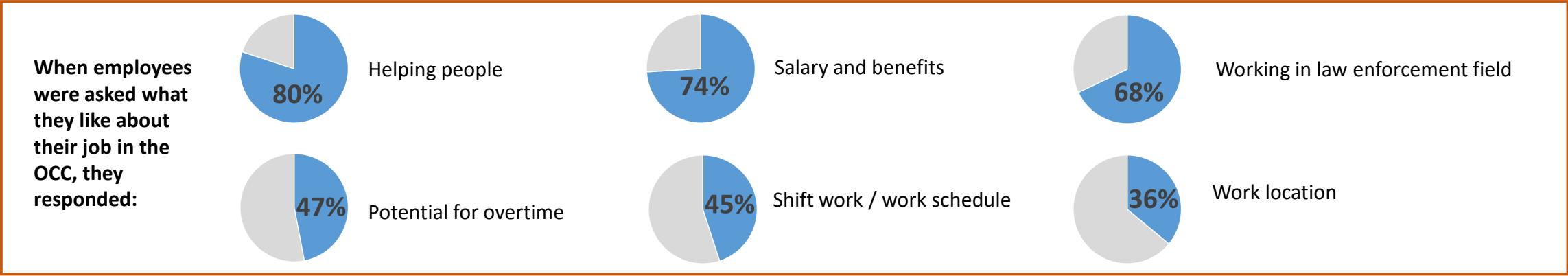
FINDING #2 (continued)

Retention

- Managers indicate that, while the recent salary increase has had a positive impact, other aspects of the job as an OCC operator make retaining employees a challenge, including:

  - Shift work – working on weekends and holidays;
  - Regular overtime;
  - Inability to work remotely;
  - Difficulty maintaining work/life balance;
  - Limited career opportunities with few options for professional development; and,
  - Job related trauma.

Why it matters
Many OCCs are short staffed, which has an impact on employee wellness and can result in inferior service to front-line police officers and the public.

*The impacts of low staffing levels will be explored in more detail later in this report.

- Another aspect that makes retaining employees difficult is the ongoing shift from OCC operators occupying CM positions to PSE positions.
  - The PSE classification allows for greater ease of movement within the Government of Canada. Other job opportunities, both inside the RCMP and externally, are easily accessible for PSEs and can offer them more favourable working conditions, such as better pay, opportunities for advancement, telework, improved work/life balance, etc.
  - This issue is particular to areas where there is a significant Government of Canada presence, or where an OCC is co-located with a large divisional headquarters.

When employees were asked what they like about their job in the OCC, they responded:

|		
80% Helping people	74% Salary and benefits	68% Working in law enforcement field
47% Potential for overtime	45% Shift work / work schedule	36% Work location

Training delivery

FINDING #3

OCC training is preparing operators to perform the core duties; however, barriers exist to better preparing employees for the role of an OCC operator.

Standardized training is preparing operators.

- Operators and managers feel that OCC standardized training is preparing operators for the core duties of the job.

- Some challenges related to training were identified:
    - Classroom simulations may not be adequate.
    - There is a lack of mental health, or resilience, training.
    - Training is limited to initial training, with little to no ongoing training.
    - Staffing shortages limit the ability of people to pursue professional development opportunities.
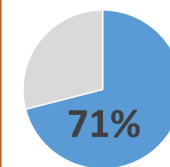
71% of employees agreed that initial OCC classroom training prepared them for the job.
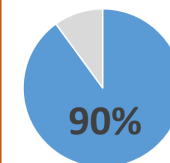
90% of employees agreed that field coaching prepared them for the job.

Field coaching

- Field coaching is an integral part of the training a new operator receives, as that is where they take the skills learned in the classroom and apply them in "the real world" with an experienced operator there to guide and advise them.

- Some challenges specific to field coaching were identified by managers.
    - Staffing shortages have led to a lack of sufficient field coaches, and good ones are being burnt out.
    - OCC field coaches receive no compensation for the added duties. Of note, field coaches for new RMs receive a 3.5% bonus.
        - Prior to the signing of the collective agreement, divisions were compensating their OCC employees in a variety of ways. As they are no longer permitted to do so, OCC staff are more reluctant to act as a field coach.

