



**VICTIMS OF CRIME COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR 2017**

**Submitted:**

**June 30, 2017**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Victims of Crime Committee (“the Committee”), which is represented by police leaders and justice officials from across the country, is mandated with enhancing the Canadian police community’s capacity to respond effectively to the protection of victims of crime. On behalf of victims, the Committee aims to enable dialogue, problem solving and innovation across Canada to address victims’ issues, and to advocate for legislative changes to address the needs of victims.

In 2016, the Committee continued its work with the Department of Justice in the implementation of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. Business card and brochure templates were provided to all Canadian police services articulating victims’ rights. Information on obtaining grant funding to print those documents was also provided.

The Committee also continues its work with the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime.

During this reporting period, the Committee accomplished the following:

- Committee meeting in Victoria, British Columbia on November 29 and 30, 2016
- Worked with Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT JUSTICE) to provide police training on victims of crime support and death notification
- Dissemination of the Victims’ Rights in Canada Pamphlet
- Committee meeting in Ottawa, Ontario on April 20 and 21, 2017
- Planning First Responders Suicide Awareness social media event with the HR Committee and Canadian Mental Health Association
- Exploring best practices for reviewing unfounded sexual assault cases



## MISSION STATEMENT & GOALS

The Committee's mission statement is:

**To enhance the Canadian police community's capacity to respond effectively to the needs of victims of crime**

The Goals of the Committee are:

1. To enable dialogue, problem solving and innovation across Canada to address victims.
2. To gather and promote effective practices.
3. To focus national attention on the needs of victims.
4. To promote systemic response to victims.
5. To advocate for legislative changes to address the needs of victims.



**MEMBERSHIP**

Members of the CACP Victims of Crime Committee are as follows:

**MEMBERS**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Rick Bourassa</b> <i>(Co-Chair)</i> | Chief, Moose Jaw Police Service                       |
| <b>Jill Skinner</b> <i>(Co-Chair)</i>  | Deputy Chief, Ottawa Police Service                   |
| <b>Jodie Boudreau</b>                  | Chief Superintendent, RCMP Surrey, BC                 |
| <b>Andrew Brinton</b>                  | Chief Constable, Oak Bay Police Department            |
| <b>Scott Gilbert</b>                   | Superintendent, Toronto Police Service                |
| <b>Danik Guerrero</b>                  | Commandant, Service de police de la Ville de Montreal |
| <b>Eric Jolliffe</b>                   | Chief, York Regional Police                           |
| <b>Colleen Kelly</b>                   | Superintendent, Halifax Regional Police               |
| <b>Dominique Lafreniere</b>            | Deputy Director, Surete du Quebec                     |
| <b>Robyn MacEachern</b>                | Inspector, Ontario Provincial Police                  |
| <b>Paul Martin</b>                     | Chief, Durham Regional Police                         |
| <b>Lauri Morin</b>                     | Superintendent, Regina Police Service                 |
| <b>Sat Parhar</b>                      | Deputy Chief, Calgary Police Service                  |
| <b>Elizabeth Pilcher</b>               | Superintendent, Winnipeg Police Service               |
| <b>Stephanie Sachsse</b>               | Chief Superintendent, RCMP, Newfoundland-Labrador     |
| <b>Darlene Savoie</b>                  | Superintendent, Edmonton Police Service               |
| <b>Paul Smith</b>                      | Chief, Charlottetown Police Service                   |
| <b>John Syrette</b>                    | Chief, Anishinabek Police Service                     |
| <b>Sylvain Guertin</b>                 | Lt., Surete, Quebec                                   |

**TECHNICAL ADVISORS**

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Gillian Blackell</b>         | Director, Policy Centre for Victims Issues,<br>Dept. of Justice, Ottawa |
| <b>Harvey Cenaiko</b>           | Chairperson, Parole Board of Canada, Ottawa                             |
| <b>Nick Fabiano</b>             | Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Services Canada,<br>Ottawa         |
| <b>Suzanne Wallace-Capretta</b> | Manager, National Office for Victims Public Safety Canada,<br>Ottawa    |

**COMMITTEE SUPPORT**

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Robin Millbank</b> | Ottawa Police Service |
| <b>Lori Anderson</b>  | Moose Jaw Police      |



## MEETINGS

Since the date of the last annual report, the Committee has met on the following dates:

