SPOTLIGHT ON VPD CIVILIAN PROFESSIONALS
The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) acknowledges that it proudly serves the public on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.
Welcome to the Vancouver Police Department’s 2023 Annual Report.

We sometimes hear from Vancouverites concerned about crime in our city – by phone and email, in social media, and in person. We want to continue to hear from you, as it makes us aware of where crime is happening and helps us determine where we can focus our resources. When you report suspicious people and circumstances, it often contributes directly to criminals being apprehended.

Last year represented the first full year without COVID-19 restrictions. As expected, the increase in business activity, tourism, and a return to normalcy, led experts to predict that crime rates would also rise.

In 2023, we saw a 6.5% increase in property crime over 2022, many of which were reports of theft, fraud, and mischief. Break-and-enters were an exception – down 8.8%. Auto theft was also down, 19.4% over the previous year.

We had 16 traffic fatalities in 2023, a decrease from 19 in 2022, and while it is good news that number is trending downward, 16 lives are still too many.

There is variation in our violent crime statistics for the year. Overall, violent crime increased slightly by 0.2% in 2023, including 15 homicides, which is two more than 2022. Sexual offences were up by 8.2%. Robberies deceased by 10.1% and violent shoplifter incidents were down 4.2%.

One of the greatest drops we saw was in stranger assaults, which fell from 4.2 per day in 2021, to 2.3 per day in 2023. We attribute that to intelligence-led policing projects, additional resources, and a focus on chronic offenders. Our team of crime analysts helped us zero in on where and when these stranger assaults were likely to happen, and who may be committing them. When we arrest repeat violent offenders, our investigators worked closely with Crown counsel and our mental health professionals to ensure they were kept in jail or received the help they needed.

Our officers and civilian professionals managed 1,018 protests in 2023, from preparation and determining levels of risk, to staffing and ensuring the safety of all participants. Conflicts and political turmoil across the globe contributed to the 26% increase in these protests and demonstrations.

Global events also contributed to an increase of 31% in hate crimes over 2022. In particular, reports of anti-Semitism rose 62%, the majority of which took place after the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel. The VPD met with community members and faith leaders to hear their concerns immediately following the attack. We worked closely with our public safety, intelligence, and counter-terrorism partners, locally, nationally, and internationally, and maintained a high-visibility police presence at strategic locations, including places of worship, community centres, and schools. We feel this active approach has contributed to fewer violent clashes compared to other large cities.

We encourage anyone who experiences hate in Vancouver to make a police report. Please visit VPD.ca to see your reporting options, or call 911 if your safety or the safety of others is immediately threatened.

In 2023, the Vancouver Police Department responded to 240,270 calls for service – approaching 700 calls per day, and a 7.7% increase over 2022. This means roughly every two minutes VPD officers are faced with another new call for service. They are working hard to keep Vancouver safe!

Hiring remains one of our top priorities. I am pleased to report that we hired 108 police officers in 2023, and we continue to actively hire new police recruits and experienced police officers from across Canada. A net increase of new officers have allowed the formation of “metro teams.”

We’ve heard from Vancouver residents and businesses that they want more high-profile and visible policing in their neighbourhoods. The metro teams address high call loads in busy areas of the city, responding to high priority incidents and increasing foot patrols.

The Vancouver Police Department continues to be a destination police department for new and experienced officers. The organization, type of police work, salary, benefits and career opportunities, and our amazing city have consistently appealed to and attracted many applicants over the years. In 2023 alone, we saw an increase of over 300% in applications to become a Vancouver Police officer.

Overtime call-outs to safely manage the record number of protests and demonstrations in 2023 led to the Department coming in marginally over budget for the year. This is only the second time in 19 years that we have not finished the year within budget.

We thank the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Board for their commitment to properly fund our police department. Hiring additional officers, civilian professionals, and mental health experts means more officers working the frontlines and throughout the city, as well as additional officers in our Mental Health Unit and our Major Crime Section.

When most people think of policing, they generally see only police officers. They don’t see the civilian members working alongside officers and behind the scenes. In this report, you will learn about some of our amazing civilian professionals, who are filling vital roles throughout the Department and making valuable contributions to public safety in Vancouver.

CHIEF ADAM PALMER
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Welcome to the Vancouver Police Department's 2023 Annual Report.

