

# Annual Report 2021-2022



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New Brunswick Police Commission
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## **Transmittal letters**

# From the Minister to the Lieutenant-Governor

# The Honourable Brenda L. Murphy, ONB Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick

#### May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of the New Brunswick Police Commission, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Honourable Kris Austin Minister responsible for the New Brunswick Police Commission

# From the Chair to the Minister Responsible

Honourable Kris Austin Minister of Public Safety

Sir:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of the New Brunswick Police Commission for the fiscal year April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Marc Léger

Chair

New Brunswick Police Commission

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# Message from the Chair

Minister,

It is my pleasure to submit to you the annual report of the New Brunswick Police Commission. As you will see, we have remained focussed and determined on our path of change, outreach, renewal, and modernization. Our dedication to excellence in the civilian oversight of police conduct issues has ensured excellent service and outcomes to all New Brunswicker's.

We have increased our role within the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE) and have benefited from collaboration with other local and provincial partnerships as the role and expectations of policing in Canada continues to evolve. We will remain focussed on our strategic priorities as expressed through our strategic plan to meet current policing challenges as they relate to our mandate.

I welcome the opportunity to serve as Chair of the New Brunswick Police Commission with the support of a dedicated team of Commission members and employees.

Marc Léger

Chair

**New Brunswick Police Commission** 



# Message from the Executive Director

There were many unique challenges for the New Brunswick Police Commission in 2021-2022, as the COVID pandemic continued to impact our operations. I am proud of our staff and members who persevered, adapted to restrictions, and when faced with difficult challenges continued to provide exceptional service to New Brunswickers.

The Commission experienced a great deal of change and growth during the reporting period. The Police Act saw significant revisions to the public complaint process in June of 2021 after much discussion, planning and hard work by various stakeholders, including the Commission, and led by the Department of Justice and Public Safety. Commission staff worked diligently to ensure proper training was carried out, existing complaints complied with the new legislation, and that new policies and procedures were developed and implemented.

Further growth is reflected in the work the Commission has done with our investigators, including finalizing a new process for selection, revision to the list, and training of our new investigators. The Commission also updated its list of arbitrators; created investigators and complaint guidelines; and implemented a new website with the goal of making the complaints process straightforward and accessible for all.

I continued to sit on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE) and in May of 2022 I was elected vice president at CACOLE's National conference. CACOLE includes membership from various administrative conduct oversight agencies, like the Commission, and the serious incident investigation teams from across Canada.

The Commission entered another round of strategic planning that saw its Strategic plan for 2021-2024 finalized in November 2021. We are focussed on streamlining our operations, building our relationships, developing our people, and increasing awareness of the Commission's mandate.

2021-2022 was a period of exceptional change and growth for the Commission, and we continue to work hard for the people of this province and to strengthen the public's confidence in policing and police oversight.

Jennifer Smith
Executive Director

**New Brunswick Police Commission** 

# **Composition of the Commission**

During the reporting period, members of the Commission included: Marc Léger as Chair of the Commission, Lynn Chaplin as Vice-Chair and members Bob Eckstein, Tammy Augustine Thompson, Sandy Ward and Brian Malone.

New member orientation was delivered to all Commission members.

Additional information on our Commission members is available on the Commission's website at <a href="https://nbpolicecommission.ca/">https://nbpolicecommission.ca/</a>.

The Commission employed an Executive Director, a Senior Consultant, an Associate Director and Administrative Officer. Staff are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Commission.

# **Highlights**

The revised *Police Act* came into effect June 11, 2021, and with it, brought significant improvements to the timelines for processing a complaint; however, it also presented significant time challenges within the Commission's operations as existing complaints needed to comply with new legislation while new complaints were still being filed.

Commission staff worked diligently to ensure that existing complaints complied with the new legislation, and that new policies and procedures were implemented, and training carried out.