1. August 13, 2016 in Ottawa, Ontario  
Attendance at the Annual Conference of Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police on August 14-17, 2016
2. November 29 & 30, 2016 in Victoria, BC
3. April 20 & 21, 2017 in Ottawa, Ontario

Attendance at all meetings is well above majority, with all Committee members showing their dedication to the mission of the Victims of Crime Committee through active participation. Comprehensive meeting minutes are included in the Appendices portion of this report.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### 1. Support to Caribbean Police Agencies

Professor Velma Newton, Officer in Charge of the Caribbean Law Institute Centre and Project Director of the Improved Access to Justice Project, asked the Victims of Crime Committee for assistance in providing training to Caribbean police officers on:

- Victims of Crime Support Training
- Death Notification Training

Committee members have repeatedly heard concerns from families of victims with the way in which law enforcement agencies across Canada perform death notification. Death notifications have a long lasting impact on family members. Many of the members of the Committee know first-hand that delivering a death notification can be an extremely stressful experience, and must be done with clarity and compassion. When delivering a death notification, it is critical to be well informed and prepared, as next-of-kin deserve accurate and complete information about the death of their loved one.

That is why on March 31, 2016, the Committee's past Co-Chairs sent a letter to all members of the CACP with respect to performing death notifications. The letter contained a link to a Death Notification Training Video entitled "A Knock at the Door" and attached a Death Notification Pocket Guide. The video and pocket guide are best practices that law enforcement agencies can use to supplement existing training on death notifications. These tools were also designed so law enforcement agencies could modify them, as needed to reflect their respective death notification procedures, policies and training guides.

#### a. Death Notification Training Video "A Knock at the Door"

"A Knock at the Door", also available in French, breaks down the process of performing a death notification and reinforces the need to ensure all death notifications are conducted with dignity, professionalism and compassion. The video can be viewed by clicking the following links:

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=th78qeeU-Ag&feature=youtu.be>

French: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPgMZxqq7L0&feature=youtu.be>

The video was shared with all CACP members on March 31, 2016 and aims to assist law enforcement agencies across Canada in providing a victim-centred approach to death notification, focusing on respect and dignity to the victim and family.

In preparation for the video, Calgary Police Service, a Committee member police agency, undertook research on best practices on the death notification policies, procedures and protocols of different police agencies. The research found that there was no national death notification standard and every agency varied in their death notification policy.



The Committee identified a need for some basic standardization in death notification. After reviewing a number of existing training courses and videos on death notification, the Committee believed a new training video should be developed that contains more up-to-date content. Calgary Police Service undertook the development and production of the video with input from members of the Committee.

#### **b. Death Notification Pocket Guide**

The Death Notification Pocket Guide was developed to assist law enforcement agencies perform death notifications. The pocket guide, based on the pocket guide used by Calgary Police Service, is a useful reference tool that law enforcement agency members can refer back to when performing a death notification. The pocket guide highlights the following common segments in death notification:

- Planning – notification should be done as soon as possible. Know the details, identify and verify legal next-of-kin, victim information, etc.
- Notification – done in person; introduce yourself, provide details, etc.
- After Notification – be prepared to repeat information and offer assistance for any type of emotional or physical reaction from family members.

The Committee arranged for members of the Calgary Police Service to provide Death Notification training, and members of the Ottawa Police Service to provide Victims of Crime Support training.

### **2. Victim Support in Major Incidents**

The Committee continues working with Public Safety Canada and the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime to develop responses for victim support in major incidents. This work focuses on creating a national process for ensuring consistent application of best practices for providing services to victims of major and mass casualty incidents.

### **3. Implementation of the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights***

*The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights Act* came into force on July 23, 2015. The Committee and its members were regularly consulted throughout the development of Bill C-32 and continued this consultation during the implementation stage.

#### **a. Victims' Rights Information Brochure**

In spring 2015, the Committee requested that the Policy Centre for Victim Issues within Justice Canada develop a brochure and business card holder for use by law enforcement agencies across Canada to provide victims with information about their rights under the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*. The brochure has been developed to include an overview of victims' rights under the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*. The business card holder serves to provide a website link where victims can find



comprehensive information about their rights. The business card holder will also allow police services to insert their own card or their victim services card inside.