We sometimes hear from Vancouverites concerned about crime in our city – by phone and email, in social media, and in person. We want to continue to hear from you, as it makes us aware of where crime is happening and helps us determine where we can focus our resources. When you report suspicious people and circumstances, it often contributes directly to criminals being apprehended.

Last year represented the first full year without COVID-19 restrictions. As expected, the increase in business activity, tourism, and a return to normalcy, led experts to predict that crime rates would also rise.

In 2023, we saw a 6.5% increase in property crime over 2022, many of which were reports of theft, fraud, and mischief. Break-and-enters were an exception – down 8.8%. Auto theft was also down, 19.4% over the previous year.

We had 16 traffic fatalities in 2023, a decrease from 19 in 2022, and while it is good news that number is trending downward, 16 lives are still too many.

There is variation in our violent crime statistics for the year. Overall, violent crime increased slightly by 0.2% in 2023, including 15 homicides, which is two more than 2022. Sexual offences were up by 8.2%. Robberies deceased by 10.1% and violent shoplifter incidents were down 4.2%.

One of the greatest drops we saw was in stranger assaults, which fell from 4.2 per day in 2021, to 2.3 per day in 2023. We attribute that to intelligence-led policing projects, additional resources, and a focus on chronic offenders. Our team of crime analysts helped us zero in on where and when these stranger assaults were likely to happen, and who may be committing them. When we arrest repeat violent offenders, our investigators worked closely with Crown counsel and our mental health professionals to ensure they were kept in jail or received the help they needed.

Our officers and civilian professionals managed 1,018 protests in 2023, from preparation and determining levels of risk, to staffing and ensuring the safety of all participants. Conflicts and political turmoil across the globe contributed to the 26% increase in these protests and demonstrations.

Global events also contributed to an increase of 31% in hate crimes over 2022. In particular, reports of anti-Semitism rose 62%, the majority of which took place after the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel. The VPD met with community members and faith leaders to hear their concerns immediately following the attack. We worked closely with our public safety, intelligence, and counter-terrorism partners, locally, nationally, and internationally, and maintained a high-visibility police presence at strategic locations, including places of worship, community centres, and schools. We feel this active approach has contributed to fewer violent clashes compared to other large cities.

We encourage anyone who experiences hate in Vancouver to make a police report. Please visit VPD.ca to see your reporting options, or call 911 if your safety or the safety of others is immediately threatened.

In 2023, the Vancouver Police Department responded to 240,270 calls for service – approaching 700 calls per day, and a 7.7% increase over 2022. This means roughly every two minutes VPD officers are faced with another new call for service. They are working hard to keep Vancouver safe!

Hiring remains one of our top priorities. I am pleased to report that we hired 108 police officers in 2023, and we continue to actively hire new police recruits and experienced police officers from across Canada. A net increase of new officers have allowed the formation of “metro teams.”

We’ve heard from Vancouver residents and businesses that they want more high-profile and visible policing in their neighbourhoods. The metro teams address high call loads in busy areas of the city, responding to high priority incidents and increasing foot patrols.

The Vancouver Police Department continues to be a destination police department for new and experienced officers. The organization, type of police work, salary, benefits and career opportunities, and our amazing city have consistently appealed to and attracted many applicants over the years. In 2023 alone, we saw an increase of over 300% in applications to become a Vancouver Police officer.

Overtime call-outs to safely manage the record number of protests and demonstrations in 2023 led to the Department coming in marginally over budget for the year. This is only the second time in 19 years that we have not finished the year within budget.

We thank the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Board for their commitment to properly fund our police department. Hiring additional officers, civilian professionals, and mental health experts means more officers working the frontlines and throughout the city, as well as additional officers in our Mental Health Unit and our Major Crime Section.

When most people think of policing, they generally see only police officers. They don’t see the civilian members working alongside officers and behind the scenes. In this report, you will learn about some of our amazing civilian professionals, who are filling vital roles throughout the Department and making valuable contributions to public safety in Vancouver.

