

# GREATER VICTORIA POLICE INTEGRATED UNITS

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2020/21**



# A MESSAGE FROM THE GREATER VICTORIA POLICE CHIEFS AND DETACHMENT COMMANDERS

The Greater Victoria policing landscape is unique. Several municipal police agencies and RCMP detachments provide community-focused services to meet the needs of individual municipalities. Working together in cooperation is critical to ensure quality police service within each jurisdiction. Key examples of formal cooperation are the individual integrated policing units, each designed to meet specific needs in a cost effective and service focused way. In each case, the participating police chiefs and detachment commanders believe that the specified service is best provided using a shared service model.

Please take a few minutes to read the summaries of the services provided by the integrated units, in addition to the priorities for the coming year and the efficiencies and highlights from 2020/21.

As always, we want to thank the dedicated officers working within the integrated policing units for their professionalism and continued commitment to our communities.

Proudly,

The Greater Victoria Police Chiefs and Detachment Commanders:

- » Chief Del Manak – Victoria Police
- » Chief Scott Green – Saanich Police
- » Chief Ian Lawson – Central Saanich Police
- » Chief Ray Bernoties – Oak Bay Police
- » Superintendent Todd Preston – Westshore RCMP Detachment
- » S/Sgt Wayne Conley – Sidney/North Saanich RCMP Detachment
- » S/Sgt Brett Sinden – Sooke RCMP Detachment

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# 01. Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team

The Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team (GVERT) was established in 1976 to assist in the resolution of high-risk critical incidents. In 1983, the Area Chiefs of Police of Victoria, Saanich, Esquimalt, Central Saanich, and Oak Bay signed an agreement concerning the general operations of the unit. GVERT remains the longest-standing integrated unit in the region, serving the citizens of the five core municipalities.

The GVERT consists of five cadres of key personnel: Critical Incident Commanders, Critical Incident Scribes, Crisis Negotiators, Tactical Liaison Officers, and Tactical Unit members. Critical Incident Commanders are senior officers who have successfully completed specialized training at the Canadian Police College. Commanders, assisted by Scribes, oversee tactical operations and manage critical incidents. Negotiators are experts in crisis intervention and de-escalation and often work in collaboration with mental health professionals to safely resolve critical incidents.

The Tactical Unit, supported by liaison officers, is a group of highly-trained police officers, with specialized skills and equipment to resolve incidents and that fall outside of the scope of front-line officers. The deployment of the team provides a greater margin of safety for the public, police, and suspects alike.

The Tactical Unit also provides explosives detection and disposal services for regional operations and major public events. The members of GVERT report to an Officer-in-Charge (OIC) who oversees the administration of the team. The OIC chairs and reports to the Joint Management Team which is comprised of senior officer representation from each contributing agency.



## /// EFFICIENCIES

- Increased the use of the Armoured Rescue Vehicle as a communications platform and safe haven for crisis negotiators and mental health professionals
- Signed the MOU with the Victoria Fire Department to have ready access to an appropriate vessel for timely and effective marine response
- Integrated the Victoria Fire Department's drone technology to enhance the safety of GVERT operations and training
- Participated in a job demands analysis for Tactical Unit members to create a benchmark for the physical and cognitive requirements of the position

## /// HIGHLIGHTS

- Delivered critical incident response and Alert Protocol training to front-line supervisors from across the region
- Provided Rescue Task Force training to members of the Victoria Fire Department to better coordinate response to critical incidents
- Fully staffed the Tactical Unit after coordinating a successful Basic Tactical Operator's Course and training new Crisis Negotiators

## /// PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

- Focusing on the mental and physical wellbeing of all members of the GVERT
- Continuing to explore a new deployment model for the Tactical Unit which is congruent with the current operational pace and training demands
- Developing an integrated Critical Incident Commander cadre for the region
- Updating critical technology such as the Tactical Unit's robot



## 02. Greater Victoria Public Safety Unit

The Greater Victoria Public Safety Unit (PSU) is an integrated policing unit consisting of members from all municipal police agencies in the Capital Regional District. In 2020, the former Crowd Management Unit was restructured and renamed the Greater Victoria Public Safety Unit (PSU) to more closely align with the strategic objectives of the unit, inclusive of maintaining public safety related to events, rallies, protests and demonstrations. The specialty teams within PSU include: Crowd Management Team (CMT), Obstruction Removal Team (ORT), Division Liaison Team (DLT), Fire Medics, and Search & Canvass Team.