FINDING #3 (continued)

OCC NSS has developed standardized training which is intended to be delivered in line with policy and consistently across the country.

- Training is delivered at the divisional level as opposed to from one central training centre.
  - A benefit of training at the divisional level is that it allows OCCs to train their employees on the equipment they will be using in their job and to include any divisionally specific information.
  - A drawback of this model is that it opens the door for potential inconsistency.

- The level of consistency in training is largely unknown, as OCC NSS has had limited capacity and authority to provide oversight.
  - OCC NSS is planning to ask the divisions to conduct Unit Level Quality Assurance, but lacks the authority to mandate participation.

- Standardized training is geared heavily to those who will be employed in contract OCCs, and therefore federal OCCs and the ROCC have had to develop their own training specific to their needs to build on the standardized training.

Although the training is effective in preparing operators for core duties, interviewees noted that it needs to be reviewed and updated.

- OCC NSS is currently in the process of updating the standardized training program.

- A working group of training coordinators across the OCCs has been established to modernize the program.

- The March 2023 Final Report of the Mass Casualty Commission (Joint Federal/Provincial Commission into the April 2020 Nova Scotia Mass Casualty) contained multiple recommendations that identified areas where OCC operators required additional training. (Appendix B)

Why it matters
While training is teaching new OCC operators the basics of the job, there are gaps that require attention to ensure that OCCs are able to continue to provide a high level of service to RMs and the public.
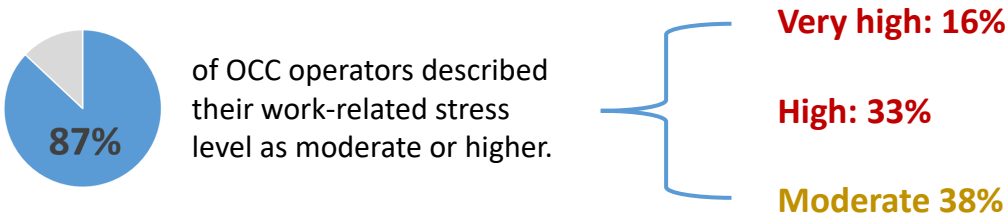
Health and wellness

FINDING #4

OCC operators are experiencing high levels of work-related stress, resulting in employee burnout and an increased number of vacancies.
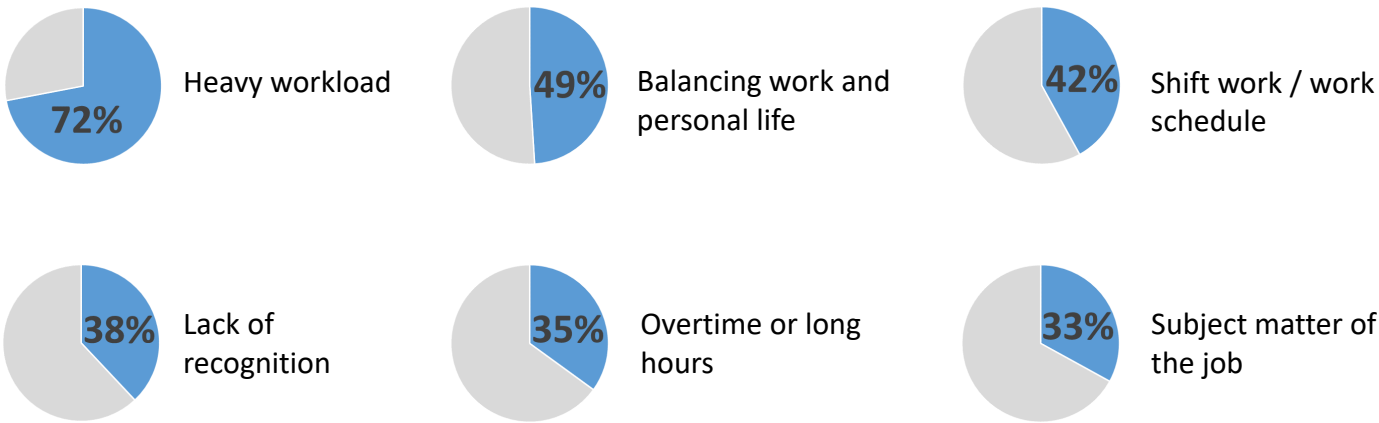
Employees reported high levels of work-related stress.