In addition to changes to the *Act*, the Commission finalized a new process for the selection of investigators, revised the list of investigators, and carried out training our new investigators. The Commission also updated its list of arbitrators; created investigators and complaint guidelines; and implemented a new website.

The *Police Act* allows for the use of arbitration to resolve complaints. Under the *Act*, arbitration hearings use independent arbitrators who act like a judge, hearing the details of the complainant and issuing a decision. The Commission maintains a list of arbitrators which can be found on the Commission's website, in addition to a list of scheduled arbitration hearings and arbitration decisions.



Privacy legislation limits the information the Commission is able to share with the public, however, arbitration hearings are open to the public (unless in rare circumstances the arbitrator, in accordance with the *Act*, closes the hearing to the public). The following arbitration decision was released in September 2021:

# Arbitration decision: In the matter of the *New Brunswick Police Act* and in the matter of an arbitration between: Chief Paul Fiander and Constable Shawn Doucet

The public expects and deserves a high standard of conduct from our Police Officers. In New Brunswick, this standard has been codified in the *Code of Professional Conduct under our Police Act*. Minor breaches of the Code might result in corrective measures like a verbal or written reprimand, whereas extreme breaches could result in a reduction in rank for the Officer, or even dismissal. The most serious cases are often concluded by an arbitration hearing. The details of arbitration hearings are open to the public, and the New Brunswick Police Commission publishes the hearing decisions on our website.

In some cases, it is not one major breach of the Code that leads to an Officer's dismissal, but a series of breaches which when viewed together demonstrate the officer does not meet the standard required of them. An example of this can be found in the arbitration hearing, linked below. The arbitrator found the Officer had in their possession stolen property (belonging to another Officer); had, without just cause, deployed a conducted energy weapon (taser) on an individual; had disobeyed orders by failing to report as required; and had consistently not properly secured his police issued firearm. The actions of the Officer in this case breached the *Code of Professional Conduct* by engaging in discreditable conduct; neglect of duty; insubordinate behaviour; and improper use and care of a firearm. The arbitrator held: "The Officer has not met the standard required of him, and his failures have demonstrated disregard on his part for the expectations imposed on the position of police officer." The Officer in this case was dismissed because they failed to meet the standard of conduct New Brunswick requires from our Police Officers.

The full decision can be found on the Commission's website under publications (<u>Arbitration</u> <u>Decision - Doucet</u>).

# **Compliance**

#### **Complaint process**

A member of the public who believes they have been affected by the operational policies and procedures, or the services of a municipal police force, or the conduct of a member of a police force may file a complaint.

All complaints filed with the Commission are confidential and are discussed only with the parties involved.

Once a complaint is filed, the Commission will confirm whether the complaint is a conduct, service or policy complaint. If it is a service or policy complaint, the complaint will be sent to the appropriate chief of police and civic authority to process.

In most cases, the Commission will send a conduct complaint to the chief of the proper police force for processing. If the complaint involves a chief of police or deputy chief of police, the complaint is sent to the civic authority for processing.

The chief of police or civic authority may dismiss a conduct complaint, in whole or in part if, in the opinion of the chief of police or civic authority, the complaint or part of the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith.

The Commission encourages early resolution of conduct complaints. If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, then the complaint will be investigated.

In some cases, where it is in the public interest, the Commission will investigate the complaint itself or order the chief of police to conduct an external investigation. In all cases involving a deputy chief or chief of police, an investigator is appointed from the list of investigators maintained by the Commission.

If the chief of police or civic authority decides there is insufficient evidence the police officer committed a breach of the *Code of Professional Conduct*, the chief of police or civic authority, will take no further action.

If the chief of police or civic authority decides there is sufficient evidence the police officer committed a breach of the *Code of Professional Conduct*, a settlement conference can occur, or the matter can proceed directly to an arbitration hearing.

Arbitration hearings conducted under the *Police Act* use independent arbitrators. The arbitrator acts like a judge. S/he hears the details of the dispute and issues a decision. The decision is final and binding on all parties involved.

A process map of the complaint process is found at Appendix B.

