

Mass Casualty Commission

PUBLIC PROCEEDING

||| MASS CASUALTY
COMMISSION
COMMISSION
DES PERTES MASSIVES

JUNE 21, 2022

NOW SPEAKING

Gillian Hnatiw

COMMISSION COUNSEL

Exhibits

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENT

- **Public Communications from the RCMP and Governments after the Mass Casualty**
- **All related source materials**



**MASS CASUALTY
COMMISSION**
**COMMISSION
DES PERTES MASSIVES**
**Public Communications
from the RCMP and
Governments after the
Mass Casualty**

Foundational Document

Prepared by: Counsel for the Mass Casualty Commission

Subject Matter

AREAS OF FOCUS

- **Captures the public communications of the RCMP and other government officials in the days, weeks and month after the mass casualty**
- **Compares those public statements to the information the RCMP knew internally at the time and reflects on the reasons for these gaps**
- **Post-event period commences with the RCMP's takedown of the perpetrator at the Enfield Big Stop at 11:26 a.m. on Sunday April 19, 2020**

Key RCMP Members & Teams

NOVA SCOTIA (H DIVISION)

| | |
|--|--|
| Commanding Officer | Assistant Commissioner Lee Bergerman |
| Criminal Operations Officer (CrOps) | Chief Superintendent Chris Leather |
| Officer in Charge of Support Services (OSS) | Superintendent Darren Campbell |
| Strategic Communications Unit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lia Scanlan (Director)• Cpl. Lisa Croteau• Cpl. Jennifer Clarke• Cindy Bayers |

NATIONAL HEAD QUARTERS (NHQ)

| | |
|--|--|
| Commanding Officer | Commissioner Brenda Lucki |
| National Communication Services (NCS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharon Tessier (Director General)• Daniel Brien• Jolene Bradley• Catherine Fortin |

Key Government Officials

Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister
of Canada

Stephen McNeil
Nova Scotia Premier

Bill Blair
Minister of Public Safety
and Emergency
Preparedness of Canada

Mark Furey
Nova Scotia Justice
Minister and Attorney
General

Applicable RCMP Policy

Standing Instructions/SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) approved in 2019 direct that the Privacy Act prohibits the disclosure of certain type of information and that media cannot be provide with details of the following:

- Marital status (i.e. can't say 'domestic assault'. Can say a woman was assaulted in a residence by a man.)
- Relationships between individuals, including parent/child, spouses, siblings, etc. Can say that individuals were 'known to each other'.
- Employment.
- Criminal history.
- Medical status – use terms like “non-life threatening injuries” and no further details.

Applicable RCMP Policy cont.

The RCMP's Operational Manual on Media Releases instructs members to “ensure information released to the media does not interfere with the investigation”, “result in injury, injustice or embarrassment to the victims or the accused”, or contravene certain statutes.

The Operational Manual also states:

- Do not speculate or offer your personal opinion. Report only the facts.
- Always protect the integrity of the criminal investigation and the impending trial.
- Do not release the names of young persons.
- Never release the names of any injured person.
- Do not release the cause of death before an autopsy is conducted and the cause of death is determined by a medical examiner.



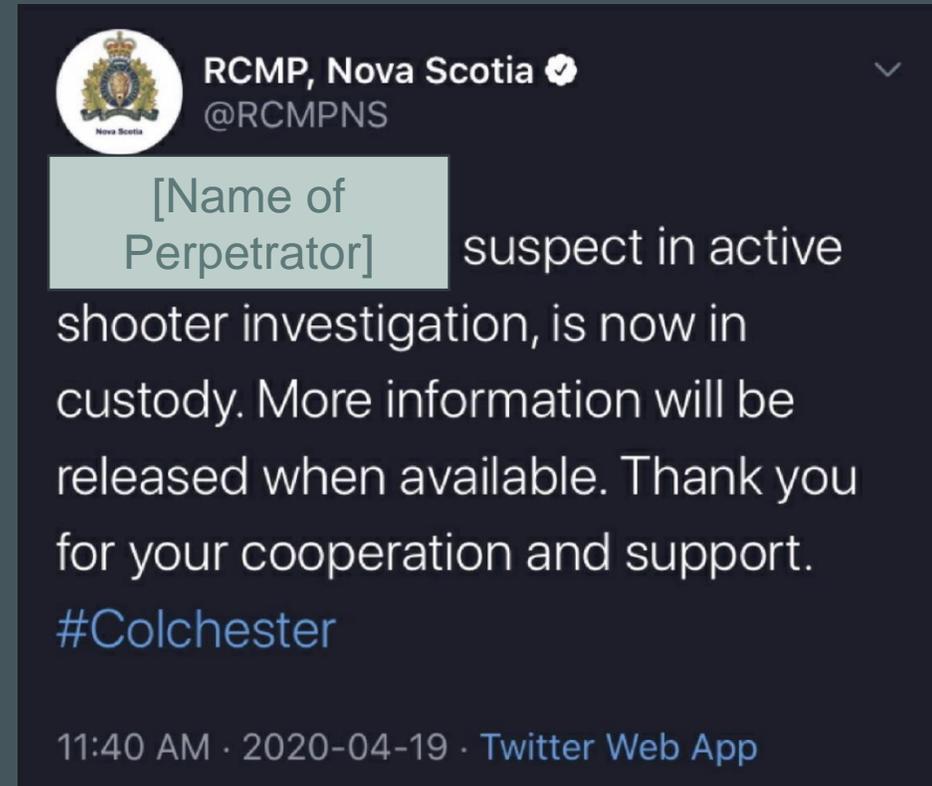
Public Communications: April 19 to 22, 2020

