

Presentation to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

DELIVERED BY ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE SCOTT ARMSTRONG
AND PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY DIVISION

APRIL 30, 2026

Department of Justice Initiatives

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ▶ Invested in the establishment of the Gender-Based Violence Division within the Department of Justice.
 - A coordinated, survivor-centered approach to addressing gender-based violence, supported by the province's whole-of-government response.
 - Administration of the Ministers' Table on Gender-Based Violence and serves as lead for the Nova Scotia Highest Risk Domestic Violence Table.

- ▶ Intimate-Partner Violence Alarm Program.
 - Coordination by the Department of Justice.
 - Assistance to local law enforcement.

Department of Justice Initiatives

BAIL COURT

- ▶ First action as Minister was to issue formal statement in support of the tabling of the Federal *Bail and Sentencing Reform Act*.
 - The Act expands “reverse onus” provisions, making it more difficult for individuals accused of serious or repeat violent offences—particularly those involving weapons or intimate partner violence—to be released on bail, with a focus on enhancing public safety and confidence in the justice system.
 - It introduces stricter sentencing rules for serious offences, including limitations on conditional sentences (house arrest) and an emphasis on denunciation and deterrence, particularly for crimes involving violence, firearms, and repeat offending.
 - Under study at Senate Committee.
- ▶ Establishment of a dedicated Bail Court to improve efficiency and reduce backlogs and delays in the provincial court.
 - Located at the courthouse on Spring Garden Road in Halifax, the bail court is currently hearing matters from Halifax and Dartmouth, both in person and virtually.

Department of Justice Initiatives

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

- ▶ The Province is advancing a Community Safety and Well-being Framework to shift from crisis response to prevention, strengthen multisector collaboration, and support safer, healthier, and more resilient communities across Nova Scotia.
- ▶ This framework intersects with police-based crime prevention initiatives by shifting policing from a reactive, enforcement only model to a collaborative, preventative, and upstream approach that addresses the root causes of crime and harm.
- ▶ By aligning efforts around shared outcomes rather than isolated interventions, this framework helps departments work more effectively together, improving coordination, reducing duplication, and strengthening overall impact of government action.
- ▶ This initiative will result in the development of:
 - A Provincial Community Safety and Well-being Framework
 - Establishment of a Provincial Advisory Committee
 - Capacity Building for Community Safety and Well-being planning through training and toolkits
 - Piloting the development of local Community Safety and Well-being plans in three municipalities / regions.

Department of Justice Initiatives

COMMUNITY SAFETY DASHBOARD

- ▶ DOJ developed an interactive platform which would enable a user to make informed decisions related to community safety planning in their municipality. This action is in furtherance of a Community Safety and Wellbeing approach to community safety.
- ▶ The Community Safety Dashboard functions to take existing data and present it in an accessible way for Nova Scotians to utilize.
- ▶ Uses may include:
 - Student research or civilian police oversight bodies (priorities setting)
 - Aid in making data informed decisions related to community safety
 - Support the development of Community Safety Plans which aim to reduce crime through community led crime prevention initiatives.

Department of Justice Initiatives

COMMUNITY SAFETY DASHBOARD



Clear all filters

Selected Year(s)
2020-2024

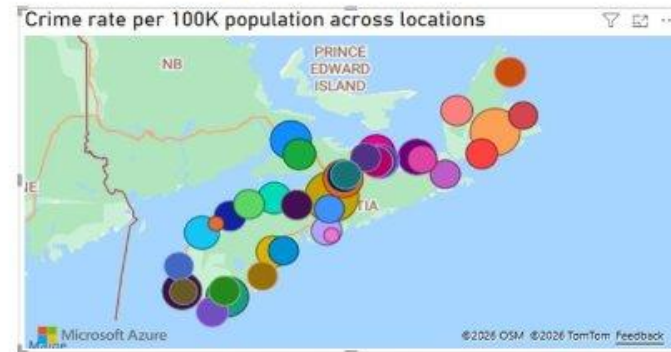
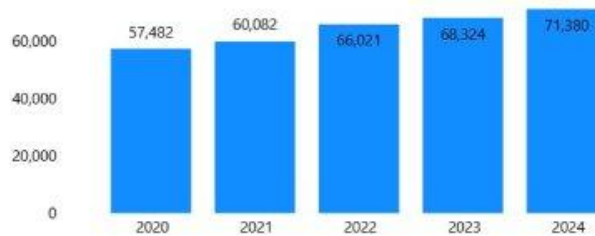
Total Crimes
323,289