#### **Operations**

On June 11, 2021, the *Police Act* was revised bringing significant change to the way that public complaints are handled by imposing strict timelines.

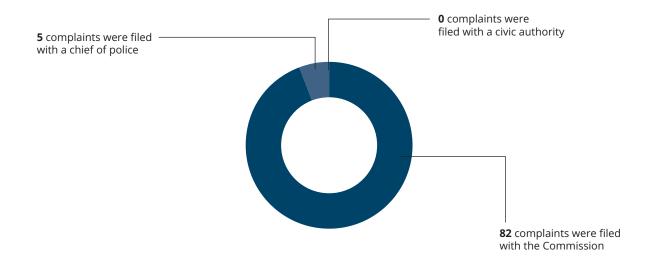
Much of our operations related to revisions to the public complaint process in the legislation. We concentrated on updating our policies and procedures, our forms, our website, and training materials.

Our investigators attended annual training which focussed on the changes to the legislation, procedural fairness, the legal standards of an independent investigator, and the law with respect to workplace harassment. Representatives from various municipal/regional police forces Professional Standards Units also attended.

We provided training and orientation to two new Commission members. The Chair and Vice-Chair roles were appointed from current-serving members during the reporting period.

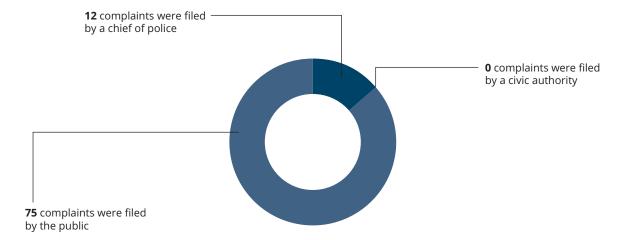
#### How complaints are made

Any member of the public can make a complaint against a New Brunswick police officer or a municipal or regional police force. This is done by making the complaint in writing on the Commission's complaint form and filing it with the Commission, with the proper chief of police, or with the police force's civic authority (which may include a board, a joint board or a municipal council). In the fiscal period, there were 87 complaints filed; 5 complaints were filed with a chief of police, none were filed with a civic authority and 82 were filed with the Commission.



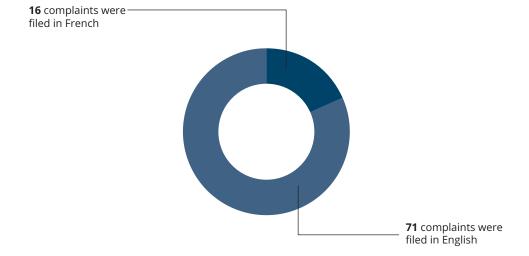
#### Who is filing complaints

Members of the public, a chief of police, or a civic authority, may file a complaint. In the reporting period, 12 complaints were filed by a chief of police, none by a civic authority and 75 by the public.



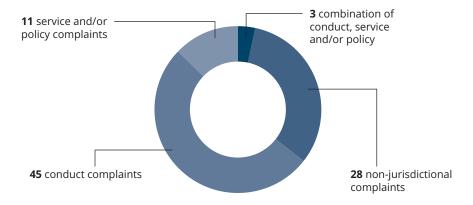
#### What language are complaints being filed in

The Commission processes complaints in both official languages. During the fiscal year, 16 of the complaints were filed in French and the remaining 71 were filed in English.



#### What types of complaints can be filed

After receiving a complaint, it is reviewed to make sure it falls within the Commission's mandate. If it doesn't, then the complaint is closed as the Commission has no jurisdiction to process it. If it does fall within the Commission's mandate, the Commission then decides what type of complaint it is, conduct, service, policy, or a combination of types. Of the 87 complaints filed, the Commission had no jurisdiction of 28. As in most previous years, most complaints were conduct complaints (45), followed by three (3) complaints that were a combination of conduct, service and/or policy and eleven (11) service / policy complaints.