- A survey of all OCC operators found:

87% of OCC operators described their work-related stress level as moderate or higher.

Very high: 16%

High: 33%

Moderate 38%

- Federal OCC and ROCC employees reported lower levels of work-related stress than contract: 24% at a high level and 69% moderate or higher.

Several factors contribute to work-related stress for OCC employees.

72% Heavy workload

49% Balancing work and personal life

42% Shift work / work schedule

38% Lack of recognition

35% Overtime or long hours

33% Subject matter of the job

FINDING #4 (continued)

OCC employee leave is increasing.

Soft Vacancies

Year	Value
2017	~165
2018	~138
2019	~137
2020	~133
2021	~192
2022	~170
2023	~180

(Chart with y-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250; x-axis: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)

- The number of soft vacancies has increased by 31% since 2019.

- Program data shows more employees are taking leave, which puts pressure on the remaining employees who then have to handle more calls, have less downtime, work more overtime, etc.
  - OCC managers reported the increase is linked to a significant increase in sick leave in recent years.

- Anecdotally, there is a sense from some OCC managers that calls have become increasingly violent or distressing, which also puts more pressure on operators.

Why it matters
The work of an OCC operator involves a certain amount of unavoidable stressors, many of which are being exacerbated by low staffing levels.

BURNOUT

BALANCE

Health and Wellness

FINDING #5

Current mental health and wellness resources are insufficient for OCC employees and are inconsistent across divisions.

Operators have access to RCMP mental health supports, but could benefit from more resources.

- Operators have access to all the same mental health supports as other PSEs/CMs but the work they do is very different.

- When asked what could be done to better support their health and well-being, common replies were to hire more staff, allow more flexibility in scheduling, provide more mental health supports, and improve facilities/amenities.

- Managers feel there needs to be more resources available to OCC employees that reflect the work they do.

- There is a sense that operators are not seen as frontline workers or first responders, and therefore do not receive the same level of support as RMs.

Some divisions offer additional resources to supplement standard RCMP offerings.

- Some managers have identified a need to provide more mental health resources for their employees and have gone outside the RCMP to access those programs.

- OCC NSS has also identified the need to provide more proactive mental health training and has begun to look into potential tools and resources.

FINDING #5 (continued)

Most employees agree that OCC managers prioritize the well-being of their staff.

76% of employees agreed that their immediate supervisor and manager support their health and well-being.
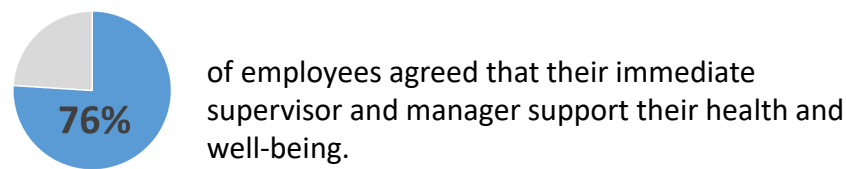
- Some examples of managers' efforts, include:
  - promoting the tools available;
  - checking in on employees after distressing calls;
  - putting employees in touch with supports if necessary; and,
  - allowing an employee to leave the floor as needed after distressing incidents.

There are inconsistencies in the supports provided to operators who are civilian members versus public service employees.

- PSEs and CMs have different benefits packages, which creates a sense of inequity amongst OCC employees.

- For example, PSEs do not have access to RCMP Health Services and Veterans Affairs services and benefits, and therefore find it more challenging to access services.

- Additionally, PSEs have limited sick leave, and have to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave (after sick leave is exhausted) to qualify for disability payments, while CMs have unlimited sick leave.

Why it matters
The RCMP needs to ensure telecommunications operators are receiving adequate support for their mental health to help them cope with job-related stress, and to help build resilience so they can continue to provide an essential service to RMs and members of the public.
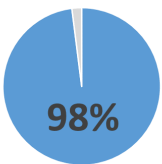
Service delivery

FINDING #6

The OCC program provides effective support to RCMP regular members; however, staffing shortages limit the overall effectiveness of service delivery.