CHIEF ADAM PALMER
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
# Crime Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRIMINAL OFFENCES</th>
<th>2022 NUMBER OF INCIDENTS</th>
<th>2023 NUMBER OF INCIDENTS</th>
<th>2022 RATE /1,000 POP</th>
<th>2023 RATE /1,000 POP</th>
<th>% CHANGE (RATE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIOLENT CRIME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culpable Homicide</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Murder</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Offences</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults</td>
<td>4,792</td>
<td>4,904</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>-10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROPERTY CRIME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break-and-Enter</td>
<td>3,187</td>
<td>2,968</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>-8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>-19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft from Auto</td>
<td>7,068</td>
<td>7,172</td>
<td>9.94</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft (Over/Under $5K)</td>
<td>11,048</td>
<td>12,566</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession of Stolen Property</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>3,099</td>
<td>3,573</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mischief (Over/Under $5K)</td>
<td>5,047</td>
<td>5,948</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER CRIME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive Weapons</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Criminal Code</td>
<td>4,848</td>
<td>5,498</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CRIME</strong></td>
<td>42,674</td>
<td>46,254</td>
<td>60.03</td>
<td>63.73</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DRUGS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fentanyl</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2023, upwards of 52,000+ non-emergency calls were abandoned before they could be answered by E-Comm, down from 90,000+ calls the previous year. This is thanks to E-Comm introducing initiatives to address service-level concerns.

For more information on our data disclaimers and limitations, please refer to: VPD.ca/crime-statistics.

Data run on January 11, 2024. These statistics are produced using the “most serious offence method.” Note: Small baseline offence numbers make large percentage changes. Numbers are subject to change due to ongoing investigations or reclassifications of incidents.

### CRIMINAL INCIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2022 Number of Incidents</th>
<th>2023 Number of Incidents</th>
<th>2022 Rate /1,000 POP</th>
<th>2023 Rate /1,000 POP</th>
<th>% Change (Rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRAFFIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Fatalities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous Operation of Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impaired Operation of Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail / Refuse Breath / Blood Sample</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail to Stop / Remain at Scene</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving while Prohibited</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calls for Service *</td>
<td>218,447</td>
<td>240,270</td>
<td>307.27</td>
<td>331.05</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>710,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>725,778</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 2023, upwards of 52,000+ non-emergency calls were abandoned before they could be answered by E-Comm, down from 90,000+ calls the previous year. This is thanks to E-Comm introducing initiatives to address service-level concerns.
With the exception of 2021 and 2023, the VPD has finished within budget for 17 of the past 19 years.

The VPD overspent in 2023 due to overtime deployments for protests and demonstrations related to the geo-political tensions of the Israel-Hamas war.

The VPD overspend in 2021 was a result of City Council’s decision to hold the VPD’s 2021 budget at 2020 levels and the City of Vancouver’s decision to not fund the recurring, routine, mid-year benefit adjustments and arbitrated wage settlements. The Vancouver Police Board’s appeal of City Council’s budget reduction resulted in the Province’s decision to restore the budget shortfall in 2022.

For more details, visit:
https://vancouverpoliceboard.ca/about/financial-statements/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCIAL SUMMARY</th>
<th>2022 ($1,000)</th>
<th>2023 ($1,000)</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>$349,650</td>
<td>$381,761</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Costs</td>
<td>$349,612</td>
<td>$382,630</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER / (OVER) BUDGET</td>
<td>$39</td>
<td>($869)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORIZED STRENGTH</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VPD Sworn Officers</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPD Civilian Professionals</td>
<td>441.5</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL POSITIONS</td>
<td>1,789.5</td>
<td>1,910</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE PLACE TO BE:
Civilian professionals stepping into the spotlight

There are 462 full-time civilian professionals, along with many part-time and casual staff, working alongside the VPD’s sworn officers. They share the same goals as their uniformed counterparts — particularly the desire to make a difference and to make Vancouver the safest major city in Canada.

Their work takes place mostly behind the scenes, where they play important roles in successful police investigations, many of whom are highly trained with specialized skills. Our civilian staff help people receive needed services and support, and ensure the smooth operation of the police department, our technology, and our fleet. Their contribution to public safety cannot be overstated.

The VPD offers a safe, diverse, and inclusive workplace. Our benefits and wellness programs support our staff with the unique challenges that come with working in policing.
How did a girl who wanted to be Heather Locklear when she grew up, and who later became certified in aircraft weight and balance, come to work at the Vancouver Police Department?

Cathy Hall grew up in Kitimat and Aldergrove, juggling school with jobs as a gas jockey at Petro Canada and at a local movie theatre. She spent 10 years working at the Vancouver Airport, initially as a check-in agent, and later in the Operations Department.

