

2022-2023
ANNUAL REPORT
Independent Centre for
Harassment Resolution



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ISSN 2816-8577
Cat. No. PS61-44E-PDF

CONTENTS

Message from the Executive Director	5
Background and Mandate	7
2022-2023: Building the Structure	8
Year in Review	13
2023 – 2024 Priorities: The Path Ahead	18
Conclusion	20
Glossary	21

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is committed to providing a healthy, respectful, and inclusive work place free of harassment, violence, discrimination, and other forms of disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour.

To that end, and in response to several reviews critical of the previous RCMP harassment complaints process, the Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution (ICHR) began operations in June 2021.

The program is a centralized, independent unit, staffed with public service employees and civilian members whose primary mandate is to facilitate the resolution of work place harassment and violence occurrences for RCMP employees, as well as other individuals working in RCMP work places. The ICHR is the Designated Recipient for the RCMP under the *Canada Labour Code's (CLC) Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations (Regulations)* and procures external neutral investigators to conduct its investigations.

The first ICHR Annual Report, published in September 2022, cited some of the ICHR's challenges during its first year in operation, including:

- staffing challenges and capacity constraints in meeting the demand for investigations of filed allegations; and,
- improving the investigator function.

This second Annual Report captures the ICHR's activities between June 2022 and June 2023. This report describes the noteworthy advancements made in addressing the issues described above, including securing a sufficient number of qualified external investigators that allowed the organization to eliminate a backlog that began prior to the ICHR being created, and respond to harassment and violence allegations in a more consistent and efficient manner.

I would also like to highlight the hard work done by the ICHR team to:

- create a harassment and violence response framework for non-RCMP employees who work in RCMP facilities (i.e. municipal employees, contractors, volunteers, etc.);
- improve communication and awareness with a wide variety of stakeholders through the delivery of education sessions and the development of tools and resources;
- start building the data structure necessary to track our progress, in order to report on our operations and identify areas requiring attention; and,
- streamline administrative processes, allowing investigators and employees to more expeditiously commence employment with the ICHR.

The year also brought new challenges which have resulted in the identification of key work priorities for the upcoming year. During the past year, the vast majority of principal parties have asked for their cases to be resolved through investigations, with very few pursuing resolutions through other means. By focusing on prevention activities and increasing awareness of the services available, our goal is to increase the number of incidents being resolved at the earliest opportunity, through the most appropriate process. Ultimately, with a greater emphasis on outreach and education, we are hopeful that employees will gain a better understanding of the tools and supports available to help resolve work place issues.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge how proud I am of all of the employees of the ICHR. It is a direct result of these dedicated employees over the past year that our program is evolving, with additional improvements identified for action in this upcoming year to ensure a fair, transparent and timely harassment resolution process for the employees of the RCMP.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amanda Nemer

Executive Director

Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution



BACKGROUND AND MANDATE

Structured in line with external reports and recommendations to improve the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) harassment resolution process, and following amendments to the Regulations in January 2021, the Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution (ICHR), an independent harassment and violence prevention resolution regime, was launched on June 30, 2021.

The primary focus of the amended Regulations is prevention, early resolution, and restoration of the work place. The ICHR uses externally contracted investigators to look into occurrences of work place harassment and violence and to identify controls that can be put in place to prevent a reoccurrence of those behaviours. The CLC harassment and violence resolution process on which the ICHR is based is non-punitive and non-disciplinary.

As the Designated Recipient for the RCMP, the ICHR supports employees by:

- receiving notices of occurrence of work place harassment and violence;
- addressing each occurrence fairly and transparently;
- guiding the parties in resolving the occurrence;
- monitoring and providing updates to parties on the status of the resolution process;
- conducting quality assurance reviews of investigation files; and,
- monitoring the implementation of recommendations from the final investigation reports.

The unit's work is rooted in a trauma-informed approach to ensure that the ICHR provides a safe space, with a focus on the needs and experiences of those who access its services.

The ICHR gives employees a trusted, accessible, and consistent harassment and violence resolution process that resides outside of the RCMP chain of command. The ICHR operates independently from the chain of command reporting, for administrative purposes only, to a senior public service employee.

2022-2023: BUILDING THE STRUCTURE

Advancing priorities from year one

As described in the [ICHR Annual Report 2021-2022](#), during its first year in operation, the ICHR laid the groundwork for the RCMP's work place harassment and violence prevention and resolution process. The ICHR contributed to the broader agenda for culture and behaviour change at the RCMP.

The ICHR's first Annual Report also identified a number of operational transition challenges as priorities for the 2022-2023 year.