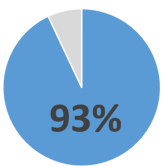## OCCs are delivering effective service to RCMP regular members.

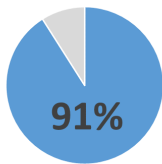- A survey of RMs indicates high levels of satisfaction with OCC services.

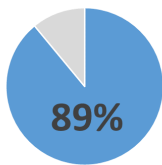**98%** Agreed that OCC operators treat members with respect.

91% Agreed that OCC operators provide members with the information they need.
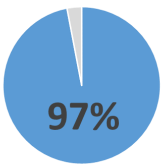
97% Agreed that member safety is a priority to OCC operators.

89% Agreed that the OCC provides all services that members require.

93% Agreed that OCC operators respond to members' requests in a timely manner.
Agreed that OCC operators are knowledgeable and competent.
Agreed that they are satisfied with the service they receive from the OCC.

- When asked for additional comments to close the survey, almost all RMs who responded expressed gratitude for the work that the operators in the OCCs are doing and/or stressed the importance of the role they play.

"The people in OCC are a tremendous and invaluable resource and I am thankful for the work they do every time I go out to work."

"I have the utmost respect for our dispatchers and know they care for our wellbeing."

"The OCC is our lifeline and a valued part of our organization."

"...they are life lines for members in the field."

"I appreciate that our OCC operators have my members' best interests and safety in mind. I view them as an extension of our team when they are out on the roads/street. Thanks to all OCC operators for all they do to assist our members in the field."

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FINDING #6 (continued)

Areas for improvement

- When asked for areas for potential improvement, RMs suggested improved information accuracy and response times.

- RMs also suggested areas where additional support would be beneficial, for example, calling tow trucks, conducting Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) checks, and other tasks that can be time consuming for RMs.
    - However, many respondents acknowledged that OCCs are understaffed and that is impacting service.

Why it matters
OCCs are an essential service to RMs and the public. Staffing shortages limit the effectiveness of the OCCs and could potentially put the safety of RMs and the public at risk.

While it is difficult to assess overall service to the public, wait times have increased in recent years.

- Managers feel the OCCs are providing a good service to the public and receive relatively few complaints, but there is a sense among managers that the level of service is deteriorating, or is at risk due to staffing shortages and operators being overworked.

- Program data indicates that service to the public has suffered, and there is a direct correlation between service metrics, such as wait times and abandoned calls, and staffing levels and call volumes.

- Of the divisions that were able to provide data on wait times, there was an average increase of 100% in wait times from 2019 to 2023. In all cases, staffing levels decreased, call volumes increased, or both.

- Data on abandoned calls was more limited, but showed similar trends.
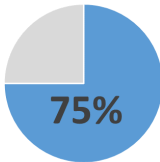
Efficiency

FINDING #7

While some OCCs have realized efficiencies in certain areas, there may be opportunities to achieve greater program efficiency overall.

Access to sufficient and appropriate resources varies across OCCs.

- Some OCCs are in brand new facilities, while others are in aging buildings in repurposed spaces.

- Some OCCs have new phone systems or other new technology, while others run on antiquated phone systems.

- Insufficient internet access and information technology limit effective service delivery and reporting capabilities in some OCCs.
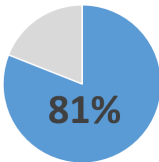
81% of employees agreed they have the tools, technology and equipment to do their job.

75% of employees agreed their physical environment is suitable for their job requirements.

Some OCCs have gained efficiencies through innovative approaches to staffing.

- Most OCCs are using casual employees to cover some shifts to lessen the impact of low staffing.
- Relief work has been used in the past to provide short term support to OCCs, particularly in the north. Low staffing has made it difficult for OCCs to let people go on relief.
- Some OCCs have had success hiring students to work in the summer and other holiday periods.
- Some OCCs have used RMs (who were operators previously) to cover shifts.
- Another potential efficiency some OCCs are undertaking is to create positions to handle administrative tasks, freeing operators to handle more calls and dispatch work.

Why it matters
Strengthened central oversight of the program could lead to increased effectiveness and efficiency by improving consistency and collaboration between the OCCs.

Conclusions

- OCCs are a critical element of RCMP operations.