Agencies participating in PSU are: (POLICE) VicPD, Saanich PD, Central Saanich PS, Oak Bay PD; (FIRE) Esquimalt FD, Saanich FD, Oak Bay FD, Central Saanich FD.

This past year saw a significant increase in public gatherings and protests requiring the expertise of PSU. The level of civil disobedience associated with various environmental and government protests required unprecedented planning and deployment of PSU resources. The successful outcome of these events is attributed to the professionalism, competency and experience of the PSU members and their leadership.

Due to COVID-19 emergency orders, the planned fall and spring training for PSU was cancelled. This provided an opportunity to repurpose this funding for the purchase of a second quick-response van to carry one full PSU squad, inclusive of their equipment. In total, PSU now has two quick-response vans in the fleet.

### /// EFFICIENCIES

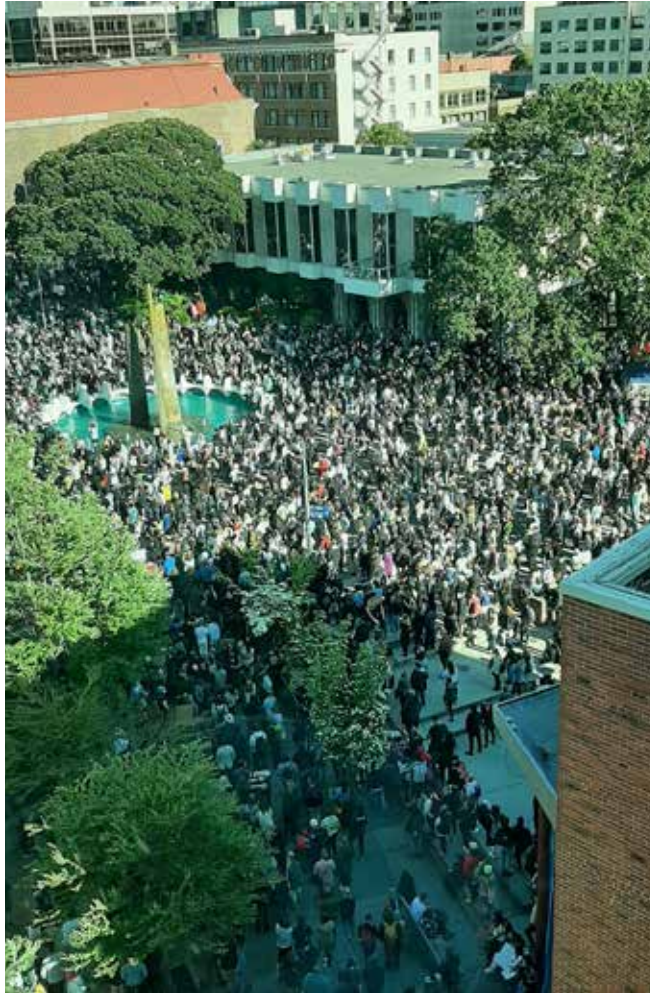
- Focused on quick-response team tactics to enhance deployment options throughout the region, utilized vans to carry a full PSU squad plus gear
- Updated and disseminated current public order policy with participating police agencies to ensure consistency
- Completion of the transition to a new less-lethal weapons platform
- Established a new numbering system on high-visibility vests to track members during deployments, increasing accountability and transparency

### /// HIGHLIGHTS

- Provided participating police agencies with operational plan appendices for public order incidents, capturing key operations and legal foundations
- Approved an updated MOU between the participating police departments to streamline activation and command protocols
- Deployed PSU for several weeks of continuous protest activity, including bridge, intersection and building occupations
- Approved the increase of the team's complement to 10 members
- Replaced retired members and implemented of a more robust leadership structure
- Added more fire agencies to the Fire Medic Program

## **/// PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22**

- Create an Evidence Gathering Team (EGT) for PSU operations
- Increase the Public Order Commander pool (currently at two)
- Focus on basic training skills due to missed training during 2020 due to COVID-19
- Finalize MOU between PSU and participating fire agencies in relation to the Fire Medic Program
- Increased/specialized training for the Obstruction Removal Team (ORT)
- Replacement of aging equipment, including helmets
- New uniform specifications



## 03. Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team

The Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team (IMCRT) developed as a multi-disciplinary mobile crisis response team that can assist vulnerable people, family members, police agencies and other service providers, by making available nurses, social workers, child/youth counselors and occasionally a psychiatrist to offer rapid consultation, assessment, and linkage to community treatment programs. Police officers who work with IMCRT for two to three years bring back advanced skills and education related to mental health and substance use issues, along with comprehensive knowledge of the services that can be of assistance. In 2020, there were 5,295 calls for service.