FACT



Between January 1 and June 30, 2023, there was a 48% decrease in files where workplace violence was identified compared to the first half of 2022 (27 in 2022, 14 in 2023).

FACT



Between January 1 and June 30, 2023, there was a 40% decrease in notices where sexual harassment was identified compared to the first half of 2022 (30 in 2022, 18 in 2023).

Investigations

During its first year of operation, the ICHR experienced significant pressures associated with meeting legislated timelines for the resolution of the harassment and violence process. The number of notices of occurrence being filed was higher than anticipated. For example, as of the fall of 2021, there

were a projected 750 notices of occurrence with only 14 active investigators.

This situation, coupled with the backlog of RCMP security clearances and the delay in equipping the investigators with the required technology, created a significant risk for the newly created ICHR.

In 2022-2023, the ICHR team developed and implemented an action plan to mitigate these risks.

This plan included:

- working closely with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to leverage and implement additional procurement vehicles to increase investigator capacity;
- implementing a pilot project to expedite the security clearance process;
- creating a 90-day framework to ensure investigations were closed within a 90 to 120 day period whenever possible; and,
- amending the Statement of Work for investigators to ensure investigations were completed to standards outlined in the Regulations, and to clearly define roles and responsibilities when conducting harassment and violence investigations.

All Government of Canada departments are required to procure their investigators specializing in harassment and violence from the National Master Standing Offer (NMSO) list. The RCMP was the first department supported by PSPC to enter a special agreement and receive an exemption from the NMSO, acknowledging the challenges that the organization was facing. This action alone resulted in a significant increase in external investigative capacity, from 14 investigators to 74 investigators.

These procurement initiatives, coupled with the modernization of administrative processes, reduced the wait time to onboard a new investigator from 8 to 12 months to just a few weeks.

A newly established 90-Day Framework tracks legislative and key activities required at various stages of the harassment resolution process.

Supporting documents, such as report templates, contract management, and tracking tools were created and implemented to support the investigators in their work. This Framework includes a 30-, 60-, and 90-day check-in as well as regular follow-ups with investigators to document their progress.

While there is still work left to do, the Framework, combined with the updated Statement of Work and the newly developed Final Investigation Report template, has created structure and consistency, while providing clear expectations to investigators when conducting their work for the ICHR.

The creation of these processes has enabled the ICHR to start meeting legislated timelines, all while increasing compliance and maintaining consistency in the resolution process.



FACT

As of June 30, 2023, there have been 209 completed investigations compared to 59 in the last reporting period.

Recruitment

The ICHR team remains agile by restructuring activities, processes and resources as required, to better respond to client needs. For example, we have been able to create new positions, adjust roles, and facilitate targeted recruiting to secure the right skill sets to best serve the program and the parties.

The increased capacity and efficient organizational structure contribute to an improved and more timely service for clients.

Awareness and prevention initiatives

Significant communication activities were completed in the ICHR's first year, including the branding for communication products and a corporate ICHR email address that serve to reinforce the independence, autonomy, and neutrality of the ICHR.

The 2021-2022 Annual Report identified strengthening education and prevention efforts as a key priority for the ICHR. Thus, during 2022-2023, ICHR resources have been working hard to increase awareness of the Centre and the new harassment and violence resolution process through employee engagement, training, and education activities.

To reinforce the responsibilities of managers and inform on the supports available to them, the ICHR has presented strategies to specific audiences including:

- Management and Supervisor Development Programs;
- Executive Officer Development Program;
- Peer to Peer Programs;
- Public Service and Corporate Member Labour Relations Community;
- Various divisional management teams; and,
- Supervisors at workshops organized at the Pacific Region Training Centre.

In addition to the above, the ICHR provided an information session to the Local Area Representatives of the National Police Federation, describing its roles and responsibilities under the new legislation, and the obligations of employees to attempt to resolve work place issues early and at the lowest level. The ICHR has built and maintained close working relationships with all bargaining agents representing employees within the organization, and continues to collaborate on joint initiatives that aim to improve the work place culture for all.

Further, monthly newsletters have been created and distributed broadly to provide RCMP senior management and key stakeholders with relevant and timely information on various aspects of the work place harassment and violence resolution process.

In June 2023, the ICHR participated in the National Headquarters Open House to inform employees and stakeholders about the services offered by the Centre. In addition, various resource materials were distributed to managers and employees, in particular, the infographics titled *Manager's Guide: Addressing Allegations of Work Place Harassment and Violence*, and, *What Can I Do? Preventing Work Place Harassment and Violence*.

The ICHR continues to collaborate with internal stakeholders on the development and delivery of specialized training, for example, the Harassment Modules for Manager and Executive Officer Development Programs, to ensure the main focus is on prevention and early intervention. This includes updating the Cadet harassment prevention curriculum, as well as the National Field Coaching Program.