Sixteen years ago, Cathy decided on a career change and applied to the VPD. Since then, she has worked at our public information counters, in our Robbery/Assault/Arson Unit, our Special Investigation Section, and our Financial Crime Unit.

Now an Investigational Assistant in the VPD Homicide Unit, Cathy prepares disclosure packages for Crown for the purpose of prosecution. She is the liaison between the Crown prosecutor and the investigative team on significant files, and the file coordinator on major cases. Her work also includes training sworn and civilian staff on disclosure.

“I put paperwork together that keeps criminals in jail,” is what Cathy tells her young niece.

The workload can be difficult to manage and requires mastering time management skills, but the positive definitely outweighs the negative.

“The best thing about my job is undoubtedly my co-workers, the fantastic team environment, and working on numerous impactful projects,” says Cathy. “I love watching the people I work with progress to greater achievements, and we have shared a lot of laughter and memories over the years.”

For anyone considering a job with the VPD, Cathy acknowledges that some public perception of policing can be frustrating, but her experience is positive. “The VPD is a fantastic place to work and provides great opportunities.”

Cathy has a desire for a teaching role in the future, to share her knowledge with others, strongly believing in the importance of finding solutions, not problems.

When Cathy is not working, you will find her running, hiking, reading or knitting. She likes to claim she once had lunch with Trevor Linden, then quietly adds that he was actually sitting at the next table.

“But we were both eating lunch,” she insists.
Sixteen years ago, as the first VPD Homicide Unit Crime Analyst, Sara Lee found herself having to explain to everyone what her role was and how she could support the investigators. “I felt like a used car salesperson,” she says. “Luckily, I’m not the shy type and everyone was exceptionally receptive and welcoming. It took very little time before I got really busy.”

Today, crime analysts are a common and critical part of most criminal investigations, and after 14 years in the Homicide Unit, Sara Lee moved to the Organized Crime Section, where she provides support in gang-, firearm-, and drug-related investigations. Her work includes sourcing background information on suspects, creating association charts, determining timelines, and analyzing other data.

Sara’s career in law enforcement began after she obtained her bachelor’s degree in business administration and psychology. She worked as an enforcement officer at the Canada Border Services Agency, and then for the RCMP in multiple positions, including as a criminal intelligence analyst with the Missing Women’s Task Force, and other serial murder investigations. Sara is now a Criminal Intelligence Certified Analyst, with an advanced certificate in crime and intelligence analysis. She is presently working on her master’s degree in crime analysis.

Since 2016, Sara has been an instructor at BCIT, teaching the Major Crimes Analysis course to current and aspiring analysts. She is part of an elite instructor team with the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA), and travels to U.S. cities to teach their course to various law enforcement agencies. She is a member of a number of analytical committees responsible for methodology standardization, product development, and training.

For Sara, the most challenging part of her job is managing her workload. “I often have three to five files on the go, and things can change in an instant, so I am always re-evaluating my priorities.”

The reward is seeing an investigation from start to finish that ends in a conviction. “I also work with really great officers and civilians who make me feel like being part of a special family.”

Sara’s career has been guided by advice she was given early on: “You’re never the smartest person in the room. Be humble and learn from others, no matter if they’re new or experienced.”

When Sara takes a much-needed break from her work, she enjoys travelling abroad, and is a self-described terrible cook. Having come full-circle, Sara’s childhood dreams of becoming a kindergarten teacher have partially come to fruition: “I think my greatest accomplishment so far is to have realized my dream of becoming an educator.”
Cell phones have become fully integrated into our world and most people rely heavily on them for communication. Police officers are no different, and it’s up to Parveer Gill, the VPD’s Mobility Communications Support Specialist to keep the 1800-plus VPD smartphones working. He manages the talk/text/data lines, rolls out new lines and new hardware, manages billing and mobile plans, adjusts policies and profiles on servers, and looks after the approval and security of any needed applications and software.

Parveer is also responsible for troubleshooting, including hardware and software issues, and managing passwords and access to apps and services people require.

“There is always something new to tackle, whether it is new software and applications to research and understand, new requests or issues clients are trying to resolve, or new methods to create efficiency,” says Parveer. “I enjoy strategically prioritizing issues that need immediate attention, and working on new challenges.”