IMCRT assists police to appropriately direct individuals to the hospital emergency room or psychiatric emergency services who require further assessment and treatment. For 90-95% of cases, IMCRT is able to explore alternatives for less intrusive community-based care. Sharing of information between Island Health professionals and police for individuals at potential risk of harming themselves or others allows for more informed risk assessments, decision-making, and mitigation of risk strategies.

### /// EFFICIENCIES

- Close working relationship with health services to assist all ages
- Quick access to health information for high-risk situations
- Multi-agency and multi-police department engagement and response

### /// HIGHLIGHTS

- Co-presented at the Closing the Gaps forum to bring multi-agency service providers together for networking and education
- Participated in provincial police Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU) working group
- Delivered service and completed 5,400 calls during the global pandemic using appropriate safety measures and personal protection equipment
- Provided 100 hours of training to the community
- Selected two new IMCRT officers from both VicPD and Saanich PD

### /// PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

- Secure enhanced training opportunities for police officers assigned to IMCRT to increase their knowledge
- Support a reduction in mental health related calls directed to police patrol resources
- Increase feedback opportunities from service stakeholders and people IMCRT attended to
- Increase direct calls for service

## 04. Integrated Canine Service

This was the inaugural year for the Integrated Canine Service (ICS) which supports police operations in the municipalities of Victoria and Saanich. ICS has eight police service dogs and six handlers. ICS offers a variety of specialized services that include canine teams trained in tracking, building and compound searches, evidence searching, searching for missing persons, drugs, and firearms, and explosive detection. Our canine teams are trained and certified in-house by a certified Master Trainer. Both the training and certification exceeds the strict guidelines set out by the BC Provincial Policing Standards. In addition to providing canine services, ICS also supports front-line policing through non-emergency call response in a primarily support capacity to assist as required: intelligence-led proactive patrols of high-crime areas, assisting investigative units as uniform support, scheduled public service dog demonstrations, and proactive community engagement.



### EFFICIENCIES

- Integration of canine services has allowed each participating organization to reduce the overall cost of canine services while enhancing service delivery to both communities
- Additional search profiles have been made available to the municipality of Saanich
- Support to front-line policing efforts have been enhanced

### HIGHLIGHTS

- On call 24/7 with a unique schedule, maximized canine coverage and provided support to the front-line
- Continued to advance training to maintain a full range of canine services to better support a variety of policing functions
- Promoted the ICS services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic through various community engagement initiatives and social media platforms

### PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

- Train three additional canine teams in drug and firearm detection
- Provide on-going training to front-line officers which will enhance canine services operationally
- Engage in specialized training with the Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team and Public Safety Unit
- Continue to engage the members of the public so that they have a better understanding of the role of police service dogs



## 05. Mobile Youth Services Team

Exploitation knows no bounds and has the potential to impact youth across our region, regardless of class or background. The Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) is a critical multi-disciplinary unit that has served the CRD for more than 20 years. Consisting of a partnership between a police officer and two youth & family counselors, MYST aims to reduce trauma and the scope of the sexual exploitation of youth in our community. MYST proactively engages with youth and their families to provide guidance, support, expertise, and key referrals. MYST also works closely with other front-line and investigative police units in the region to identify and target offenders.

### EFFICIENCIES

- Increased the capacity of the unit by adding a second counselor from Pacific Center Family Services
- Enhanced presence in our local schools to promote healthy relationships
- Balanced time spent supporting youth and identifying/targeting predators and offenders
- Improved reporting to better document and track unit activities
- Forged relationships with external partners such as Sanctuary, Victoria General Hospital, Probation, School Districts, and Youth Empowerment

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Delivered a number of “Healthy Relationships” presentations to middle and high school youth in the CRD
- Provided information on exploitation to School District 61’s Police Liaison Committee
- Completed the “Tug of War” documentary on exploitation in collaboration with Empress Avenue Media
- Assisted with the successful conclusions of a number of high profile missing persons investigations involving at-risk youth
- Worked with the Special Victims Unit on two successful sex trafficking projects
- Successfully transitioned a new police officer to the unit whose skill-set is tailored to the needs of the program

### PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

- Initiating a new “School of Rock” music program for at-risk youth, in partnership with Sanctuary
- Presenting to front-line police officers across the CRD to ensure they are aware of the MYST function
- Considering a proposal to increase the size of the unit owing to the growing need in the community



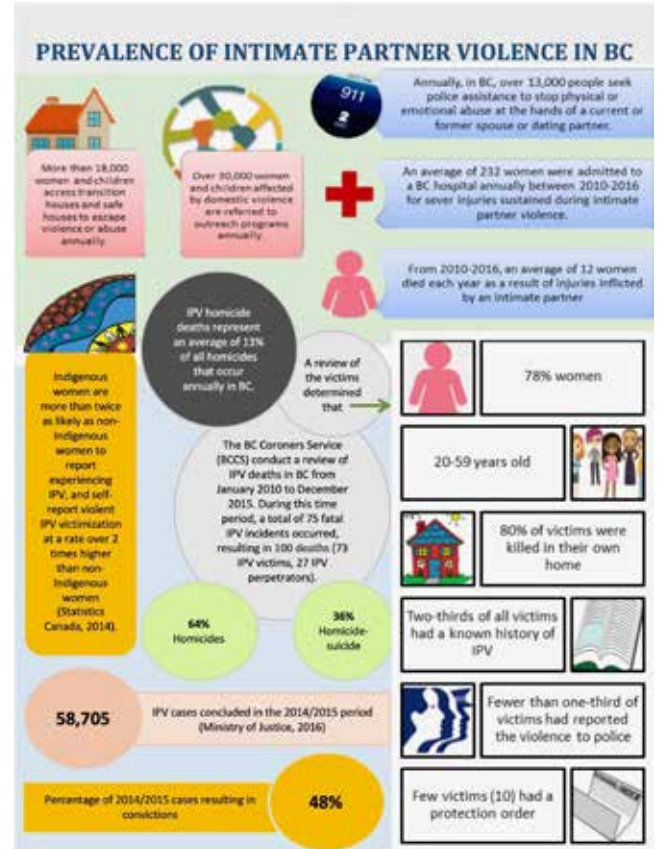
# 06. Regional Domestic Violence Unit

The Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU) provides follow-up in designated highest risk intimate partner violence cases. The RDVU increases victim safety and offender accountability by providing a collaborative, multi-disciplinary response across the CRD.

The RDVU is a partnership between the Victoria Police, Saanich Police, West Shore RCMP, Oak Bay Police, Central Saanich Police, Victoria Women’s Transition House Society, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The unit includes two police investigators, one police supervisor, one administrative assistant, two victim service workers, and one child protection social worker. The RDVU also has a courtesy agreement with Community Corrections, where a designated bail supervisor and probation officer manage all RDVU offenders.

The RDVU has established and sustained relationships with Crown Counsel, Corrections, Emergency Mental Health, Transition House Societies, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, local police agencies, and numerous other community partners and service providers.

The RDVU accepts referrals from any agency involved with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), where high-risk factors are present. The RDVU also initiates referrals after determining that high-risk factors are present. The RDVU provides follow-up investigation, risk assessment, offender management, safety planning for victims and their children, and intensive victim support through the court process and beyond.



In 2020, the RDVU received 111 new referrals in addition to its existing caseload. The RDVU assisted on 69 files, consulted on 35 files, and submitted seven files for additional charges. The RDVU opened 30 monitor files to document ongoing victim support and offender management. The RDVU managed several complex and resource intensive cases that required coordination and collaboration with several agencies in other jurisdictions. The RDVU is currently providing long-term case management for 21 of the referrals received in 2020.

The RDVU adapted its service delivery model during COVID-19 to ensure operational continuity. The RDVU increased its use of technology to allow remote work, maintain communication with its partners, and create efficiencies in workflow processes.