In an effort to improve our presence and influence on-line, the harassment related content on the internal infoweb pages is being revised and restructured to provide additional resources, and make information more easily accessible to employees. Further, work is underway to review the ICHR related content on the external RCMP website to provide external stakeholders and members of the public more information on the status of the ICHR, ICHR activities and metrics on occurrences filed.

With respect to work place restoration, as per the Regulations, investigators are responsible for producing a final report for the employer which

considers preventative measures, including the investigator's conclusions and recommendations to eliminate or minimize the risk of a similar occurrence in the future, irrespective of the findings on the occurrence. These recommendations are shared with the appropriate authority and the Work Place Health and Safety Committee of the affected work place for the joint review.

Building structure for the new harassment and violence resolution process is necessary to ensure that the legislative requirements are being met, and that the data being captured is contributing to the continuous improvement of the program. To facilitate this, one-on-one meetings were conducted with key stakeholders to identify what structure was required to implement the process. These actions resulted in the ICHR contributing to a collaborative approach, led by the Occupational Health and Safety Branch, reviewing the Work Place Assessment tool, increasing education and training, and leveraging supporting resources.

Informal conflict resolution

Efforts continue between the ICHR and the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP) to collectively promote the services and the benefits of resolving work place conflicts both early and informally.



FACT

Between January 1 and June 30, 2023, there was a 29% decrease in submission of files overall compared to the first half of 2022 (243 in 2022, 173 in 2023).

All principal parties are advised of ICMP services during their initial consultations with the ICHR. The ICHR provides the principal party with options for informal resolution and encourages its use, if appropriate. ICHR presentations also describe the benefits of informal resolution and the options available. To this end, we continue to maintain focus on informal routes of resolution in the processing of notices of occurrence. From June 2022 to June 2023, all principal parties who submitted or were named in a notice of occurrence by a witness (a total of 251) were provided with the option of attempting to resolve their occurrence through ICMP; 28 accepted the referral. Of those, four were resolved with the support of ICMP, including mediation, 10 are on hold/ongoing, and 14 were unsuccessful in their attempts at informally resolving their work place issues.

Key documentation

As described in the ICHR's first annual report, policies, procedures and other foundational documents were developed by the ICHR team to support efficient and effective operations.

Throughout 2022-2023, additional guidance documents such as Standard Operating Procedures, forms, and onboarding documents were created in order to enhance consistency in all ICHR interactions. The addition of this structure has significantly improved communications with investigators and data collection.

In response to concerns raised by the National Policy Health and Safety Committees, an outcome summary document detailing the findings of the Work Place Assessment and the implementation of recommendations is now being prepared for every occurrence. This document is shared with parties to conclude the resolution process, and is already proving to be a welcome and useful summary since its implementation.

Further, in this last year, we learned that the definition of a principal party under the Regulations did not consider municipal employees (ME), volunteers and contractors as they are not themselves employees of the RCMP. This means that should these individuals experience harassment and violence while working on RCMP premises, they are not considered employees with respect to the RCMP's obligations under Part II of the CLC. To ensure these non-RCMP employees have a mechanism to raise allegations of harassment and violence, the ICHR has created a process, a guidance document and a reporting form specifically for non-RCMP employees.

Lastly, in accordance with a legislative requirement to jointly review the policy every three years, a review and update of the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention, Investigation, and Resolution Policy is currently underway.

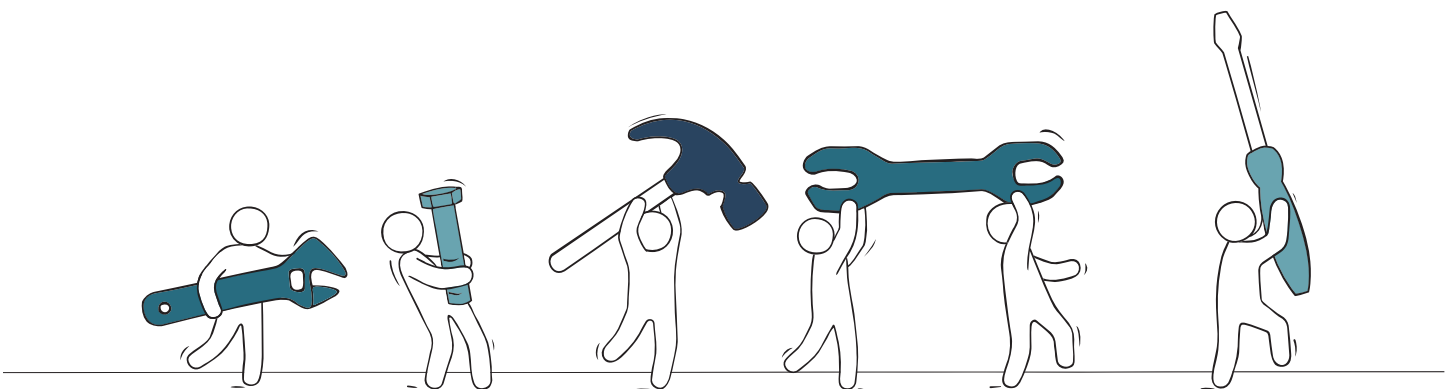
Greater independence and externalization