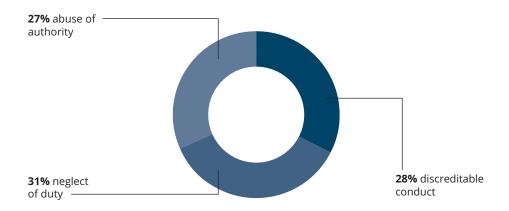


#### How a police officer breaches the Code of Professional Conduct

A conduct complaint relates to the conduct of a member of a police force as it relates to the police *Code of Professional Conduct (Code)*. The *Code* is a regulation found in the *New Brunswick Police Act*. If a police officer does something, or doesn't do something they are supposed to, that violates any of the thirteen breaches listed in the *Code*, then a police officer might have violated the *Code*.

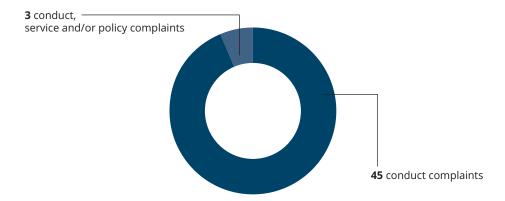
Sometimes there can be more than one alleged breach of the *Code* and sometimes there is more than one officer involved who is alleged to have breached the *Code*. Eleven (11) of the 48 conduct complaints had more than one police officer named. Nineteen (19) of the 48 conduct complaints had more than one allegation of a breach of the *Code*, either because there were multiple police officers allegedly involved in the incident or more than one section of the *Code* might have applied to the allegation.

Of the 48 conduct complaints, there were 94 alleged breaches of the *Code* with the most common being neglect of duty (31%), discreditable conduct (28%), and abuse of authority (27%). The alleged breaches are identified when a complaint is filed.



#### How many conduct complaints are filed

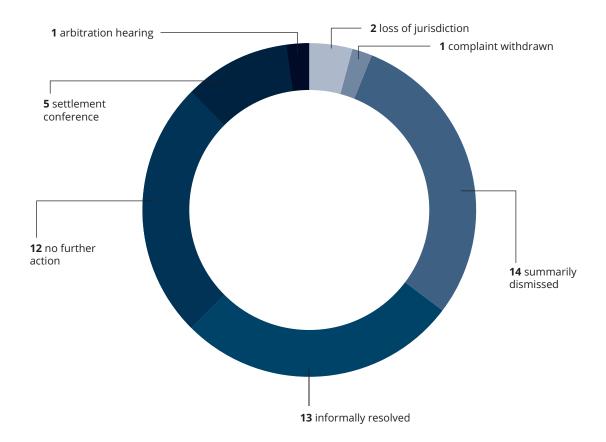
A total of 48 (45 determined to be conduct only, 3 determined to be a combination of conduct, service and policy) conduct complaints were filed during the fiscal year. Four police forces accounted for 78% of the conduct complaints and account for 71% of the total police officers in the province.



#### How complaints are resolved

There are different ways that a complaint can be resolved or concluded. They include when someone withdraws their complaint; when a complaint is summarily dismissed; or when a complaint is settled at early (informal) resolution. Most times, these occur at the beginning of the complaint process.

When an investigation occurs, if there is not sufficient evidence that an officer breached their code of conduct, the complaint will be closed with no further action being taken. If there is sufficient evidence the officer breached their code of conduct, then the complaint may be settled at a settlement conference or decided by an arbitrator at an arbitration hearing. The Commission oversees the process from start to finish, and a complainant can request the Commission review the decision made by a chief of police or civic authority. During the reporting period, one (1) complaint was withdrawn, 14 were summarily dismissed, 13 were informally resolved, 12 resulted in no further action, five (5) were settled at a settlement conference, and one (1) proceeded to an arbitration hearing. The Commission lost jurisdiction of two (2) complaints when the officers retired. There was one (1) complaint referred to an arbitration that remained outstanding at the time of publication of this report. In one complaint where two officers were named, one officer retired while the other officer reached a settlement at a settlement conference which resulted in 49 dispositions of 48 conduct complaints.