APRIL 19, 2020

11:40 AM | Nova Scotia RCMP published a tweet stating that the perpetrator was in custody.

12:15 PM | Prime Minister Trudeau addressed the events of April 18 and 19 in his daily COVID-19 briefing.

2 PM | Nova Scotia Premier McNeil addressed the events of April 18 and 19 during a COVID-19 press briefing.

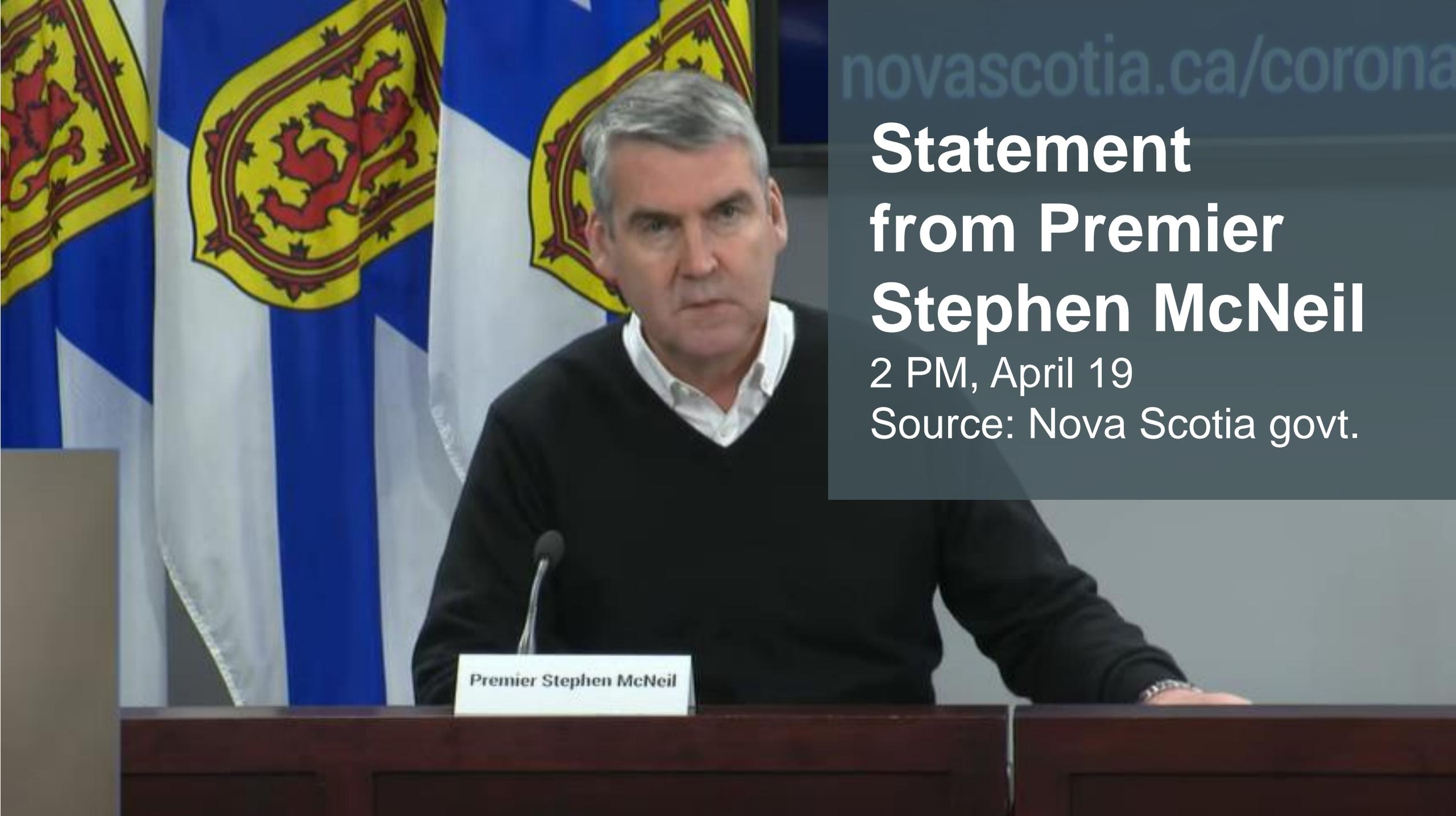


novascotia.ca/corona

Statement from Premier Stephen McNeil

2 PM, April 19

Source: Nova Scotia govt.



Premier Stephen McNeil



>> MY NAME IS TINA THIBEAULT. I WILL BE YOUR MODERATOR. JOINING US TODAY, THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN McNEIL,



Communications Plan & Approaches

APRIL 19-20, 2020

NOVA SCOTIA RCMP

- Senior RCMP personnel to deliver coordinated updates to the public about the events of April 18 and 19 through press briefings.
- No one-on-one interviews between RCMP and the media.
- Deliberate holding messages about status of investigation including number of victims, given that investigation was active and unfolding.

NHQ

- Although NCS said it was aligned with NS RCMP communications plan and approach, Commissioner Lucki gave one-on-one interviews on April 19 and 20 and participated in a separate briefing on April 20 with Minister Blair.
- Commissioner Lucki's statements result in different media organizations reporting different information over the course of the night.

APRIL 19, 2020

6 PM | NS RCMP delivered its first press briefing. A/Commr. Bergerman delivered a statement announcing the death of Cst. Heidi Stevenson and the injury of a second Member. C/Supt. Leather provided an update on criminal investigation.

Statement from Nova Scotia RCMP Commanding Officer, Assistant Commissioner Lee Bergerman

📅 April 19, 2020

📍 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

News release

Today is a devastating day for Nova Scotia and it will remain etched in the minds of many, for years to come.

What has unfolded overnight and into this morning is incomprehensible and many families are experiencing the loss of a loved one.