- The OCC NSS policy centre at National Headquarters lacks the capacity and authority to provide full oversight of the program and foster greater consistency across OCCs.

- OCCs are delivering an effective service to RMs and members of the public, but challenges related to recruitment and retention, training, and employee well-being are a barrier to improved service.

- Severe staffing shortages and their implications (e.g. increased leave, risk of burnout) are a serious threat to the sustainability of the OCC program.

Recommendations

1. Examine the governance of the OCC program with a view to enhancing national oversight of its design and delivery, including establishing and communicating clear roles, responsibilities, and authorities within the OCC program.

2. Establish a national recruitment and retention strategy that incorporates the sharing of lessons learned and best practices, and encourages collaboration across the program.

3. Update training to ensure it better prepares operators, fulfills the needs of all OCCs and reflects the recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission and other reviews.

4. Establish an OCC-specific health and wellness strategy to ensure employees are receiving sufficient and consistent support.

5. Strengthen the approach to performance measurement with the objective of enhancing program efficiency, supporting decision-making and monitoring program effectiveness.

Appendices

Management Response

Contract & Indigenous Policing (C&IP) Senior Management have reviewed the evaluation of RCMP Operational Communication Centres (OCCs) and accept the findings and recommendations as provided by NPES. Implementation of the planned actions below will help to ensure that the OCC program continues to provide effective service to RCMP officers, partners, and the Canadian public. In addition, many of these actions directly align with, and support, key recommendations from the Mass Casualty Commission's Final Report.

The achievement of some key objectives in this Management Response Action Plan is contingent upon the receipt of additional resources. Without additional resources, OCC National Support Services will not have the capacity necessary to adequately address the recommendations and undertake the planned actions.

Recommendation	Planned Action(s)	Diary Date
1. Examine the governance of the OCC program with a view to enhancing national oversight of its design and delivery, including establishing and communicating clear roles, responsibilities, and authorities within the OCC program.	In consultation with the Divisions and Federal Policing, C&IP will review the governance of the OCC program, and: **a. Develop a governance framework for the OCC program** which will outline the roles, responsibilities, authorities, and function of the program. **b. Evaluate the feasibility of developing a National Operational Standard** (NOS) for the OCC program.	May 2026
2. Establish a national recruitment and retention strategy that incorporates the sharing of lessons learned and best practices, and encourages collaboration across the program.	In consultation with CHRO, C&IP will **develop a national RCMP OCC recruitment and retention strategy**, which will include: a. Establishing a national OCC recruiting working group to facilitate the sharing of best practices b. Collaborating with Comms and Recruiting to regularly promote external OCC recruiting content on social media platforms c. Collaborating with Comms and Recruiting to promote the Experienced Police Dispatcher hiring program	October 2025

Recommendation	Planned Action(s)	Diary Date
	d. Collaborating with Depot to promote OCC career opportunities for spouses, family, and friends of Cadets e. Collaborating with Recruiting to redirect deferred applicants towards OCC career opportunities f. Implementing and monitoring results of the national exit interview for departing OCC employees g. Engaging with the divisions to promote career development opportunities for OCC employees, such as relief work, additional training and special event deployments h. Identifying limitations of current technology and evaluating potential technologies to assist with reducing workload in RCMP OCCs	
3. Update training to ensure it better prepares operators, fulfills the needs of all OCCs and reflects the recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission and other reviews.	C&IP will **modernize the National Telecommunications Operator Core Training (NTOCT) program**, which will include: a. Revising, updating, and publishing 7 OCC training courses b. Revising and updating the applicable policy chapters in the national OCC Manual c. Revising and updating the applicable national OCC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) d. Strengthening national oversight of the delivery of the NTOCT program	October 2027

Recommendation	Planned Action(s)	Diary Date
4. Establish an OCC-specific health and wellness strategy to ensure employees are receiving sufficient and consistent support.	In consultation with CHRO, C&IP will **develop a mental health resiliency strategy for the OCC program**, which will include: a. Integrating mental health resiliency training into the National Telecommunications Operator Core Training (NTOCT) program b. Evaluating the viability of additional external, targeted mental health programs for OCC employees c. Collaborating with the Reintegration Program to onboard and expand the program to OCC employees	December 2025
5. Strengthen the approach to performance measurement with the objective of enhancing program efficiency, supporting decision-making and monitoring program effectiveness.	C&IP will **develop a performance measurement framework for the OCC program**, which will include: a. Developing an expanded, regular report to Senior Management utilizing divisional OCC data b. Expanding the OCC resource model to additional divisions to be used to provide evidence to demonstrate resource needs c. Encouraging divisional OCCs to engage with clients to regularly monitor and assess satisfaction with service levels and service delivery	October 2026

