

Frequently Asked Questions:

RCMP civilian governance

Alberta's government is enhancing civilian governance of RCMP policed communities to ensure they have a voice in setting local and province-wide policing priorities and performance goals by creating municipal and regional policing committees, as well as a Provincial Police Advisory Board.

This document provides answers to questions about the establishment and operation of RCMP civilian governance bodies.

Why is the government mandating civilian governance bodies for RCMP-policed communities?

Creation of these new civilian governance bodies responds to a long-standing desire of communities to have more say in how they are policed by the RCMP.

By establishing municipal and regional governance committees and the Provincial Police Advisory Board, we are giving communities the opportunity to provide input on both local and provincial policing priorities and RCMP service delivery while increasing police accountability.

Civilian governance bodies support a paradigm shift that sees local police as an extension and a reflection of the communities they serve.

What will the function of the municipal police committees be?

Municipal policing committees will enhance civilian governance of local policing by:

- Overseeing the administration of the municipality's police service agreement;
- Representing public interests and concerns to local RCMP leadership and collaborating with local detachments to plan yearly priorities and strategies for municipal policing and community safety; and
- Regularly reporting on the implementation of programs and services that support police service priorities.

What will the function of the regional police committees be?

Regional policing committees will help ensure Alberta's small rural communities have a voice in how they are policed.

- Regional committee's roles and responsibilities will be similar to their municipal counterparts, advocating for the priorities and concerns of smaller communities while also supporting integrated community safety planning for RCMP policed municipalities in the region.
- The boundaries of the four new regional policing committee zones correspond to Alberta's four RCMP districts, to ensure local policing priorities are accurately reflected in service delivery.

How many different civilian governance bodies will be established?

Four regional policing committees will be established to align with the four RCMP districts in Alberta.

The number of municipal policing committees will depend on whether individual communities decide to either participate in one of the four regional boards, form joint municipal policing committees with neighbouring communities, or form their own municipal policing committee. It is recognized that some communities already have a committee similar in nature to what is envisioned.

How will the civilian governance body for a community be determined?

Communities with a population over 15,000 that are policed by the RCMP will be required to establish municipal policing committees.

RCMP policed communities with a population between 5,000 and 15,000 will be represented by regional policing committees but can apply to opt out and form their own municipal policing committee.

Communities with a population under 5,000 that are served by the RCMP under the Provincial Police Service Agreement will be represented by the Provincial Police Advisory Board. The board will make recommendations on province-wide policing priorities and other aspects of RCMP service delivery.

What is the timeline for these governance bodies to be established?

The amendments and new regulations will come into force on March 1, 2025.

A transitional period, between November 2024 and February 2025, will allow municipalities to pass relevant bylaws and make other preparations for implementation.

This transition period also allows municipalities that already have civilian governance bodies time to adapt those bodies to the new statutory requirements.

What is the process for communities that want to opt out of a regional committee and establish their own municipal or joint policing committee?

Communities seeking to opt out of a regional committee in favour of establishing their own municipal committee (or a joint committee with another municipality) must have a formal process in place to do so, consistent with how other municipal committees are established and aligned with the *Police Act* and Police Governance Regulation.

- Municipalities will also need ministerial approval in order to opt out of a regional committee and/or form a joint municipal committee.
- Any municipality can be part of a joint municipal policing committee, as long as it meets the definition of municipality in the *Police Act*.

To initiate the process of obtaining ministerial approval, a municipality can contact the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services at AlbertaPoliceGovernance@gov.ab.ca.

What are the requirements for the composition of the municipal and regional policing committees?

Municipal policing committees will consist of between three and seven members, appointed by the municipality's council, for terms of two to three years. The municipality's chief elected officer is not eligible to be elected as chair or vice-chair of a municipal policing committee.

Regional policing committees will consist of at least one member appointed by each municipality represented for terms of two to three years.

- Regional policing committees can include additional members appointed by the municipalities with the agreement of all the municipalities in the region. Both municipal and regional policing committees may also include provincial members appointed by the minister.

Will committee positions be voluntary or paid?

Municipalities can choose whether to establish remuneration for their policing committee (municipal or regional) members through their respective bylaws.

Will the municipalities have to pay for the setup and administration of the governance bodies

Municipalities are responsible for the costs of establishing, administering, and sustaining membership of municipal and regional policing committees.

If a municipality cannot afford these costs, they have the option of utilizing a portion of their annual Police Support Grant, which allows funds to be used for governance and local police oversight.

Communities with populations between 5,000 and 15,000 may also take the opportunity to share costs related to RCMP governance by becoming part of a regional policing committee.

What is the role of the Provincial Police Advisory Board?

The Provincial Police Advisory Board will serve as an advisory body for about 275 small rural municipalities, such as municipal districts and counties, as well as eight Metis Settlements policed by the RCMP under the Provincial Police Service Agreement. The board will support the alignment of local and provincial priorities across the province.

The PPAB will be responsible for developing and maintaining communication between the Alberta RCMP, the provincial government, and the small and rural communities it represents.

The PPAB will help advance the interests of RCMP-policed communities by

- Advising and supporting collaboration between the RCMP, communities, and community agencies on integrated community safety planning;
- Representing the interests of communities served by the RCMP under a provincial police service agreement;
- Reporting annually on progress related to provincial police service priorities, provincial police service resourcing, and related initiatives; and
- Working with the RCMP and the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services to communicate with municipalities about provincial priorities, resourcing, and community specific challenges.

How will the government ensure alignment between provincial and municipal policing priorities?

Both municipal and regional policing committees are required to consider provincial policing priorities when setting local ones.

The Provincial Police Advisory Board will provide advice on behalf of small and rural communities policed by the RCMP, to support overall alignment of local and provincial policing priorities.

Who will pay administration costs associated with the Provincial Police Advisory Board?

Costs for the Provincial Police Advisory Board will be the responsibility of the province.

Can the government appoint provincial members to these policing committees or to the board?

Yes. The government is responsible for ensuring adequate and effective policing across the province, and provincial appointees help the government fulfill that obligation.

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services appoints all members of the Provincial Police Advisory Board and can appoint a small number of members to municipal, joint municipal, or regional policing committees based on size.

Who can municipalities contact with questions about the new civilian governance bodies?

Municipalities can contact the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services at AlbertaPoliceGovernance@gov.ab.ca with questions and/or support in setting up these new governance bodies.

More information on RCMP civilian governance bodies can be found in the *Police Act* and in the Police Governance Regulations, found at Alberta King's Printer.