In the fall of 2021, the ICHR initiated extensive internal and external consultations in order to gather perspectives to help inform policy development. Per the Minister of Public Safety and the RCMP Commissioner's mandate letters, efforts continued throughout the 2022-2023 year to examine externalization options for the ICHR. Consultations continue with both internal and external stakeholders, including the Management Advisory Board (MAB), to contribute to this initiative.

Victim support services

In November, 2021, the ICHR launched a new unit for victims of criminal offence. The Victim Services Unit continues to provide support and general guidance to current and former RCMP employees that are victims of a criminal offence related to harassment and violence in the work place. This unit provides information on resources and

programs available, and referrals, as appropriate, to external victims support resources, or the police of jurisdiction. The ICHR continues to provide these services and can be reached via email at ICHRVictimSupport-SoutienVictimesCIRH@rcmp-grc.gc.ca



YEAR IN REVIEW

Occurrences filed or resolved in 2022-2023

Status of files

As of June 30, 2023, the ICHR has received a total of 954 notices of occurrence since the coming into force of the Regulations on January 1, 2021. Of the 954, 338 were received between June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Between January 1, 2021, and June 30, 2023, 330 notices of occurrence have been resolved and 156 were pending conclusion, meaning that the implementation of recommendations from the final investigation reports and/or the review and update of the work place assessments at the local level had yet to be completed by RCMP management. The remaining 468 are currently undergoing the resolution process, with 384 of those undergoing an investigation.

Complaint types & behaviours identified

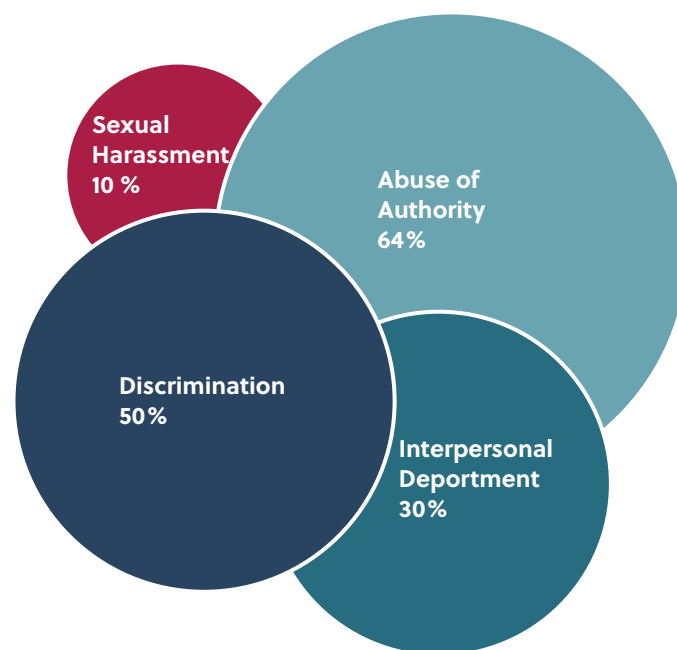
Between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2022, the ICHR categorized notices of occurrence using the following 4 complaint types: Abuse of Authority, Interpersonal Department, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. In notices of occurrence submitted to the ICHR between June 30 and December 31, 2022, 64% featured abuse of authority as a complaint type. The alleged behaviours typically included managers creating an environment where employees could not contribute ideas during meetings or they were acting aggressively during meetings. There were instances alleged where supervisors mocked, belittled and used inappropriate language, and where they allegedly shared confidential information about employees.

The second most recurring complaint type identified was discrimination, at 50%. In general, discriminatory behaviour referred to allegations of treating some members, specifically female

members, differently. Other behaviours described included failing to honor accommodations or making comments about employees' medical leave.

Interpersonal department (uncivil behaviour) was the third most recurring complaint type identified, at 30%. Behaviours associated with interpersonal department included allegations of being rude and dismissive to other colleagues. As well, behaviours alleged spreading misinformation about a colleague to others.