- Violations
- Violent Crime
 - Crime Against Property
 - Other Criminal Code Violations
 - Drug Violations
 - Other Federal Violations

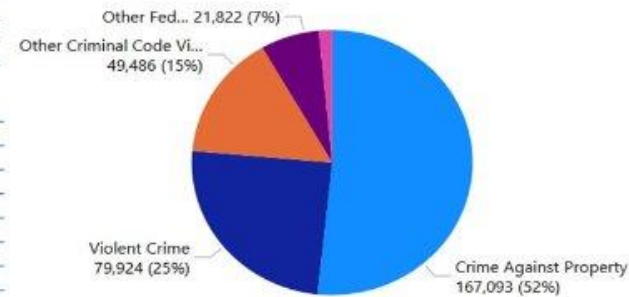
- Regions / Police Jurisdictions
- Nova Scotia
 - Northern Health Zone
 - Eastern Health Zone
 - Central Health Zone
 - Western Health Zone
 - Municipal Police
 - RCMP
 - Rural
 - Urban
 - Railway Police

Summary of Police Reported Incidents in Nova Scotia

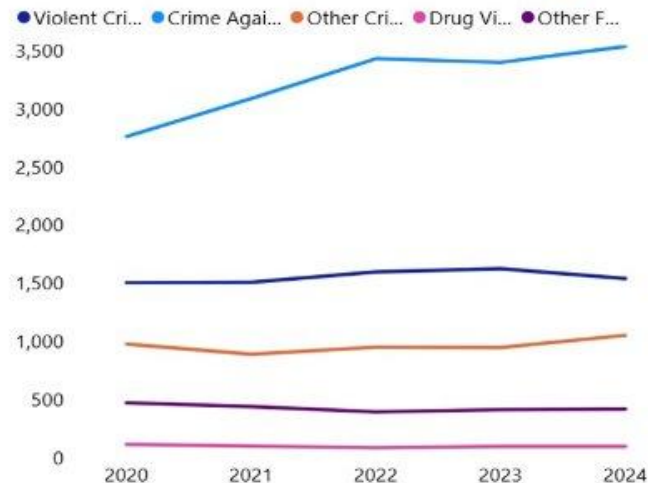
Police reported incidents summary - previous 5 years



Total crime violations



Crime rate per 100K population among crime violations



Year	Reported	Cleared	% Cleared
2020	57,482	21,657	38%
2021	60,082	20,012	33%
2022	66,021	20,613	31%
2023	68,324	21,837	32%
2024	71,380	22,188	31%
Total	323,289	106,307	33%

Department of Justice Initiatives

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Civil Forfeiture Grant Program	Crime Prevention Grant Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time funding to organizations that support eligible victims of crime and targeted crime prevention initiatives across Nova Scotia. • The Program is funded from the disposition of forfeited property seized by law enforcement. • Organizations can apply for a maximum of \$50,000. • 2025-26 recipients included Thriving Together Society in Yarmouth, Shelter Movers – Nova Scotia, Leave Out Violence (LOVE), and Box It Out Association in East Preston. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invests in community-led initiatives that prevent crime and victimization before they occur. • Focuses on early intervention, inclusion, and addressing root causes of crime. • Provides up to \$12,000 annually per grant. • 2025 recipients included HRM, Cumberland County, Town of Middleton, Bay St. Lawrence, and other community organizations across the province. <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Application deadline: May 22, 2026</u></p>

Department of Justice Initiatives

COMBATTING GUN VIOLENCE

- Unlike Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and Quebec, Nova Scotia was not identified as having a year-over-year increase in firearm-related violent crime in 2024. This suggests stable or declining trends in NS relative to provinces with increases.