Parveer has been with the VPD for seven years now. He spent his first two years transcribing police reports and maintaining the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database in the Transcription and CPIC Support Unit.

“My only exposure to police departments before I started here was through TV and movies,” he says. “I never truly realized the size of a police department and all the different specialty units. It was an eye-opener to the complexities of policing.”

Along with a bachelor’s degree in business administration and a diploma in business management, Parveer’s past experience included working as a mobile specialist at Best Buy, a specialist at Apple, and as a Workplace Improvement Coordinator at the BC Liquor Distribution Branch. His future plans include furthering his education and experience, and moving into more leadership and project management roles at the VPD.

“There are many roles within the Department. You can take advantage of internal opportunities and really find a position that is rewarding, has real-world impact, and supports your career goals.”

When Parveer is not working, you will find him playing recreational league sports, mostly soccer, weightlifting, or riding his bike on the seawall.

He is proudest of how he supported his family and friends during difficult times growing up, and of making his parents proud of him, which instilled in him the belief that the only difference between an obstacle and an opportunity is your attitude towards it.

“Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity.”
Anyone who has been the victim or witness of a traumatic incident in Vancouver is offered the services of the VPD’s Victim Services Unit. The civilian staff arrange counselling, prepare people for court and attend court with them, give guidance for needed services and benefits, and offer comfort with an empathetic ear.

Sandra Chung has been working in the VPD Victim Services Unit since 2017, first as a crisis response worker and then as a crisis intervention caseworker. Last year, she became the Unit’s coordinator, responsible for supervising the pool of after-hours crisis response workers. She ensures the service provided meets the program guidelines and objectives, which she helps identify, evaluate, develop, and implement.

Sandra also assists with recruitment of new staff and provides training. She is available 24/7 to respond to requests for advice from the crisis response workers, providing crisis intervention assistance and emotional support in response to a wide variety of traumatic incidents.

As a child who wanted to grow up to be a veterinarian, Sandra has partially fulfilled the goal of working with animals. As one of two trained handlers for the VPD Justice Facility Dog, Sandra works with Sydney to provide support for clients at crime scenes, in court, and during meetings.

“The best part of my job is contributing to my community in a meaningful way, and helping folks navigate the complicated criminal justice system,” she says. “I enjoy the challenge of solving complex problems, and I find a sense of accomplishment in finding solutions.”

Figuring out how to effectively fit into this puzzle is not without challenges.

“In the Victim Services Unit, we are a very important piece of the puzzle in connecting with victims, families, and witnesses, providing crisis intervention, and ensuring that their experiences and voices are heard within the criminal justice system.”

Sandra has a bachelor of arts degree in criminology from SFU, and came to the VPD from a background in community-based non-profit organizations. She worked with self-identified marginalized women in the Downtown Eastside, and with people who experienced power-based violence.

When Sandra is not working, her love of the outdoors means she’s hiking, camping, snowboarding, kayaking, and snowshoeing.

“I love travelling, and I had the opportunity to go to Korea, where my parents are from,” she says. “I’ve also travelled to Mexico, the U.S, Greece, Italy, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Australia. My next trip will be to Spain this year.”

Sandra appreciates the strong sense of community and work-life balance at the VPD, and her career plans are to continue working in a helping profession, along with travelling and adventures.

“And I want a dog. I have a cat now, but I would eventually like to get a dog of my own.”
In July 2019, Despina Heiland left her job at a national law firm in downtown Vancouver, where she had worked for 11 years, to come to the Professional Standards Section of the VPD. After receiving a Paralegal certificate from Capilano University, her work experience at the law firm had included construction, arbitration, insurance, and tort liability matters.

Her position in Professional Standards was brand new, and it took some time to determine her duties and responsibilities. It was specialized work, and at the time there were only a few other municipal police departments who employed paralegals.

Today, Despina’s biggest challenge is juggling numerous deadlines, while managing complex documents, and staying on top of legal updates in policing. She provides legal support in administrative matters involving Police Act investigations and discipline proceedings into police misconduct. That includes public trust complaints, and internal discipline and policy matters.

“I conduct and prepare legal research in relation to the Police Act, supporting the investigators, and the inspectors and superintendents serving as Discipline Authorities,” says Despina. “I summarize and distribute legal updates to the section, and provide procedural guidance in the Police Act process.”