## EFFICIENCIES

- Used technology to create efficiencies in workflow processes
- Continued to use Major Case Management principles of file coordination to increase accountability and improve disclosure processes
- Analyzed existing budget to reallocate resources and minimize requests for additional funding
- Continued to use the police database as a case management platform to ensure data integrity and security
- Ongoing consultation with Crown Counsel to streamline disclosure processes and ensure compliance with case law

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Follow-up investigation and intensive victim support resulted in additional charges and offender accountability
- Team members completed online training to increase subject matter expertise
- Team members regularly consulted as subject matter experts by other agencies involved with complex investigations
- Files continued to have a high rate of guilty pleas which reduced court time and did not require the victim to testify
- Assisted Police Services Branch with review and revisions to the mandatory IPV training course for police
- Assisted Police Services Branch with review and revisions to the Summary of IPV Risk Factors tool

## PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

- Continue to provide services to diverse populations while adapting to changing trends
- Strengthen existing partnerships to improve collaboration and information sharing
- Resume delivering strangulation awareness training to front-line workers to increase awareness and reporting
- Build new partnerships in mental health and addictions to better support victims and offenders
- Apply specialized threat assessment training and tools during case management process
- Establish sustainable funding for training initiatives and to provide marginalized victims with cell phones
- Explore offender management strategies in other jurisdictions to increase victim safety and offender accountability

## 07. Greater Victoria Crime Stoppers

Greater Victoria Crime Stoppers (GVCS) encourages members of the community to assist local law enforcement agencies in the fight against crime. We strive to overcome issues that inhibit people from sharing information with the police such as fear of reprisal, apathy, and a reluctance to get involved. The past year saw continued advancement for the GVCS despite the complications of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Phil Downie and Gill Millam continue to manage the day-to-day GVCS operations as the Program Coordinators, overseen by Sgt. Jantzen from the Saanich Police Intelligence Section. GVCS has enjoyed extraordinary growth in this past year, and the profile of the program is ever increasing through our social media presence and strategic community partnerships despite the challenges we faced.



### EFFICIENCIES

- Continued use of P3 (tip management software) making tip collecting, documentation & dissemination more efficient
- Increased social media presence has solved cases more quickly; suspects are often being identified in 5-15 minutes
- Continued flexibility in scheduling to allow coordinators to attend community events and meetings without incurring overtime costs
- Continued community relationships to increase the Crime Stoppers profile through local advertising at no cost to the program
- Positive relationships with all area police agencies to increase awareness of our services and ability to assist in investigations



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Received an award from Crime Stoppers International for a 154% increase in arrests over previous year
- Completed our first Strategic Plan in conjunction with input by our policing partners
- Increased social media & online growth. Increased Facebook followers by 3,313 from year before. Twelve specific posts reached 1,403,763 people
- Successfully ran the program from home through the COVID-19 pandemic
- Renewed our webpage, the backbone of our program, with a livelier appearance and expanded security features
- Held our first ever Shred-A-Thon fundraiser for the program where over \$9,000.00 was raised for rewards

## /// PRIORITIES 2021/22

- Connect with Greater Victoria's diverse communities and cultures such as the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria and Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee
- Increase public presence by keeping up to date on all social media platforms, maintain relationships with traditional media partners and attend as many relevant community events as possible
- Increase measurable statistics by increasing tip numbers and law enforcements recoveries; if the other two priorities are met, our profile will be increased and people will call in tips which in turn will lead to more useable intelligence for our policing partners to action



# 08.

## Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee

The GVPDAC is an advisory committee comprised of police and community members. The GVPDAC brings together representatives of Greater Victoria’s diverse communities with the municipal police departments and RCMP detachments, for the purpose of improving communication and understanding around issues of mutual concern. The GVPDAC also seeks to build positive relationships and improve police and community relations. The current structure of the GVPDAC includes community representatives from 10 separate community groups or agencies along with police representatives from the individual police departments and RCMP detachments. The GVPDAC is co-chaired by a police officer and a community member. The Committee meets regularly to identify topical issues and discuss strategies for increased mutual understanding between the people served in Greater Victoria and the police agencies who provide service.



### EFFICIENCIES

- Cst. Michelle Joyce retired from her position as the GVPDAC Police Co-Chair and was replaced by Staff Sergeant Jennifer Ames of Victoria Police
- Brenda Freeman, Team Leader for the Family Service Team at Victoria Native Friendship Centre, was appointed as the new Community Co-Chair
- Started virtual meetings as well as events to maintain connection and carry out its mandate during COVID-19
- Supported the growth of diversity and inclusion in other jurisdictions who sought information to assist starting similar committees

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The GVPDAC Co-Chairs were invited to the BC Association of Police Boards annual conference to participate in presentations
- Former community Co-Chair, Dr. Magassa, offered a workshop on anti-racism skills and competencies to GVPDAC members titled, “Anti-Racism from the Centre”
- The GVPDAC participated in a virtual inter-community dialogue hosted by the African Heritage Association to learn the impact of white supremacy
- The Police Co-Chair was honoured to canoe into the remembrance and awareness raising ceremony for Indigenous child victims of residential schools
- The GVPDAC members attended the Sikh temple for the “Tell Me Why?” project aimed at helping police officers increase cultural awareness
- The GVPDAC Co-Chairs gave a presentation to the Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board to give an overview of the GVPDAC and current projects