Provincial Policing Review Status

Records Management System

- ▶ Supported through budget 2026/2027
- ▶ Four new FTE positions (one manager and four specialized support staff). Staffing these positions is currently underway.
- ▶ Base funding for professional services and Phase One which will include project mapping, engagement and vendor enquires.

Enhancing Police Resourcing

- ▶ Support for the RCMP GDPRM process across detachments to identify high-risk areas
- ▶ Evaluation of current overall capacity

RCMP Billing Mechanism

- ▶ The Department of Justice will soon meet with Chief Administrative Officers for municipalities policed by the RCMP under the Provincial Police Service Agreement to discuss a new draft billing mechanism tool.
- ▶ A new mechanism is intended to be administered this fiscal year.

Provincial Policing Review Status

Layered Policing

- ▶ Blueprinted layered policing options have been developed to guide the engagement discussions
- ▶ Focused engagement with partners and communities will take place through the spring and summer of 2026 to test assumptions and refine the models
- ▶ Feedback from engagement will inform next steps, ensuring options are practical, scalable, and fit for Nova Scotia's public safety landscape

Community Safety Boards

- ▶ The Police Modernization Unit is establishing a robust consultation plan to work with existing civilian police oversight bodies
- ▶ Ultimately, this recommendation will materialize in the development of a new police governance structure.

Policing Standards

- ▶ New standards are in the initial stages of drafting
- ▶ Some existing standards will be amended to be strengthened based on findings from the review.

Provincial Policing Review Status

- ▶ The *Police Act* review is looking at how the legislation supports current police modernization initiatives. We are examining where modernization initiatives align with, or are limited by, existing authorities in the Act.
- ▶ Governance and layered policing are strongly shaped by legislation, but the review is also considering the impacts on other modernization initiatives.
- ▶ Where gaps or barriers are identified, amendments to the *Act* will be considered to better support modernization.
- ▶ Any proposed changes to the *Act* will be informed by stakeholder input. Proposed amendments will be reviewed and validated with stakeholders as work progresses toward legislation.

Provincial Policing Audits

- ▶ Public Safety Audit Function sent Notification Letters initiating a formal audit on September 17, 2025, to one (1) police agency and September 29, 2025, to eight (8) police agencies.
- ▶ Two Provincial Policing Standards are currently being audited: Critical Incident Response and Community Patrol and Service Response. Phase One (document review) is nearing completion and Phase Two (onsite review) will commence.
- ▶ The Managing Auditor remains available for presentations to police leaders and police governance boards regarding the audit process.
- ▶ Audit reports will be provided to:
 - The Chief Officer
 - The Chair of the respective Police Advisory Board or Police Boards of Commissioners
 - The respective Chief Administrative Officer
 - The Attorney General and Minister of Justice

Provincial Police Service Agreement

▶ Leadership Changes

- Acting Commanding Officer – Dan Morrow
- Acting Officer in Charge of Criminal Operations – Sean Auld

▶ Establishment of Policing Priorities

- The Department of Justice is engaging in work to explore provincial policing priorities for 2026-27.
- We encourage police governance bodies to do the same as we embark on this work together.

Upcoming Engagements

- ▶ **Regional Provincial Police Service Agreement Town Halls (in-person and virtual options)**
 - ▶ Overview of Provincial Police Service Agreement administration and RCMP service delivery
 - ▶ Elected officials, Police Advisory Board members and municipal staff to be invited
- ▶ **CAO meeting on billing**
- ▶ **Police Governance Training**
 - ▶ Board Orientation and Strategic Planning
 - ▶ CAPG umbrella membership provides access to resources and events for PABs
- ▶ **Quarterly Update will continue**
 - ▶ Covers administrative PPSA highlights, RCMP resourcing updates and DOJ initiatives

Key Contacts

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Thank You