Born and raised in Vancouver, English was not Despina’s first language. She grew up in a Greek-speaking household, and did not learn English until she started preschool. She can still speak, read, and write Greek.

Even from a young age, Despina was drawn to the legal field, choosing Law Studies 12 as an elective in high school. "I completed my work experience at the Collingwood Community Policing Centre," she says. "I did consider policing briefly, however, after graduating I realized I preferred to be in an office setting and made the decision to pursue my career in Paralegal studies."

As for working at the VPD, Despina echoes the sentiment of so many of her fellow VPD co-workers: “The best thing about my job is the amazing group of people I get to work with.”
Morgan Friesen didn’t see herself ending up working for the Vancouver Police Department. She spent six years working for Earls restaurant, and originally thought she would become a nurse.

“Growing up, I always wanted to be a nurse. I was ready to start applying to nursing schools,” says Morgan. “I was at a significant crossroad in my life when I decided to apply to the VPD in 2019.”

She began working in the Transcription CPIC Support Unit for a short time, before moving to the Human Resources Unit, where she worked as an Administrative Assistant and then a Project Assistant.

Now an HR Consultant, Morgan sources and identifies qualified candidates for the VPD’s civilian professional positions. She coordinates with the applicants by arranging testing, conducting interviews, arranging security clearances, and preparing successful applicants for their first day.

“The best part of my job is seeing a new hire thrive. I take great pride in being part of the process that ultimately brings such great people to work for the VPD.”

When Morgan first began, she was surprised at the importance the Department places on physical fitness and mental wellness.

“For me, having access to a gym at work has been a significant factor to my overall health, and it’s a fun place to connect with others.”

Outside of work, Morgan describes herself as a UFC fan. “My dream is to meet my favourite fighter, Holly Holm.”

Morgan believes everything happens for a reason, and she sees herself continuing to grow and learn with the Human Resources Unit.

“I am thankful I have ended up where I was meant to be,” she says. “The VPD is certainly where I see my future.”
As the Purchasing & Inventory Manager for the Vancouver Police Department, Marcos Kwong and his team support the purchasing of a variety of goods and services essential for VPD operations — from critical assets such as uniforms and firearms, to everyday necessities like office supplies.

Marcos previously worked as the Purchasing Manager for UBC, and for the Provincial Health Services Authority, before he came to the VPD in 2022, and while these organizations all have very different needs, there are many similarities.

Marcos believes that successful procurement is not just about transactions, it’s about cultivating long-term partnerships that drive sustainable value for the VPD. Building strong relationships with suppliers leads to better outcomes for everyone.

“By developing trust and mutual respect, we can foster a more resilient and responsive supply chain, negotiate more effectively, and leverage innovation and cost-saving opportunities.”

The nature of law enforcement is constantly evolving, particularly in the area of technology, so Marcos stays informed about regulations, best practices, and emerging technologies.

“I want to ensure our staff are equipped with the ‘latest and greatest,’ in terms of safety and fighting crime, but I also have a responsibility to manage budgets effectively and seek cost-saving opportunities — without compromising the quality or integrity of the equipment or services purchased.”

Marcos’ grandfather was a respected police officer in Hong Kong, and he always admired his dedication to serving the community. He once dreamed of becoming a police officer, too, but soon realized his strengths and interests lay elsewhere.

“While my career path may have taken a different direction than I initially imagined, I am proud to be part of the VPD, and to have found a way to apply my skills and expertise in a meaningful way.”

Marcos is a car enthusiast, and as a new parent, he is trying to convince himself of the need and practicality of an SUV. “I’ve had a fascination with automobiles since I was young,” he says.

Marcos aspires to become a trusted leader in procurement within the law enforcement sector, gaining a deeper understanding of its unique needs and challenges. He intends to continue streamlining operations and finding cost efficiencies without compromising on quality or reliability, by leveraging innovative strategies and technology to better support the officers whose mission is to serve and protect the community.

For anyone considering a career with the VPD, Marcos would wholeheartedly encourage them to pursue it.