# New Brunswick Police Commission Priorities

#### **Strategy and Operations Management**

The New Brunswick Police Commission is an independent civilian oversight body created by the *New Brunswick Police Act*. It oversees the public complaint process into the conduct of police officers and the policies or services of municipal and regional police forces. It does so in a transparent and accessible manner that ensures complainants and police officers are treated fairly, impartially and with respect.

The Commission functions at arms-length from government. The Police Commission consists of a Chair, a Vice-Chair and such other members as the Lieutenant-Governor in Council appoints.

The New Brunswick Police Commission safeguards the public interest in policing by:

- · Providing an independent and objective complaint process;
- · Ensuring independent, fair and thorough investigations; and
- Ensuring the province is discharging its obligation to maintain an adequate level of policing.

The Commission does this by ensuring we remain committed to our values:

Quality Service	We provide services that are dependable and consistent.
Integrity	We act with honesty and fairness.
Accountability	We take responsibility for our policies, decisions, actions and products.
Objectivity	We make balanced and unbiased decisions.
Transparency	We foster a structure and culture that encourage access to information within the law.

During the reporting period, the Commission finalized its 2021-2024 strategic plan. Its strategic priorities focused on excelling in operations, increasing the awareness of the Commission's mandate, strengthening the Commission's relationships and building organizational talent. The Commission's strategic plan may be found on our website under Publications (NBPC Strategic Plan 2021-2024).

# **Education and Engagement**

#### **Awareness**

The *Police Act* and the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RTIPPA)* set out the information that the Commission can release to the public. Complaints are considered personnel investigations under *RTIPPA* and so we are only able to release complaint statistics through the publication of our annual reports on our website. Complaints only become public if they are referred to arbitration. During the reporting period, one arbitration occurred and it is posted on our website at **Arbitration Decisions (nbpolicecommission.ca)**.

We also publish other news releases or documents to inform New Brunswickers of the work of the Commission and these are also published on our website.

We are committed to increasing our transparency and accessibility. We continue to work on modernizing the website as the central resource for the public and the media to access information about us.

The Commission's **2021-2024 strategic plan**, our <u>list of investigators</u> and our <u>list of arbitrators</u>, were added to our website during the reporting period. The Commission also maintains a list of <u>scheduled arbitration hearings</u> on our website.

#### Presentations, education, and workshops

Commission staff gave 15 presentations through 2021-2022 to various groups including civic authorities, frontline police officers, police chiefs and professional standards officers, and the New Brunswick Association of Chiefs of Police. Most of these presentations focused on changes to the *Police Act*.

The Commission held its inaugural investigators' training workshop for our new investigators. Professional standards officers attended as well.

There were three new Commission members appointed during this time and they, along with other members of the Commission, participated in a newly developed orientation workshop.

The Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE) national conference was held virtually and provided an opportunity to include Commission staff and members, Public Safety employees, the STU students involved in the Social Action placement, and professional standards officers to attend.

The Commission also had the opportunity to present the work we do with the Commissioner on Systemic Racism, Dr. Manju Varma, and to hear from the Commissioner on ways we could improve the work we do.

#### National oversight of law enforcement activities

The Commission is a member of CACOLE which is a national organization of individuals and agencies involved in the oversight of law enforcement in Canada. CACOLE members represent diverse organizations - municipal and provincial police boards and commissions, First Nations, provincial and federal oversight agencies, ombudsman's offices, police associations and professional standards bureaus individuals as well as organizations in the justice, rights and advocacy agencies and representatives of community agencies and police services from Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Portugal and other European countries.

The Executive Director is a Director on the CACOLE Board of Directors. Being part of CACOLE allows us to work with our colleagues across the country and internationally to improve our effectiveness and our efficiency as well as to share best practices.