Recommendation P.10
CAPTURING INFORMATION FROM 911 CALLS
The Commission recommends that:
All staff at the RCMP Operational Communications Centre and staff at other public safety answering points should have access to 911 call recordings at their desk and be trained in how to play calls back.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT
Standard operating procedures should encourage call-takers, supervisors, and risk managers to review calls whenever it may assist them to glean more information or review the completeness of the incident activity log.

Recommendation P.11
INCIDENT LOGGING SOFTWARE
The Commission recommends that:
The RCMP should review its incident logging software to ensure that it allows call-takers and dispatchers to capture all information, and that standard operating procedures ensure that Operational Communications Centre staff members are able to capture all relevant information, even for complex incidents. These procedures should be scalable so that, during a critical incident, communications operators are following the same procedures they follow for more routine calls.

Recommendation P.12
INCIDENT LOGGING SOFTWARE CALL-TAKER TRAINING AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
The Commission recommends that
The RCMP and Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office should review call-taker recruitment and training to ensure that 911 call-takers are trained to capture all information shared by a community member as fully and accurately as possible, and to listen for background noises or information that may also be important for first responders.
RCMP dispatchers should be trained and standard operating procedures should require that information obtained by call-takers be shared using standard language that signifies the source of the information (e.g., caller says she saw the person carrying a gun; call-taker heard possible gunshots in the background of the call). Important information should be shared repeatedly, and updates or conflicting information should routinely be identified.

Recommendation P.13
RESPONSABILITIES TO 911 CALLS
The Commission recommends that:
(a) The RCMP Operational Communications Centre training and procedures should be amended to emphasize the ethic of care for 911 callers and the central role played by 911 call-takers in eliciting important information from callers and helping community members to stay safe and share information even when they are injured or terrified.
(b) The RCMP instruction to call-takers, issued after the April 2020 mass casualty, to end the conversation with callers who can't see a perpetrator during a critical incident response should be reversed in favour of a policy that gives equal weight to strategies for obtaining relevant information about all aspects of a critical incident including, for example, the location of injured community members and advising callers about steps that will help keep them safe.

Recommendation P.14
EFFECTIVE USE OF POLICE RADIOS
The Commission recommends that
(a) The RCMP should
(i) commission and publicly share an international evaluation of best practices in radio transmission and incorporate the results of this evaluation into its training, policies, and practices;
(ii) conduct a holistic review of radio training for members, supervisors, and dispatchers, including the means by which changes in policy, procedure, and equipment are communicated and implemented;
(iii) prepare plans for managing radio communications during large-scale critical incident responses;
(iv) evaluate radio and uniform design to ensure that the Emergency Request to Talk (ERTT) button is accessible when it is needed; and
(v) incorporate radio use and challenges with radio communication into scenario-based and tabletop training.

(b) RCMP leadership, supervisors, and Operational Communications Centres should
(i) emphasize effective radio use and adherence to proper radio protocols at all times to ensure that good practices are routine; and
(ii) conduct an annual assessment of division-wide compliance with training and policy.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS
- RCMP radio protocol should
    - require that the speaker identify themselves by name, rank, and role if relevant; and
    - identify the intended recipient of the transmission, deliver the message, and await confirmation of receipt by the intended recipient.
- Any upgrades to radio technology should be accompanied by member-wide training and practice.

Appendix C: Scale of Interview Responses

DESCRIPTOR	MEANING
All	Findings reflect the views and opinions of 100% of interviewees
Most	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 75% but less than 100% of interviewees
Many	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 51% but less than 75% of interviewees
Half	Findings reflect the views and opinions of 50% of interviewees
Some	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 25% but less than 50% of interviewees
A few	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least two respondents but less than 25% of interviewees