Finally, sexual harassment was identified in 10% of notices of occurrence received. Behaviours included allegations of comments about the appearance of other employees and/or their body parts and showing graphic photos or videos to other employees. This also included allegations of inappropriate sexually explicit comments and switching shifts or travel arrangements to be alone with others, specifically new, female members.



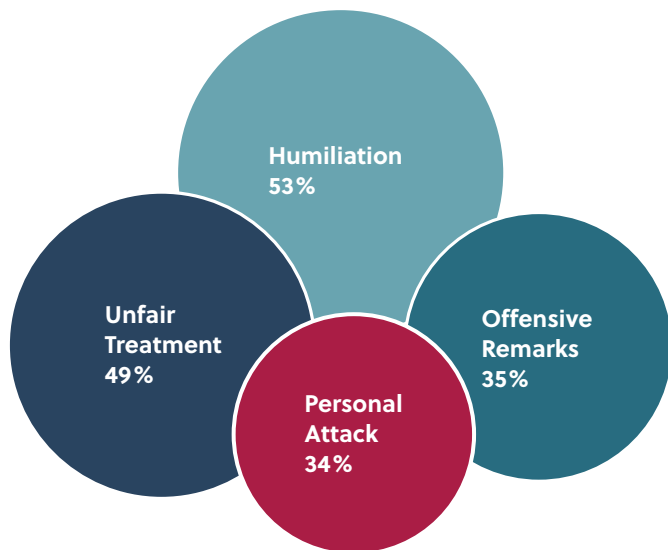
**Note that the percentage of complaint type is compared to the total number of notices of occurrence filed. There can be more than one complaint type reported on the complaint form.*

Beginning January 1, 2023, the ICHR started collecting information on the alleged behaviours experienced or witnessed from the principal parties and witnesses in a different way. These are now reported to be in line with the behaviours identified in the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES). This allows us to better identify trends within the RCMP, and across the public service, from PSES results.

These behaviours now include:

Offensive remark, unfair treatment, being excluded or ignored, aggressive behaviour, excessive control, humiliation, personal attack, interferences with work or withholding resources, yelling or shouting, threat, sexual comment or gesture and physical violence.

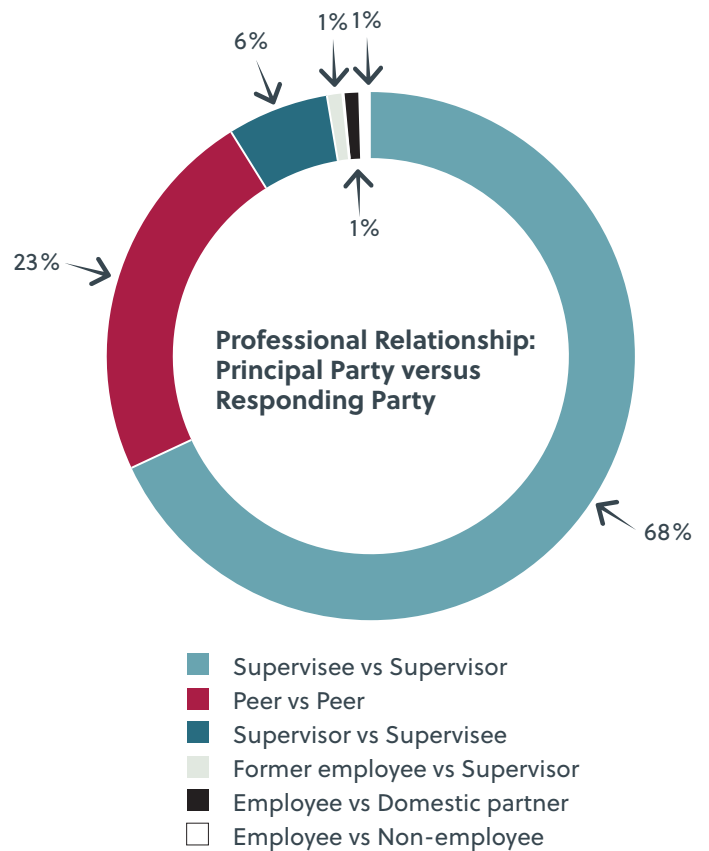
The following graphic illustrates the top four alleged behaviours for files received between January 1 and June 30, 2023:



Sexual harassment was identified in 10% and discrimination in 39% of occurrences received in 2023, as of June 30.