### Performance measures

Addressing changes to legislation	Measures
Implement <i>Police Act</i> changes into Commission operations.	Complete to 100% by September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2021

#### Addressing changes to legislation

#### Objective of the measure

Implement revisions to the *Police Act* that impact the Commission's operations.

#### Measure

Address 100% of the changes made to the *Police Act* that relate to complaint processing by September 30, 2021.

#### **Description of measure**

The portion of the *Police Act* that relates to public complaints received a significant overhaul on June 11, 2021, that resulted in new prescribed timelines for processing complaints. All Commission policies, procedures, and guidelines required updating and Commission staff and members, stakeholders and investigators required training. The benchmark was set at 100% as not meeting that goal could impact the Commission's jurisdiction of a complaint.

#### **Overall performance**

This measure was incorporated into the Commission's 2021-2024 strategic plan. Action plans were created and prioritized to address areas of highest risk. The Commission implemented all revisions made to the *Police Act* as they relate to public complaints.

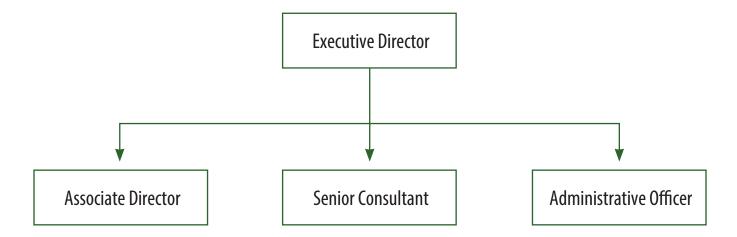
#### Why do we measure this?

The Commission was a stakeholder involved in the revisions to the *Police Act*. The Commission strives to be *fair and independent civilian oversight of policing in New Brunswick, trusted by all*. The Commission endeavours to be transparent and accountable to all who live in and visit New Brunswick and to increase the public's confidence in policing and its oversight agency. By establishing measurable benchmarks and regular reporting on results, the Commission addressed 100% of this measure by September 30, 2021.

# **Appendices**

# Appendix A

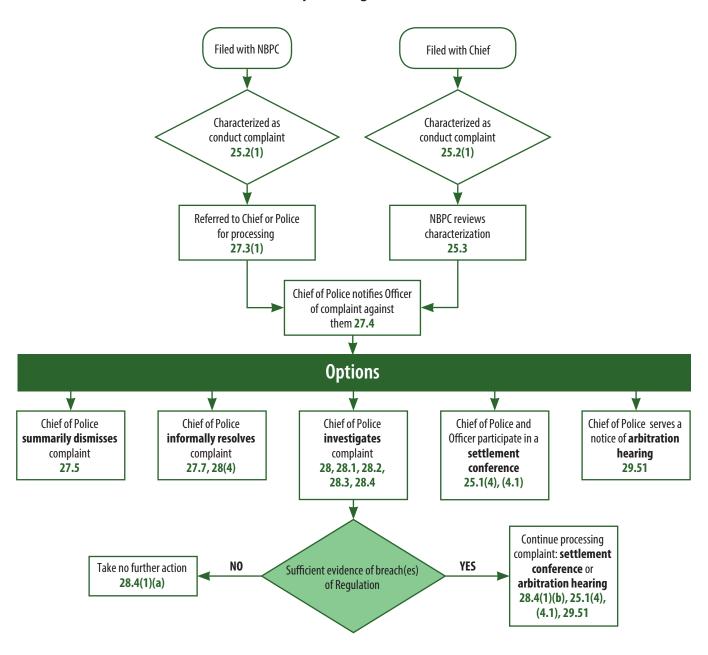
**Organizational chart** 



#### Appendix B - Process maps

All sections/subsections/paragraphs referenced are from the New Brunswick Police Act.