“Working at the VPD is not just a job — it’s a chance to make a meaningful difference in the community and to serve alongside some of the most dedicated and professional people in law enforcement.”
MOUNTED UNIT
Stable Attendant Niah Prowal

Niah Prowal is no stranger to hard work. As a teenager, she held down a full-time job at a restaurant throughout her high school years, waking up at 5:00 every morning to ride her horse before school. While studying interior design at BCIT, she continued working in restaurants, until she came to the VPD three years ago.

Growing up in Merritt, Niah owned and competed with horses, gaining valuable experience for her work as a stable attendant for the VPD Mounted Unit. She works hard, making sure that the barn and stables are clean and organized, and feeding and watering the horses. Under her watch, there is always a large supply of food and bedding, along with any other needed supplies for the barn.

“The labour involved, like lifting hay bales, bedding bags, and scooping stalls for long periods of time, can be challenging,” says Niah. “But I’m learning so much about riding and training, and I get to be outside with horses all day.”

Niah was surprised at the amount of training the VPD horses and their riders are given, as well as the level of care the horses receive.

“They truly are spoiled horses,” she says, “but they deserve it. They have a tough job patrolling the streets of Vancouver.”

On the rare occasion that Niah has spare time, she likes to draw, paint, hike, or enjoy a good book. Her work ethic led to the remarkable achievement of purchasing her own apartment at the age of 19 — something she considers her greatest accomplishment to-date.

As the child of a real estate agent and a contractor, and a fan of home improvement and design shows on TV, Niah thinks she was destined to also be in the housing industry. After a semester studying architecture, she decided interior design was what she was really looking for, but she was not ready to give up her love of working with horses.

“The best advice I ever got was to follow my passion, be open to criticism, and to never stop evolving and learning.”

She intends to keep one foot planted in each of her passions — her love of horses and her love of design.
A successful police investigation is a sum of its parts — the many different tasks that come together, that most people are unaware of. In her job as a Clerk III in the VPD Transcription and CPIC Support Unit, Harprit Dhadwal makes valuable contributions to investigations, transcribing police reports, processing recovered stolen vehicles, and ensuring the Canadian Police Information Centre database is accurate and up-to-date.

“I find my role really interesting because I get to know the inner workings of police work that isn’t always shown in the media,” says Harprit. “The job is fast-paced, so I constantly need to adapt and find solutions. It’s demanding, but ultimately rewarding.”

Harprit started at the VPD in 2022, after working with the Vancouver School Board and Family Services of Greater Vancouver, with street-entrenched and high-risk clientele. She has a criminology and French degree from SFU.

Harprit is a firm believer in volunteering and giving back to her community. She volunteers with the SALAL Sexual Violence Support Centre as a crisis call-taker, and in the past has volunteered with the Strathcona Community Policing Centre, participating in foot patrols and speed watches with VPD Neighbourhood Police Officers.

“During COVID, I was able to secure a grant for $10,000 for the Khalsa Diwan Society to support families requiring nutritional support,” says Harprit. “It’s a cause that is near to my heart, as I grew up with food insecurity in my childhood.”

When Harprit first began working at the VPD, she was surprised at the many opportunities for civilian professionals, and found the working environment encouraged professional and personal growth. She credits much of her success to asking questions and seeking help when she needed it.

“I think it’s important to be confident in the work you do, but it’s okay to not know all the answers.”

Harprit stays active on her days off, trying new fitness classes, and recently began police judo classes. Her secret weapon is being ambidextrous, which gives her an advantage in her recreational basketball league. She is hoping her time spent as a VPD civilian professional will lead to becoming a sworn officer.

“Despite the numerous opportunities that exist for civilians, becoming a sworn member has been a goal of mine since I was in high school.”
Carol Bueckert’s career has taken her from wrangling high school students to wrangling adults. After graduating with her bachelor of education degree from SFU in 1995, she became an on-call teacher, in subjects ranging from French and Spanish to cafeteria chef to auto mechanics before settling in as a high school French and Spanish teacher. Today, as the Administrative Coordinator for the Information Management Section of the VPD, Carol supports 18 members of the section leadership team and over 100 civilian staff.

“It’s my job to make sure that everyone has what they need when they need it,” she says. “And there are a lot of people who need a lot of things.”

When Carol began as a casual employee at the VPD in 2011, she was transcribing interviews of victims, suspects, and witnesses. Her current position has her proofreading reports, creating newsletters, booking travel, producing a variety of reports and documents, and keeping everything and everyone organized. She is the unofficial section cheerleader, with a mission to keep people smiling, engaged, and happy at work.