That includes our own RCMP family. It is with tremendous sadness that I share with you that we lost Cst. Heidi Stevenson, a 23-year veteran of the Force who was killed this morning, while responding to an active shooter incident.

Heidi answered the call of duty and lost her life while protecting those she served.

Earlier this afternoon, I met with Heidi's family and there are no words to describe their pain. Two children have lost their mother and a husband his wife. Parents lost their daughter and countless others lost an incredible friend and colleague.

Heidi's family is a part of our RCMP family and we will embrace and support them in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Unfortunately, I have to also share that another one of our officers was injured and is in hospital receiving treatment of non-life threatening injuries. He and his family will be supported and we will be alongside him as he begins his road to recovery.

This tragic incident has also resulted in many victims outside of the RCMP.

Countless families are in mourning today. Each person who lost their life had family and friends and they too will need support.

The impact of this incident will extend from one end of this province to the other. As Nova Scotians, we have to do what we are known for. And come together in times of need and support one another.





NS RCMP Press Briefing

6 PM, April 19

Source: CBC



news

CTV

April 19 NS RCMP Press Briefing

6 PM

SUSPECT: Perpetrator deceased. Not known to police.

VICTIMS: Announce death of Cst. Heidi Stevenson and injury of second member. Also “[in] excess of 10 people” killed but investigation still ongoing.

SCENES: Several locations across the province in addition to Portapique, but unable to share other locations.

SiRT: Perpetrator's death would form part of a SIRT investigation.

FIREARMS: Confirmed perpetrator was armed but too early in investigation to give details.

POLICE PARAPHERNALIA: Confirmed perpetrator was wearing part of a police uniform and driving a “mock-up or vehicle that was made to look like an RCMP police cruiser”.