Professional relationship

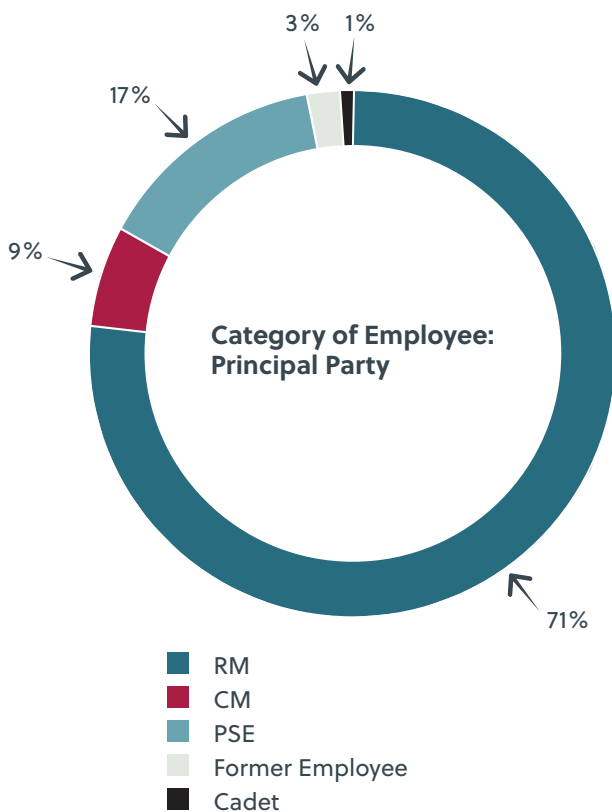
For occurrences received between June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023, the predominant professional relationship between the principal party and the responding party was a supervisee to supervisor relationship, at 68%. The second most predominant professional relationship was a peer to peer relationship, at 23%. Third, was a supervisor to supervisee relationship, at 6%, and the remaining relationships were each featured in 1% of the occurrences and included former employee to supervisor, employee to domestic partner and employee to non-employee.



Category of employees

As of March 30, 2022, the RCMP workforce was represented by a population of roughly 31,000 employees, and is comprised of 19,126 regular members (RM), 2,782 civilian members (CM), and 8,798 public service employees (PSE). As reflected in the graph below, the majority of the principal parties in notices of occurrence filed to the ICHR are RMs at 71%. This is reflective of the higher percentage of RMs in the RCMP workforce. The second most predominant principal party category of employee is PSE at 17%, followed by CMs at 9%. Former employees were featured in 3% of occurrences as the principal party, and cadets in 1%.

RMs represented 79% of the responding parties in notices received, PSEs in 13% and CM employees in 7%. Non-employees represented 1% of the responding parties in notices of occurrence.

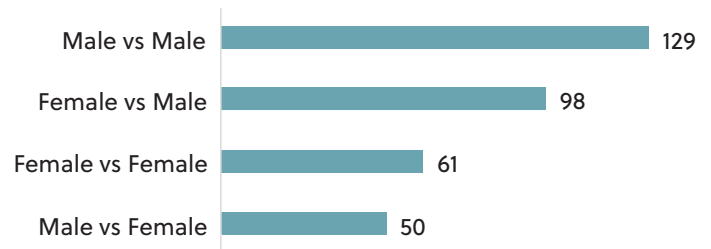


Sex of principal and responding parties

In the majority of notices of occurrence submitted to the ICHR, the principal party was male, with a male responding party. Further, in 67% of notices of occurrence filed to the ICHR, males were predominantly featured as the responding party.

Below is the representation of the sex of principal parties versus responding parties in occurrences received from June 30, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

NoOs by Sex*
Principal Party vs Responding Party



*Note that this refers to the biological sex assigned at birth of the parties and may differ from gender identity.

As of June 30, 2023, there were 209 final investigation reports received, and of those, 74 concluded that at least one allegation met the definition of work place harassment and violence, while 135 indicated that there were no allegations that met the definition. The final reports received stemmed from allegations filed from various divisions across the RCMP and included employees of all categories representing the RCMP.

Of a total of 209 investigations completed as of June 30, 2023



...the definition of work place harassment and violence.

Recommendations from investigators to improve the work place

A primary goal of the Regulations is to restore the work place following an incident of work place harassment and violence and to prevent reoccurrences. To this end, whether or not allegations of work place harassment and violence meet the definition, if the investigator believes their recommendations will help to eliminate or minimize the risk of a similar occurrence, the investigator will formulate recommendations that will be submitted to the local health and safety committee and the appropriate authority to jointly determine which recommendations to implement. Restorative practices can be used within the work place to prevent occurrences from happening in the first place and to address them when they do, enabling everyone involved to find a positive way forward.

Key recommendations to RCMP management on restorative and preventative practices that were received from investigators between June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023 include, among others:

- providing management supervisory and leadership training;
- employee training on creating a respectful work place; and,
- recommendations relating to improving communication within the work place.

