

October 1, 2025



Halifax Regional Police

Interim update on HRP use of the RCMP H Division Sexual Assault Investigations Review Committee (SAIRC) process

Background

- In December 2024, the BoPC directed the Chief of HRP to participate in the RCMP H Division (Nova Scotia) Sexual Assault Investigations Review Committee (SAIRC) process for a trial period of 12 months
- At the BoPC meeting on May 21, 2025, Commissioners requested an interim six-month staff report evaluating the performance of, and findings to date, from the use of the SAIRC process
- Commissioners specifically requested the following information be included in the report:
 - How many files have been reviewed through the SAIRC process since its inception
 - How many reviewed files have resulted in additional investigation actions as opposed to clerical changes
 - How many investigations have been reopened as a result of the review; and
 - Whether any reopened cases resulted in a charge being laid

Sexual Assault Investigation Team (SAIT)

- Sexual violence is one of the most underreported types of crime
- The integrated Sexual Assault Investigation Team (SAIT) investigates adult and child sexual assaults and child physical abuse in the Halifax Regional Municipality
- SAIT is a unit within the Special Victims Section of the Criminal Investigation Division and is comprised of members from HRP and RCMP HRD who are all trained, qualified specialists in this field
 - Current staffing levels - two Sergeants and 15 investigators
- In recent years, the SAIT team has focused on training, education and strengthening relationships with partner agencies to improve the overall response to sexual assault investigations

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Supports Offered

- Prior to conducting an interview with a survivor of sexual assault, SAIT investigators will offer to connect adult survivors with the Victim Services Unit and the Independent Legal Advice program, which provides free, independent legal advice to adult survivors of sexual assault
- All interviews with adult survivors take place in a soft interview room where there is access to additional information on support services
- Prior to SAIT interviewing a child in relation to a sexual assault investigation, the SeaStar program will be offered. SeaStar brings together professionals from law enforcement, child welfare, health care, mental health, and the justice system to create an integrated approach to investigation, assessment, and treatment of suspected violence or abuse
- SAIT will often interview children at the SeaStar office, which is designed specifically for children and youth

SAIRC Formation

- Sexual assault investigations have been the subject of increased public scrutiny over the past several years
- In response, the RCMP began reviewing sexual assault investigations which were cleared without charges to ensure that appropriate steps were taken. This review is conducted by a Sexual Assault Investigations Review Committee or SAIRC
- The goal is to provide investigative oversight, to ensure investigations are thorough, timely, impartial, and properly classified, as well as to identify any systemic gaps and barriers
- To date, SAIRCs have been established in 12 RCMP divisions across Canada. There is one in every contract division and two in British Columbia, with the province currently in the process of implementing a third SAIRC in Fall 2025

SAIRC Process

- Each SAIRC meets two to four times per year to review sexual assault investigations
- SAIRCs are comprised of provincial independent subject matter experts across governmental and non-governmental organizations, all of whom are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement
- Investigations are selected at random prior to each SAIRC meeting, with the un-vetted file material securely and completely prepared and transferred. The SAIRC member has access to any audio or video interviews which were completed during the investigation, officer notes, reports, and monitor notes associated with the file
- No sexual assault investigations are excluded from being selected from review, including those involving children

SAIRC Process

- Each SAIRC committee member reviews a file individually and in-depth, against an agreed set of standards
- Following the review, the SAIRC may find that the investigation was completed in accordance with best practice, or they may make recommendations, including (but not limited to) that the investigation be reopened for additional investigative steps to be taken, or that the investigating officer receive feedback
- In December 2019, a SAIRC was established in H Division (Nova Scotia). Until recently, sexual assault investigations conducted by RCMP HRD members were not being reviewed by SAIRC, only files which occurred outside of HRM

HRP Involvement

- In preparation for HRP participating in the SAIRC process, RCMP analysts, who conduct the random selection of files for review by the SAIRC, were provided access to the HRP Records Management System (Versadex RMS)
- HRP was initially scheduled to participate in its first SAIRC meeting in September 2024. Five investigative files from SAIT were selected and prepared for review, however, this session was cancelled
- To date, HRP has participated in three SAIRC meetings:
 - December 2-3, 2024
 - May 12-13, 2025
 - September 3-4, 2025

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SAIRC Feedback

- To date, 21 SAIT files have been reviewed through the SAIRC process:
 - Three files reviewed at the December 2024 meeting
 - Eight files reviewed at the May 2025 meeting
 - 10 files reviewed at the September 2025 meeting
- To date, no files have been reopened, and no additional investigative actions have been identified as a result of feedback received from the first two SAIRC meetings. Several of the files which were reviewed relate to either historical complaints or cases where the victim did not wish to proceed with the investigation
- HRP is currently awaiting feedback from the Committee on the most recent SAIRC meeting

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SAIRC Feedback

- Overall, there has been consistent feedback provided by SAIRC members that the interviews conducted with survivors are positive and that the interview space is appropriate
- In one of the files reviewed by SAIRC, a note was made that the investigator should be more cognizant of their body language. This is something that has been addressed with the member by their supervisor

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Next Steps

- The next SAIRC meeting is scheduled for December 8-9, 2025, where 10 files are expected to be reviewed
- At the direction of the BoPC, HRP is currently participating in the SAIRC process for a trial period of 12 months and is scheduled to return to the Board in February 2026 with an update and a recommendation as to continued participation

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Questions?

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