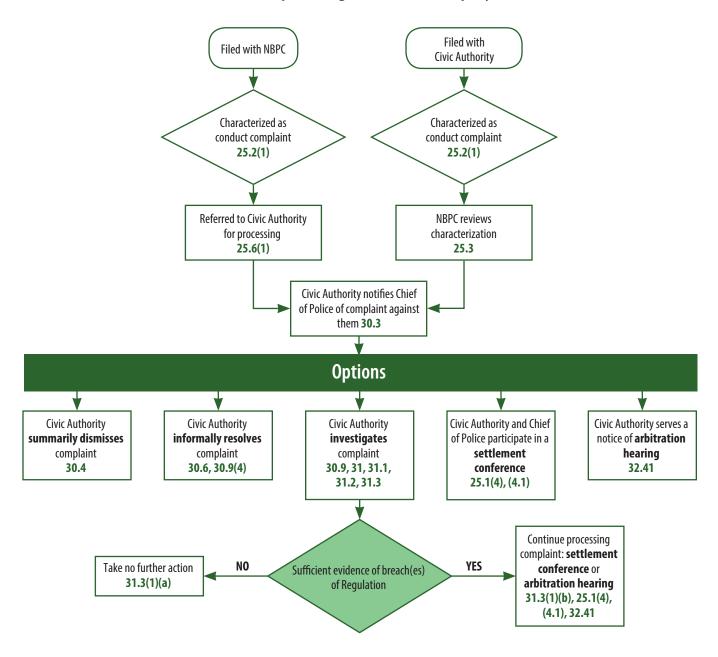
#### **Conduct Complaint against Police Officer**



\*Complaints must be filed within 1 year of the alleged incident or omission, or within 1 year after the last incident or omission, in the case of a series of incidents or omissions, unless the timeline is otherwise extended by the Commission. 25.1

<sup>\*</sup>Parties to complaints are the Chief of Police and the Police Officer

#### **Conduct Complaint against Chief or Deputy Chief**

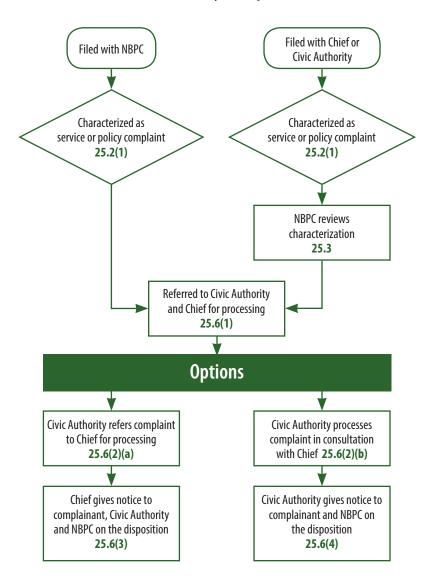


\*Complaints must be filed within 1 year of the alleged incident or omission, or within 1 year after the last incident or omission, in the case of a series of incidents or omissions, unless the timeline is otherwise extended by the Commission. 25.1

\*If the complaint concerns a Deputy Chief, it will be referred to the Civic Authority to process. 27.3(2), (3)

<sup>\*</sup>Parties to complaints are the Chief of Police and Civic Authority

#### **Service/Policy Complaint**



\*Complaints must be filed within 1 year of the alleged incident or omission, or within 1 year after the last incident or omission, in the case of a series of incidents or omissions, unless the timeline is otherwise extended by the Commission. 25.1

# Appendix C

#### New complaints filed - overall

2021-2022 Complaints filed	
Conduct	45
Service / policy	11
Combination of conduct, service and or policy	3
No jurisdiction	28
Total	87

#### **New complaints filed**

Characterization of complaints	Bathurst	BNPP Regional	Edmundston	Fredericton	Grand Falls	Kennebecasis Regional	Miramichi	Saint John	Woodstock	Total
Conduct	6	1	6	8	1	3	5	14	1	45
Combination conduct, service, and/ or policy	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Service and /or policy	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	3	0	11
Total	6	1	6	15	1	6	5	18	1	59

#### Disposition of conduct complaints - overall

2021-2022 Disposition of conduct complaints	
Withdrawn	1
Summary dismissal	14
Informal resolution	13
No further action	12
Settlement conference	5
Arbitration hearing	1
Loss of Jurisdiction*	2
Outstanding	1
Total	49

<sup>\*</sup> Loss of jurisdiction occurs when an officer resigns/retires during the processing of a conduct complaint.