This is compared to the first year of operations where final investigation reports included recommendations such as:

- providing management and employee training on creating respectful work places; and,
- practical training in informal dispute resolution and having difficult conversations.

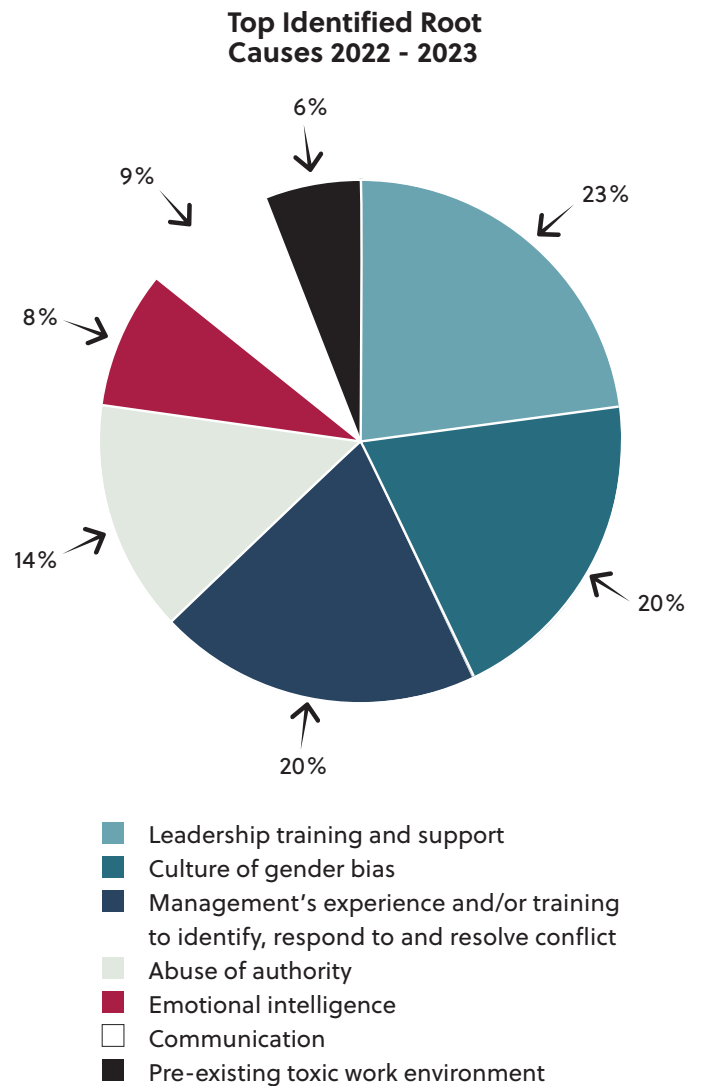
The ICHR monitors the implementation of the recommendations following an investigation. Where the employer and local health and safety committees/representatives jointly determine not to implement a recommendation, a rationale for this determination is provided to the ICHR. Where rationales indicate that recommendations are not accepted, it is usually because corrective actions or restorative measures have already been implemented.

Below are some examples of measures that were implemented in work places as a result of recommendations from investigation reports. Recommendations are not punitive and aim to improve the overall work place.

- ① All Non-Commissioned Officers and managers in the work place were required to review the Performance Reviews Administrator Guide and Performance Review User Guide.

- ② One detachment implemented quarterly or bi-annual town halls with all program lines to encourage open discussions on operations, administration, and/or matters that may impact a team.
- ③ All detachment members participated in respectful work place training provided by an independent consultant. The sessions were initially presented to supervisors and then to the remainder of the employees with the supervisors integrated into those sessions. One focus of these sessions was how to adequately address conflict before it escalates.

In addition to recommendations to prevent reoccurrences, investigators must also provide a root cause analysis of the circumstances in the work place that contributed to the occurrence. Based on final investigation reports received between June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023, the most reoccurring root causes identified by external investigators fall into the following categories:



2023 – 2024 PRIORITIES: THE PATH AHEAD

The ICHR is entering its third year in operation. As such, opportunities for improvement continue to emerge, and the ICHR is committed to leveraging valuable lessons learned as it continues to shape the way forward. The following outlines the key activities that the ICHR will focus on developing over the coming year.

Investigations

Through working with key centres of expertise in government, such as PSPC, Treasury Board Secretariat, and with bargaining agents, the ICHR has increased access to qualified external investigators trained in the new harassment and violence prevention and resolution regime.

Maintaining the required capacity to manage the high volume of reported incidents of harassment and violence in RCMP's work places will remain a priority for the 2023-2024 year.