The Committee requested the brochure in electronic template format to allow police services to customize the resources by inputting their own contact information on the back and printing the product themselves. The electronic versions of the brochure and the business card holder were provided to the Committee at the end of May 2016. The Committee distributed the electronic versions to CACP members in June 2016 so that member agencies can customize and print the brochure and the card holders. Should individual police services require additional funding to print these products, they can apply to the Justice Canada Victims Fund at the following link:

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/cj-jp/fund-fond/proj.html>

In addition, a generic version of the brochure (without customizable text) was printed and provided to all attendees at this year's Victims and Survivors of Crime Week Federal Symposium on June 3rd, 2016. The brochure is not currently online, but efforts are underway to have it available.

These resources are intended to assist police services across Canada in the implementation of the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*. They have been designed to serve a multi-purpose function by providing victims with information about their rights, providing that information in a timely manner (i.e. upon first contact with police and in the early stages of the criminal justice system), as well as providing information about the local services available to assist them. In addition, dissemination of these resources by law enforcement agencies across Canada will help to ensure nation-wide accuracy and consistency in the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* information provided to victims.

The Committee continues to provide input on policies, legislation and regulatory changes that affect victims of crime. Working with the Department of Justice, a Committee priority is to ensure police responsibilities under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights are communicated to police services. The Committee also continues to work with the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics as it develops measurements for Canadian Victim Bill of Rights implementation.

#### **4. Suicide Awareness and Prevention for First Responders**

Working with the HR Committee and the Canadian Mental Health Association, a social media campaign focused on suicide awareness and prevention for first responders has been developed. Further discussion on implementing the campaign will take place in the coming year.

#### **5. Unfounded Sexual Assault Investigations**

The Committee was invited to collaborate with the CACP Police Information and Statistics (POLIS) & the Crime Prevention Committees to develop a response to an article published in the Globe & Mail regarding the investigation and classification of sexual assaults by police. The VOCC continues to



work with POLIS to improve police response to victims of sexual assault through a variety of measures. In February, President Mario Harel requested that the VOCC and the Crime Prevention, Community Safety and Wellbeing Committee recommend standards for training (including trauma-informed investigation), procedures and policies based on best practices, and share them throughout the policing community. This work has just begun and will continue over the coming year.

It was reported that many police agencies are conducting their own reviews of unfounded sexual assaults. Discussion will continue to determine impacts of reviews on overall statistics.

The VOCC is partnering with the OACP and the Ontario Victims Of Crime Office to explore practices in other jurisdictions for investigating sexual assaults (from the initial report to police to the decision about whether to charge). The OVC's role in this partnership will be to provide research on what's out there in terms of promising/innovative practices, and what evaluations have found about these practices (if evaluations were conducted). A report will be prepared for VOCC.

Additionally the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women met in September 2016, and directed senior officials across Canada to continue to work on addressing sexual violence against women; specifically the low rates of reporting of sexual violence, as well as the use of forensic sexual assault examination kits.

Manitoba Status of Women and Status of Women Canada are co-chairing this FPT committee and requested access to members of the VOCC to participate in their efforts. Specifically, hearing ideas and thoughts on how collaboration could occur on increasing the rate of reporting by women. Also, they are interested in discussing some specifics around the delivery of the forensic sexual assault examination kits by law enforcement as well as the storage of kits afterwards by law enforcement.

## **6. Support for Community Safety Knowledge Alliance Research To Understand Impacts On Family Of Individuals Killed By Impaired Drivers**

The CACP Research Foundation received a request from the Community Safety Knowledge Alliance for endorsement of a planned research project to build a more comprehensive understanding of the social, economic and health impacts on immediate family members of individuals killed by impaired drivers. The research will also address services and supports offered to family members, the relative experience of families in urban vs. rural settings in this regard, and families' experience with the criminal justice system in this situation. The VOCC provided letter of support.



## CONCLUSION

The Victims of Crime Committee demonstrates the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police's (CACP) commitment to ensuring the rights and protections of victims. This Committee brings together police leaders, criminal justice practitioners, government agencies and other partners to enhance the capacity to respond effectively to the needs of victims of crime.

The work plan for the next year includes:

- Providing input on policies, legislation, and regulatory changes that impact victims of crime;
- Further information gathering on victim services;
- Greater focus on needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis victims;
- Exploring best practices for victim support in major incidents.

The Co-Chairs and past Co-Chairs would like to thank the CACP for their continued support as we make advances in improving police services to communities.



## APPENDICES

**Appendix A**      CACP Victims of Crime Committee Meeting Minutes