Carol is well-known for her altruistic efforts to improve the lives of her co-workers and people in the community. She volunteers as the secretary treasurer of the Vancouver Police Community Fund, a charity that provides funding for things like Cops for Cancer, and purchasing gifts and food for families struggling at Christmas. She is also the VPD champion for Jean Up, the BC Children’s Hospital Foundation annual fundraiser, and has helped the Department raise and donate over $28,000 in the last 10 years.

“Giving back to the community is important,” says Carol. “Over the years, my colleagues and I have supported First United Church in the Downtown Eastside, Convenant House Vancouver, Canadian Blood Services, the MS Society, Pink Shirt Day, and the Shoebox Project for Women.”

Carol’s love of language didn’t end with teaching French and Spanish to high schoolers — she is presently teaching herself Italian from an app on her smartphone — and before she came to the VPD, she learned machine shorthand, completing the Real Time Reporting Program at Langara College. She then worked as an official court reporter for 10 years, taking down testimony at 225 words a minute.

As a background performer for TV commercials and movies, Carol was able to use her real-life skills to play the role of a court reporter in a movie of the week starring Jennie Garth and Metta World Peace.

Carol will retire in a few years, and her plans include a lot of what she’s already doing: enjoying the great outdoors, travelling, volunteering in the community, and learning. “I believe in doing what we can to make the world a better place.”
When Thomas Nguyen began working as a civilian employee at the VPD in 2007, becoming a police officer had never entered his mind.

“I was just happy to have a job with City, and was thrilled to be making $18.50 an hour.”

Thomas grew up in East Vancouver and went to Templeton Secondary. After high school, he obtained a business administration degree from Capilano College, and worked as a call centre agent for eBay in their fraud department. He also volunteered with the Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre.

His first job at the VPD was working at one of the public service counters. He moved on to Document Services, where he worked as a Law Enforcement Notification System (LENS) clerk and DNA assistant.

That’s when Thomas’ career plans started to change.

His supervisor was a sergeant, who shared engaging stories of his time spent working on patrol. He encouraged Thomas to apply, adding that the Department needed more officers from diverse backgrounds.

“I’m Vietnamese,” says Thomas. “I guess you could say that was the impetus that got me thinking seriously of a career in policing.”

In September of 2011, he was officially sworn in as a Vancouver Police officer.

Thomas is currently working in the Mental Health Unit with the Assertive Outreach Team, alongside Vancouver Coastal Health practitioners. The Team supports clients suffering from severe addictions and mental health challenges — many of whom are involved in the criminal justice system. The goal is to help stabilize clients through regular outreach visits to reduce future incidents of violence or self-harm, to improve their quality of life, and ultimately help them transition to care in the community.

“I see clients with significant mental health and addiction challenges get better while under the Team’s care,” says
Choose a career as a Vancouver Police officer

Policing is meaningful work that contributes to making positive change — whether just for one person or for an entire community. It’s dynamic and fast-paced, and no two days ever look the same.

As a multi-cultural and international port city, the Vancouver Police Department offers unique and rewarding opportunities, along with competitive pay and benefits. Your workplace may be the streets of Vancouver or the water surrounding it, a local school or community policing centre, at the end of a police dog leash or undercover in the drug world. You could be at the helm of a boat or an armoured rescue vehicle, in a crime lab or in the online world, on horseback or motorcycle — the choices are many.

We’re hiring now.

Visit JoinVPD.ca and learn more about becoming a Vancouver Police officer.
“The best thing about my job is undoubtedly my co-workers, the fantastic team environment, and working on numerous impactful projects.”

INVESTIGATIONAL ASSISTANT CATHY HALL

“You’re never the smartest person in the room. Be humble and learn from others, no matter if they’re new or experienced.”

CRIME ANALYST SARA LEE

“Working at the VPD is not just a job — it’s a chance to make a meaningful difference in the community and to serve alongside some of the most dedicated and professional people in law enforcement.”

MANAGER MARCOS KWONG

“Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity.”

MOBILITY COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SPECIALIST PARVEER GILL

“Working as a civilian first made me more familiar with working in a police environment. I learned about all the different roles and units behind the scenes that keep the Department operating smoothly — largely staffed by civilians.”

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE THOMAS NGUYEN