APRIL 19, 2020

Evening Hours | RCMP Commissioner Lucki took part in one-on-one interviews with various news organizations. The information she shared about the rising death toll differs from the information provided by the Nova Scotia RCMP. This resulted in different news outlets receiving and reporting different information about the number of victims over the evening on April 19.

>>> Sonia Aslam <[REDACTED]> 2020/04/19 7:03 PM >>>
Hi,

I'm seeing the RCMP confirm at least 13 people are dead in Nova Scotia not including the shooter.

Are you able to the comments from your force?

Thanks,

Sonia Aslam
Midday Producer/Reporter/Web and New Media

NEWS 1130 Radio COMM0016752

>>> "Fraser, Ted" <[REDACTED]> 2020/04/19 7:19 PM >>>
Hi there,

My deadline is fast-approaching, and I'm looking to verify the confirmed number of deaths resulting from the series of shootings in NS today. Commissioner is saying 13 to some media, is this accurate?

Ted Fraser
Staff Reporter | Toronto Star
Breaking News, Atlantic Canada
Cell: 902-
C1 - Personal Information COMM0016741

 **CBC News Alerts** ✓
@CBCAlerts

RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki now says 17 people dead, including the gunman, in weekend rampage in Nova Scotia.

10:14 PM · Apr 19, 2020 · Twitter Web App COMM0058904

APRIL 19, 2020

7:47 PM | Government of Canada published statement by Prime Minister Trudeau.

7:57 PM | Nova Scotia RCMP published A/Commr. Bergerman's statement as a tweet, a Facebook post, and on its website.

9 PM | Minister Blair released statement paying tribute to Cst. Stevenson.

By End of Day | Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team (SiRT) issued statement about "investigating the shooting of a male in Enfield by RCMP officers".

Statement by the Prime Minister on the shooting in Portapique, Nova Scotia

Subscribe to email updates



April 19, 2020
Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on the shooting in Portapique, Nova Scotia:

"I was saddened to learn about the senseless violence in Nova Scotia, which claimed the lives of multiple people, including one member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Cst. Heidi Stevenson, a 23-year veteran of the Force. Our hearts go out to the people who have lost loved ones, and to the RCMP family mourning a fallen officer. I also hope for a full recovery for the people who were injured, including one RCMP member who is in hospital being treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

"Every day, law enforcement members put themselves in harm's way to ensure our safety and well-being. I thank them, and all first responders, for their unwavering dedication, professionalism, and service, and for always being there for us.

"As a country, in moments like these, we come together to support one another. Together we will mourn with the families of the victims, and help them get through this difficult time.

"Earlier today, I spoke with the RCMP Commissioner and the Premier of Nova Scotia to offer my condolences, on behalf of the Government of Canada. The people of Nova Scotia are strong and resilient, and we will be here to support them as they heal from this tragedy."

APRIL 20, 2020

12:15 PM | Prime Minister Trudeau again addressed the events of April 18 and 19 in his daily COVID-19 briefing. Refers to 18 victims.

2 PM | Nova Scotia RCMP held second press briefing. C/Supt. Leather provided an update on criminal investigation.

2:30 PM | Minister Blair and Commissioner Lucki gave separate press briefing in Ottawa; referred to 18 lives lost (inconsistent with NS RCMP).

3:30 PM | During routine COVID-19 press briefing, Premier McNeil addressed emergency alert question.

By End of Day | SiRT issued another statement about investigation into “circumstances surrounding the discharge of firearms by two members of the RCMP” and decision not to investigate an “other matter [which] is best investigated by the RCMP”.

April 20 NS RCMP Press Briefing

2 PM

VICTIMS: In excess of 19 including the perpetrator. Both men and women, all adults. Some known to the perpetrator, others not. Identified Cst. Chad Morrison as injured RCMP member. Unable to release names of other victims identified by the Medical Examiner.

SCENES: 16 crime scenes in Portapique and other communities in central and rural NS.

SiRT: RCMP made two further referrals to SiRT. Declined to provide details.

FIREARMS: Could not discuss firearms because of SiRT investigation.

POLICE PARAPHERNALIA: Replica RCMP cruiser was first reported “early in the morning” (of April 19). Origin of the police uniforms unknown but believed to be real or good copies.

ALERTS: C/Supt. Leather said he believed an Amber Alert had been issued; Cpl. Croteau clarified the RCMP just used Twitter and Facebook.