Note 1: 48 of the 87 complaints were either characterized in full or in part as a conduct complaint.

Note 2: In one complaint that involved two respondent officers, the disposition was different for each officer; one officer retired, and the officer reached a settlement, thereby resulting in 49 dispositions.

**Disposition of conduct complaints** 

Disposition of contact complaints										
Disposition of conduct complaints	Bathurst	BNPP Regional	Edmundston	Fredericton	Grand Falls	Kennebecasis Regional	Miramichi	Saint John	Woodstock	Total
Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Summary dismissal	3	0	2	3	0	2	3	0	1	14
Informal resolution	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	7	0	13
No further action	2	1	3	3	0	0	1	2	0	12
Settlement conference	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	5
Arbitration hearing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Loss of Jurisdiction*	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Outstanding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	6	1	6	10	1	3	5	16	1	49

<sup>\*</sup> Loss of jurisdiction occurs when an officer resigns/retires during the processing of a conduct complaint.

#### Alleged breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct - overall

Conduct complaints - alleged breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct Regulation	
Discreditable conduct - 35(a)	26
Neglect of duty - 35(b)	29
Deceitful behavior - 35(c)	3
Improper disclosure of information - 35(d)	0
Corrupt practice - 35(e)	0
Abuse of authority - 35(f)	25
Improper use and care of firearms - 35(g)	0
Damage police force property - 35(h)	0
Misuse intoxicating liquor or drugs - 35(i)	0
Convicted of an offence - 35(j)	0
Insubordinate behavior - 35(k)	2
Party to a breach - 35(l)	0
Workplace harassment - 35(m)	9
Total allegations	94

Note 1: 11 of the 48 conduct complaints had more than one respondent police officer named.

Note 2: Alleged breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct Regulation are identified when a complaint is filed. An incident may have multiple allegations identified. During the reporting period, 19 of the 48 conduct complaints had more than one allegation of a breach of the Code, either because there were multiple respondent officers, or more than one section of the Code may have been alleged to have been breached.

Alleged breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct

Conduct complaints - alleged breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct Regulation	Bathurst	BNPP Regional	Edmundston	Fredericton	Grand Falls	Kennebecasis Regional	Miramichi	Saint John	Woodstock	Total
Discreditable conduct - 35(a)	2	3	2	3	0	1	4	11	0	26
Neglect of duty - 35(b)	3	3	1	9	0	1	1	11	0	29
Deceitful behavior - 35(c)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Improper disclosure of information - 35(d)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corrupt practice - 35(e)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abuse of authority - 35(f)	5	0	7	1	0	3	1	6	2	25
Improper use and care of firearms - 35(g)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Damage police force property - 35(h)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Misuse intoxicating liquor or drugs - 35(i)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Convicted of an offence - 35(j)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insubordinate behavior - 35(k)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Party to a breach - 35(l)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Workplace harassment - 35(m)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	9
Total allegations	10	6	10	13	1	5	6	41	2	94

Note 1: 11 of the 48 conduct complaints had more than one respondent police officer named.

Note 2: Alleged breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct Regulation are identified when a complaint is filed. An incident may have multiple allegations identified. During the reporting period, 19 of the 48 conduct complaints had more than one allegation of a breach of the Code, either because there were multiple respondent officers, or more than one section of the Code may have been alleged to have been breached.

#### Appendix D

#### **Summary of expenditures**

Item	Budget	Actual
Personal services	405.1	347.1
Other services	264.1	282.9
Materials & supplies	2.8	3.4
Property & equipment	17.7	2.1
Total	689.7	635.5