## /// PRIORITIES 2021/22

- Community consultations are being planned for Fall 2021 to seek input from diverse communities regarding CRD police strengths and areas for improvement
- Hold a GVPDAC strategic planning session to establish goals for 2022 and beyond
- Examine GVPDAC membership for gaps in representation from the diverse communities in Victoria
- Continue discussions on creating a full-time GVPDAC position, given the increased responsibility and importance of the role
- Offer presentations to local police departments on the GVPDAC's role and the assistance the Committee may offer police
- Continue to seek opportunities to encourage recruit applicants from diverse communities
- Increase community awareness of the committee through active involvement on social media as well as traditional media methods
- Welcome back in-person events and dialogues for genuine high quality connection between the police and community



# 09.

## Vancouver Island Integrated Major Crime Unit

The Vancouver Island Integrated Major Crime Unit (VIIMCU) experienced an influx of new files opening 21 new cases in 2020 and five new cases in early 2021. The complexity of each case differs, with one file involving three murder victims at one scene. VIIMCU is also managing a number of active investigations from previous years and staff are providing disclosure of evidence to Crown Counsel for prosecutions related to several other investigations. This process is taxing on resources but remains crucial to successful prosecutions.

In the courts, VIIMCU files resulted in four convictions for manslaughter and one for weapons offences.



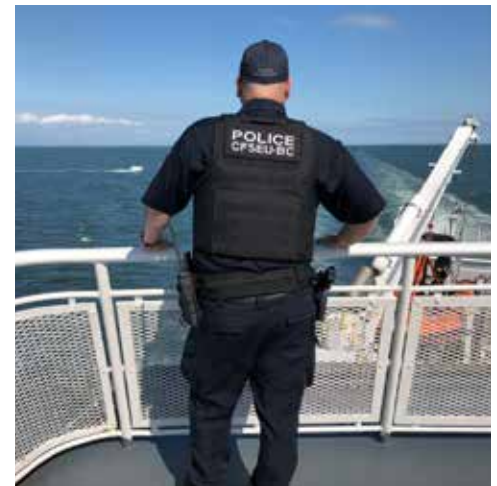
# 10.

## Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit

The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU) is an independent law enforcement agency in BC staffed primarily by seconded police officers from municipal police agencies and the RCMP from throughout the province. CFSEU has a broad mandate that includes contributing to and sharing crime research and intelligence, coordinating long-term crime reduction strategies at the provincial, national and international levels, reducing gang and organized crime violence, and deterring organized crime and related violence. CFSEU uses both uniform and covert investigative techniques and policing units during the pursuit of their mandate

Currently, the Victoria, Saanich, Central Saanich, and Oak Bay police departments, as well as the RCMP, have officers seconded to the local CFSEU team.

CFSEU supports local agencies related to outlaw motorcycle gang monitoring and enforcement, and conducts investigations related to CFSEU's mandate. More information can be found at [www.cfseu.bc.ca](http://www.cfseu.bc.ca).





# 11.

## Capital Regional District Integrated Road Safety Unit

The Integrated Road Safety Unit (CRD-IRSU) is comprised of seconded police officers from each of the local municipal police agencies and the RCMP. CRD-IRSU's mandate includes harm reduction on BC roadways, strategic traffic enforcement related to high-risk locations and activities, commercial vehicle enforcement, criminal interdictions, and assisting and enhancing local traffic enforcement units with strategic enforcement projects and operations.

CRD-IRSU is operated by the RCMP through funding provided by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) to the BC Provincial Government's Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. CRD-IRSU receives local input from a Joint Management Team comprised of representatives from the local police agencies and the RCMP.



# 12.

## Integrated National Security Enforcement Team

Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (E-INSET) exist throughout Canada under the management of the RCMP. INSETs are intended to increase the capacity for the collection, sharing and analysis of intelligence among partners with respect to individuals or groups that pose a threat to national security in addition to conducting investigations related to these individuals and groups. INSETs include representatives from the RCMP, federal partners such as the Canadian Border Services Agency, and local police agencies.

Locally, representatives from each of the municipal police agencies, as well as the RCMP, are assigned to the local INSET unit on secondment.

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