April 20 Ottawa Press Briefing

2:30 PM | RCMP Commissioner Lucki & Minister of Public Safety Bill Blair

- Minister Blair referenced “18 innocent lives that were lost” and says RCMP was actively investigating “16 crime scenes”. Although victims not yet identified, Minister Blair notes they included “a nurse, a teacher, correctional officer, serving police officer, parents, neighbours and friends”.
- Speaking about the investigation, Commr. Lucki warned “in the face of this unprecedented crime, it’s going to be very long and very complicated ... there’s 15, at least 15 crime scenes”.



Statement from Premier Stephen McNeil

3:30 PM, April 20

Source: Nova Scotia govt.


NOVA SCOTIA
novascotia.ca/coronavirus
Mental Health Crisis Line
1-888-429-8167



MORE RESOURCES TO BEAR WITH THE SUPPORT FROM NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH AUTHORITY.

>> Tina Thibeau:

APRIL 21, 2020

3:30 PM | During routine COVID-19 press briefing, Premier McNeil reiterated that the RCMP did not request use of the province's Alert Ready system.

4:10 PM | Nova Scotia RCMP published an update on the investigation on its Facebook page, which was also shared the next day as a news release. The text of the Facebook post originally stated that there were 23 victims. Later that evening, at 8:26 p.m., the post was edited and the number of victims amended to 22. In a comment under the post, the RCMP clarified: "The above post was edited to reflect that there are 22 victims. The suspect, [name of perpetrator], also died in the incident."

Update on Investigation into the incidents on April 18 and 19

📅 April 22, 2020
📍 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

News release

The Nova Scotia RCMP continues to investigate the incidents that began on April 18 in Portapique. The investigation is detailed and complex. The investigative team is focused on learning more about this very tragic situation, including accurate victim information and whether others may have aided the suspect.

The following is an account of what we know so far about the incidents on April 18 and 19:

On Saturday, April 18, Nova Scotia RCMP members responded to a possible shooting incident at a home in Portapique in Colchester County.

When police arrived, members located several casualties inside and outside of a home. They did not, however, locate a suspect. Officers secured the area and began to search for the suspect.

Residents of the immediate area were being evacuated by police while the search was ongoing.

The initial search for a suspect led to multiple sites in the immediate area, including structures and vehicles that were on fire.

Gabriel Wortman as identified as the suspect and the search for him continued overnight and into the morning of Sunday, April 19 through multiple communities in Colchester County.

The search ended on April 19 when Gabriel Wortman was located by members at a service station in Enfield. Wortman was shot by police and later died. This matter has been referred to SiRT.

Nova Scotia RCMP are currently at 16 specific locations in the communities of Portapique, Wentworth, Debert, Shubenacadie/Milford and Enfield to gather evidence and learn more about what occurred at each location.

We believe there to be 22 victims, including a 17-year-old, plus the shooter who is deceased. All other victims are adults, both men and women. Among the victims is Cst. Heidi Stevenson, a 23-year veteran of the RCMP. Some of the victims were known to Gabriel Wortman and were targeted while others were not known to the suspect.

Our thoughts are with all of the victims' families and we are particularly mindful of families who have not yet received confirmation that their loved ones were involved. This is an unprecedented incident that has resulted in incredible loss and heartbreak for countless families and loved ones. So many lives will be forever touched, including all who responded, community members, multiple RCMP units, including our Operational Communications Centre, municipal police services, firefighters, and EHS.

Nova Scotia RCMP would like to acknowledge the support we have been receiving from Nova Scotians, from Canadians and from our many colleagues here and across the country. Your support means so much and will help us heal. While we have lost one of our own, and had one of our members injured, we would like to acknowledge the many other individuals who were affected by this tragedy. We are humbled by the stories of their lives and contributions to their communities.

Attached are questions and answers that provide more information on the tragic incidents of April 18 and 19.

More information will be provided when available.

April 21 NS RCMP Statement

VICTIMS: 22 victims, not including the perpetrator. Clarified one victim was 17 years old while the rest were adults. Did not provide names but said they continued to work with the Medical Examiner and on notifying next of kin.

PERPETRATOR: Restated that the perpetrator did not have “a criminal record”.

SiRT: Confirmed that “[two] matters, including the death of the suspect, are being investigated by SiRT” and that as a result the RCMP would not be providing more detail about those matters.

COURSE OF EVENTS: RCMP first responded to a “firearms complaint”.

APRIL 22, 2020

3:30 PM | During routine COVID-19 briefing, Premier McNeil continued to address questions about public alerting.

