



Mounted Police Professional Association of Canada
Association Canadienne de la Police Montée Professionnelle

Member Communication

DEAR COLLEAGUES

We write to provide you with the big picture on the role of police associations in Canada. The RCMP is the only major police association in Canada whose members are not represented by an independent association which engages in collective bargaining with their employer.

The historic reason for that is we have been forbidden from doing so. Throughout the twentieth century, the profession of policing developed and independent police associations became recognized as credible partners in policing, necessary to provide representation for members and ensure a balance between members' rights and interests, and the ever-challenging need to deliver police services.

Today, that partnership between members, working in associations, and force management, is seen as natural and necessary part of policing operations. That is the democratic choice made by our police colleagues across Canada. That is the choice that we believe members of the RCMP should also make.

To make an informed choice, you need to understand the options available to you. Within this communication, we provide information on the activities of police associations in Canada. We urge you to reach out to your colleagues in other police forces and ask them about their experience working with an association.

An independent association and collective bargaining is a choice that has been made available to you as a result of the *MPAO v Attorney General of Canada* decision. The government has anticipated the implementation of that decision through the introduction of Bill C-43, which would recognize an independent police association for members of the RCMP, for the purposes of collective bargaining.

The *status quo* is not an option. The SRR Program was found to be unconstitutional and its days are numbered. While the SRRs have been attempting to create a revised SRR Program to overcome the *Charter* breaches associated with the existing program, both the existing SRR Program and any revised program are creatures of RCMP management, backed by the government. There is no indication that the revised SRR

Program which certain members of the SRR Program are promoting would be available to members, even if they wanted it.

The creation and nature of such programs are a matter of government choice, reviewable by our courts. Our choice is whether to join together for mutual support and benefit. Essentially every other police force in Canada has done so. The question for our members should be, *why not?*

WHAT POLICE ASSOCIATIONS HAVE ACHIEVED

Police associations in Canada have succeeded in improving the lives of their members and the safety of their communities at the same time. Consider these examples:

- The *elimination* of voluntary overtime. All associations have done this. You work, you deserve to get paid for it.
- In negotiations in 2005-2007, The Toronto Police Association fought to retain an existing minimum staffing requirement of two officers per patrol car (exempting traffic duties) during evening (7 PM to 3 AM) and peak patrol hours.
- The Winnipeg Police Association has successfully retained a similar minimum staffing provision since first acquiring it in the 1970s. Both are issues of member safety.
- Amid the global economic recession, the Edmonton Police Association obtained a 4.5% wage increase for constables with at least five years of experience (for 2009-10).
- The Windsor Police Association negotiated full payment by the employer of bulletproof vests for members at a time when this safety measure was not yet mandated.
- Since 1992, the Police Association of Ontario has hosted a labour conference designed to bring together various police and governmental representatives to discuss a wide range of issues related to working conditions.
- The Service de police de la Ville de Montréal has coordinated efforts to contest recent cuts approximating \$35 million.
- The Police Association of Nova Scotia recently defended their members against a pension deficiency. The court ordered their employer to make up for the shortfall.
- Semi-automatic sidearms were introduced across Canada as a result of an OHS complaint filed by the Ontario Provincial Police Association.
- In 2002-2003, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Association introduced a public awareness campaign that resulted in an increase the force's budget. This resulted in the hiring of more officers, and improvements to training, equipment, and other working conditions.

WHAT IS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING?

Collective bargaining simply refers to work-related negotiations between an employer and a group of employees that, as members of an association, permit it to negotiate on their behalf. Negotiations will include a neutral, third-party arbitrator to resolve disputes and impasses.

Collective bargaining produces a collective agreement. The document is a contract that binds the parties to the agreed upon terms and conditions on employment issues addressed in the collective agreement. A collective agreement typically includes:

- salaries, salary schedule, expenses, allowances, and severance
- schedules, overtime (*eliminating* voluntary overtime), and leaves of absence
- a clear distinction between full-time and other types of employment
- postings and transfers
- grievances (group and individual) through a neutral arbitrator and access to the association's independent legal fund

While collective bargaining refers to a specific form of negotiation and includes most direct work-related issues, associations can also represent their members' interests on a number of other matters. These include:

- independent Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) complaints
- discrimination complaints (including linguistic discrimination)
- education and training
- regional issues
- discipline process
- dismissal
- long-term disability disputes
- worker's compensation disputes
- duty to accommodate
- force and government policy
- equipment issues
- legal indemnification

Ultimately, the issues that an association pursues are those identified and placed on the agenda by its members.

ALL POLICE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PAY DUES

Dues are the sole source of funding for associations and therefore the only means by which they maintain financial independence from management, and are thus enabled to advance the agenda of the members themselves.

Here are a few important points:

- dues are completely tax deductible
- representation generally excludes rank of Inspector and above
- larger associations typically ask for a lower percentage of yearly salary (see below)
- an association of RCMP members would be the single-largest association in Canada

Examples of police associations and their membership size and dues are set out below:

ASSOCIATION	# MEMBERS (APPROX.)	DUES
Calgary	1 600	1.08 %
Edmonton	1 300	1.40 %
Halifax	500	1.50 %
Montreal	4 500	1.25 %
Niagara	700	2.00 %
Ontario Provincial Police	5 700	1.25 %
Ottawa	1 300	1.75 %
Peel	1 700	1.30 %
Quebec Provincial Police	5 300	1.25 %
Toronto	5 500	1.72 %
Vancouver	1 400	1.25 %
Winnipeg	1 300	1.75 %
York	1 300	1.50 %

MEMBER PERSPECTIVE ON THE BENEFITS OF A POLICE ASSOCIATION

Ask your friends and colleagues from other police forces about what it means to be represented by an independent association. Former RCMP member Dan Petre had this to say:

I was a member of the RCMP for over eight years and have been with the Vancouver Police Department for nearly six years. It has been an overwhelmingly positive experience to have the strength of an independent association looking out for me and the other members. Collective agreements provide a clear framework and an enhanced degree of understanding and respect between the ranks on the job. The dues we pay are well worth the peace of mind.

I would strongly recommend the RCMP members inform themselves as to the benefits of working under a collective agreement and give the association a chance.

THINK ABOUT IT

Our colleagues in every other major police force across Canada enjoy the right to associate and have made the *choice* to form associations and seek collective representation in active, good faith negotiations with their employer.

The dedicated, hardworking members of the RCMP have long since deserved the same right and the freedom to create and exercise a voice *independent* from management. A program of limited consultation created by management *is not* an independent voice.

We believe in the overwhelmingly positive effect that police associations have on their members' personal and professional lives through the issues they are empowered to address in their representational capacity and as collective bargaining agents.

We believe this is the choice for members of the RCMP. Think about it.

WHO WE ARE

We are your colleagues.

We have come together to form a national, independent association of members.

We are behind the *MPAO v Attorney General of Canada* court challenge that prompted the government to introduce Bill C-43, a framework for recognizing an independent member association for the purposes of collective bargaining. We are working to build the national association into the member association that will be your choice.

For more information, please visit our website: www.mppac.ca

And be sure to look for our link on the RCMP Infoweb!