Restoration of the work place

The application of work place restoration activities has varied between divisions. In the coming year, in consultation with stakeholders, the ICHR will focus additional efforts and place greater emphasis on creating processes and products to help create a consistent and predictable implementation of work place restoration recommendations across all divisions.

Education, awareness and promotional materials

During the 2023-2024 year, there will be a continued focus on initiatives to raise awareness about the

ICHR's services, as well as ways to prevent work place harassment and violence. To accomplish this, the ICHR has created a new unit dedicated to education, awareness and prevention activities to support and help drive culture change, and improve work place health through management and employee engagement.

This unit will develop and coordinate the delivery of education and awareness sessions, which will be made available to all employees and managers of the RCMP. In addition, this unit will develop and distribute resource material to educate and promote awareness on work place harassment and violence prevention. These materials will be easily accessible to all employees of the RCMP through the ICHR's Infoweb, and to ensure a wide national reach, they will also be distributed directly to each division.

In order to continue to meet our client needs, the ICHR would like to learn from the users of the new process, and hear about their individual experiences. The ICHR will be implementing a system to directly engage with and receive feedback from parties after their resolution process is complete. This exchange will help us to remain client focussed and be aware of and responsive to any gaps and evolving client needs.

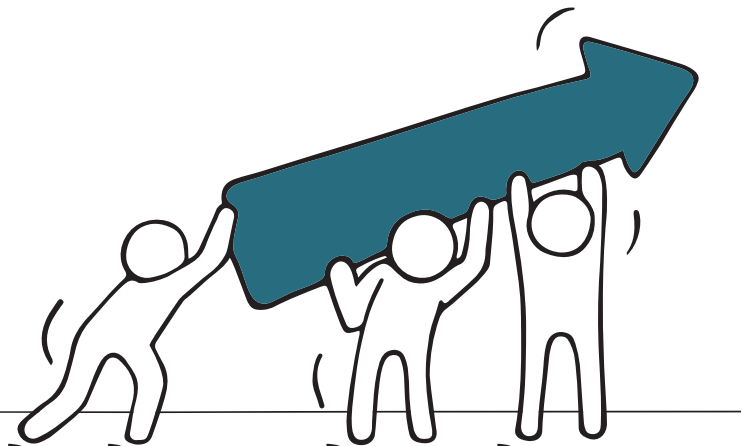
The ICHR also plays a critical role in the broader RCMP commitments of modernization and improving culture. Our focus over the next year will include increasing data analytics and trends analysis, and leveraging learned experiences, to inform on activities that can be undertaken to contribute to the improvement of the overall health of the organization.

Other key work priorities for the ICHR in the 2023-2024 year include:

- the revision and update of the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention,

Investigation, and Resolution Policy (in progress);

- working with key stakeholders, such as the Management Advisory Board (MAB) and bargaining agents, to identify gaps and improve processes;
- updating ICHR's landing and infoweb pages, which will include a repository of prevention tools and information, available to all employees;
- increasing data/metrics collection and analysis, including the creation of timely and meaningful reporting products; and,
- implementing the ICHR's Privacy Impact Assessment Action Plan.



CONCLUSION

A busy year has resulted in progress at each step of the harassment and violence resolution process. Still, there are always improvements to be made.

The ICHR team is committed to evolving the program to meet the needs of all RCMP employees. With key stakeholders by its side, the ICHR will continue to play a critical role in contributing to the broader RCMP commitments of modernization and improving work place culture in the year to come.

With a focus on fairness, transparency and employee engagement, the ICHR team will continue rebuilding trust among all RCMP employees and all Canadians.

GLOSSARY

The following definitions apply in this report.



Harassment and violence means any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, that can reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness to an employee, including any prescribed action, conduct, or comment.



Designated Recipient means the work unit, as designated under the *Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations*, identified by the Commissioner to receive notices of occurrence and coordinate the harassment and violence resolution process for the RCMP, namely the Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution (ICHR).



Notice of occurrence means a report provided to a supervisor or to the Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution, in writing or verbally, by a principal party or a witness, regarding an occurrence of harassment and violence in the work place.



Parties means the principal party and responding party identified in an occurrence.



Principal party means an employee or employer who is the object of an occurrence.

GLOSSARY

Continued...



Responding party means the person who is alleged to have been responsible for the occurrence in a notice of occurrence.



Conciliation is a process whereby the parties in a dispute voluntarily use a conciliator, such as the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP), who meets with the parties both separately and together in an attempt to resolve their differences.



Mediation means a voluntary process in which an impartial and neutral third party assists employees to create a mutually acceptable solution to their problem. Mediation can be used as a stand-alone process or it can form part of another formal or informal process.