4:30 PM | NS RCMP held another press briefing. C/Supt. Leather delivered a statement about the ongoing investigation, the emergency Alert Ready system, the course of events, and the RCMP's response. He confirmed that the perpetrator acted alone, adding that the RCMP continued to investigate whether anyone may have assisted the perpetrator leading up to the mass casualty.

By End of Day | NS RCMP posted statement from C/Supt. Leather on its website (see right).

Statement by RCMP Criminal Operations Officer, Chief Superintendent Chris Leather

April 22, 2020

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Statement

As we try and piece together the many details of the incidents that unfolded over the weekend, here is some of the information we know to date.

Throughout the evening Saturday and into the early morning hours Sunday, the RCMP established and maintained a significant presence in the Portapique area in response to an active threat. Our response centred on protecting people, which included providing up-to-minute information on Twitter.

RCMP members were in the community of Portapique at 10:26 p.m. responding to a possible shooting. When they responded, members determined this to be a homicide. As part of the investigation, officers began notifying residents in the immediate area and searching for suspect(s). The RCMP issued a public instruction on Twitter that we were aware of a firearms complaint in the Portapique area and advised them to stay inside.

Within a short period of time, police discovered additional victims and several structure fires in Portapique. A complete search of the area was underway throughout the evening and into the morning hours and the suspect was not located.

Based on the evidence available at the time, the RCMP established a perimeter in the Portapique area as part of their ongoing investigation.

Early Sunday morning, the RCMP began providing real-time information on its Nova Scotia RCMP Twitter account. While doing so, confirmation was obtained about who the suspect was and at 9:35 a.m. police received a call about a possible female victim on Hwy 4 in Wentworth. Throughout this time the RCMP were able to broadcast photos of the suspect, suspect vehicle, locations and sightings. Twitter allowed our information to be shared, followed and broadcast by local, provincial and national news outlets.

At 10:15 a.m. Nova Scotia Provincial Emergency Management officials contacted the RCMP to offer the use of the public emergency alerting system.

The RCMP was in the process of preparing an alert when the gunman was shot and killed by the RCMP.

This incident was dynamic and fluid. The RCMP have highly trained and capable Critical Incident Command staff who were on site in Portapique. Operational Communications Centre operators assisting the response and police presence was significant. The members who responded used their training and made tough decisions while encountering the unimaginable. Collectively, RCMP employees had one objective and that was to protect Nova Scotians and each other by stopping the threat. At 11:26 the gunman was killed by the RCMP.

We are working towards providing a full timeline, and more information will be provided as it becomes available.

April 22 NS RCMP Press Briefing

4:30 PM

FIREARMS: Declined to go into specifics, citing SiRT investigation. In response to a journalist's question, C/Supt. Leather said RCMP believed that the perpetrator did not have a “firearms acquisition certificate (FAC)”.

POLICE PARAPHERNALIA: Restated that it was the morning of April 19 that information about police uniform and car came to CIC commander.

ALERTS: C/Supt. Leather said “a lot of the delay [in preparing an alert] was based on communications between the EMO and the various officers, and then a discussion about what the message would be”.

COURSE OF EVENTS: When asked if using the term “firearms complaint” undersold the initial events, C/Supt. Leather said he was “very satisfied with the messaging”. He said “the communications that were being provided were the best and clearest information that could be provided”.

RCMP Knowledge: April 19 to 22, 2022

| VICTIMS | SCENES | PERPETRATOR | SiRT |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knew there were at least 17 before April 19 press briefing.• By April 20 press briefing, knew one victim was 17 years old.• By the time of April 21 statement, the RCMP knew the names and ages of all 22 victims and whether they were known to the perpetrator.• All next-of-kin notifications were completed by April 20. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Believed there was a minimum of 18 scenes on April 19. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• While April 21 statement was an accurate reflection of the perpetrator's Canadian Police Information Center (CPIC) records, it does not account for the perpetrator's criminal history, including his conviction of assault in 2002, threats of violence, and other dealings with the police, all known to the RCMP by this time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knew by end-of-day on April 19 that there were at least three incidents of members discharging their firearms:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enfield• Shubenacadie• Onslow |

RCMP Knowledge: April 19 to 22, 2022 cont.

| FIREARMS | POLICE PARAPHERNALIA | ALERTS | COURSE OF EVENTS |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By the April 22 briefing, the forensic identification report on the firearms in the Mazda3 was completed.• RCMP had interviewed several witnesses who spoke about the firearms in the perpetrator's possession. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Received information that the perpetrator was driving a police car or a vehicle that looked like one from multiple witnesses in Portapique as early as 10:01 PM on April 18.• Received further information about car from Lisa Banfield and David McGrath on the morning of April 19. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft statement on April 21 was amended to remove the line which said that the RCMP had not considered the option of using the public emergency Alert Ready system and the paragraph about investigating its use of the emergency Alert Ready system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial 911 call from Jamie Blair was received by the OCC in Truro at 10:01 p.m. on Saturday April 18. She described the perpetrator shooting her husband Greg Blair. During the call the perpetrator shot Jamie Blair multiple times.• RCMP learned in the first call that at least two people had been shot and possibly killed in Portapique. |



Public Communications:
April 24 to June, 2020

APRIL 24, 2020

11 AM | Nova Scotia RCMP held first press briefing in 48 hours. Supt. Campbell delivered a statement in which he shared a timeline of the mass casualty and first responders' actions in Portapique, noting that "the initial complaint was of a shooting." He described the mass casualty as occurring in three parts: "The first cluster was in the Portapique area on Saturday night. On Sunday, there was a second cluster of incidents in the areas of Wentworth, Glenholme, and Debert. And then, a third and final cluster of incidents were in the Shubenacadie area, Milford and in Enfield."

Speaking remarks: Supt. Darren Campbell

April 24, 2020
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Speech

[Check against delivery](#)

As Cpl. Clarke said, I am Superintendent Darren Campbell, Support Services Officer, Nova Scotia RCMP.

Before I begin and provide you with information related to the incidents as they unfolded, I want to first acknowledge those who lost their lives.

Twenty-two innocent people were killed at the hands of a gunman and three people were injured. To call this are heroes.

I want to express my sin

There are two elements

The incidents happened
This is a small communi
and some are summer r

The RCMP implements
skilled and trained offic
units deployed when res

These two elements are

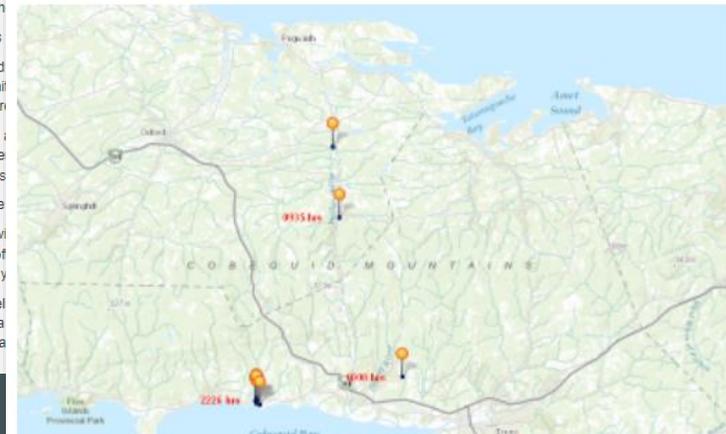
The following details I wi
happened. The police of
am about to share with y

To help explain the timel
On Sunday, there was a
Shubenacadie, Milford a

Related link

[Maps - Speaking notes: Supt. Darren Campbell](#)

Map 4



A close-up map of the area of Nova Scotia where shooting incidents occurred. Markers depict the locations where victims were found as well as the start time of each incident:

- Portapique (11:26pm, April 18)
- Wentworth (9:35am, April 19)
- Debert (10:06 am, April 19)



NS RCMP Press Briefing

11 AM, April 24
Source: CPAC

DARTMOUTH, NS

NOVA SCOTIA RCMP UPDATE ON MASS KILLINGS

VEHICLE THEN APPROACHED

RCMP provides detailed account of the incidents that took place on April 18 and 19

cpac



DARTMOUTH, NS

NOVA SCOTIA RCMP UPDATE ON MASS KILLINGS

RCMP provides detailed account of the incidents that took place on April 18 and 19

cpcic

April 24 NS RCMP Press Briefing

11 AM

VICTIMS: First mention of April 18 assault on Lisa Banfield happening prior to first 911 call, although she was not named. Names of victims still not shared.

SiRT: When asked about the second SiRT investigation, Supt. Campbell said he could not go into detail, but said it involved "two of our other officers" and a "marked vehicle".

FIREARMS: Perpetrator was in possession of a pistol and long barreled weapons. RCMP had traced one of the weapons back to Canada and believed rest came from the USA.

POLICE PARAPHERNALIA: Supt. Campbell said that early in the RCMP's response on Saturday April 18 they learned the perpetrator owned "several vehicles that looked like police vehicles." He said they learned on the morning of Sunday April 19 that the perpetrator "was in possession of a fully marked and equipped replica RCMP vehicle and was wearing a police uniform."

ALERTS: Supt. Campbell shared belief by the Critical Incident Command team that the perpetrator had been contained on April 18 and they were dealing with a "localized incident".

APRIL 28, 2020

11 AM | Nova Scotia RCMP held another press briefing. Supt. Campbell provided information about the RCMP's ongoing investigation on topics such as the perpetrator's access to firearms, and the emergency Alert Ready system.

Speaking remarks: Supt. Darren Campbell - April 28, 2020

April 28, 2020

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Speech

[Check against delivery](#)

Thank you Cpl. Clarke.

Before I begin and provide you with information related to the investigation and what we have learned thus far, I also want to highlight that today is the National Day of Mourning — a day dedicated to remembering and honoring those who have lost their lives or suffered injury or illness on the job. The recent events here in Nova Scotia remind us that policing is an inherently dangerous job, and today Constable Heidi Stevenson, who gave her life to protect her community, and Constable Chad Morrison, who was injured in the incident, are both very much on our minds. Thank you once again to everyone who bravely responded to intervene and those who stepped up to help them.

Today is also a day to acknowledge the victims of the tragic incidents on April 18 and 19, and I express my sincere condolences to all the families of the twenty-two innocent people who were killed at the hands of the gunman. I want to thank Nova Scotians for the support they have shown all the families and the RCMP.

Having provided an account of the incidents this past Friday, my focus today is on providing you with an update on our investigation and the information we have collected and pieced together to date.

Any homicide investigation is a significant endeavor. In this case, we are dealing with 22. We have a sizeable major crime team dedicated to the investigation and we have engaged specialized resources. In addition, we have experts across the country and are now receiving additional support from RCMP resources across the country. We have received support from external agencies, including the Canadian Armed Forces, Halifax Regional Police and Canada Border Services Agency.

I want to extend my appreciation to all of the law enforcement agencies who have offered assistance and support.

Our job is now to determine the actions of the gunman on April 18 and 19. Though the gunman will never stand trial, we still have a duty to complete this investigation by the same standards that we would if he was.

At this time, priority areas for us are to determine how the gunman obtained access to the equipment he used, to establish the gunman's movements on April 18 and 19, and to determine if anyone had knowledge of the gunman's plan, if any, and if they had assisted him in any way.

We have been focusing on witness interviews, video canvass, and judicial authorizations that allow us to obtain search warrants and records. This work has enabled us to gain a better picture.

To give you a sense of the scope of the investigation, we have identified over 435 witnesses to this point and we have interviewed more than half of them. There are many more interviews to come and we expect the witness list to grow. Also, we have completed approximately 20 legal applications and have obtained authorizations to help us determine the acquisition of equipment and the gunman's activities and movements.

Related link

[Maps - Speaking remarks: Supt. Darren Campbell - April 28, 2020](#)



A map of the region of Nova Scotia shows the gunman's route from 123 Ventura Drive, Debert to 2328 Hunter Road, Wentworth. Insets of still images taken from different videos show the gunman's replica police car:

- at 5:43am, Debert
- a red car in a laneway at 6:29am, Wentworth

April 28 NS RCMP Press Briefing

11 AM

VICTIMS: Perpetrator's assault on his common law spouse was the "first significant assault" of the mass casualty. RCMP confirmed it had interviewed Lisa Banfield (still not named) several times.

SiRT: When asked about the second SiRT investigation, Supt. Campbell said he could not go into detail, but said it involved "two of our other officers" and a "marked vehicle".

FIREARMS: Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) assisting investigation, and RCMP had spoken to an individual in the USA. Perpetrator was "in possession of several semi-automatic handguns and two semi-automatic rifles".

ALERTS: RCMP conducting a full review about alerts and were in conversations with the province and Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

COURSE OF EVENTS: RCMP investigators believed the perpetrator had "left the Portapique area through a field at approximately 10:35." This was in part based on evidence from "a witness that saw a vehicle that was travelling through a field which was not very common".

April 28 Meeting Between NS RCMP, NHQ RCMP Comms and Commr. Lucki

- According to Supt. Campbell's notes, A/Commr. Bergerman, C/Supt. Leather, Supt. Campbell and Director Scanlon met by phone with Commr. Lucki and members of the NHQ Comms Team.
- During the meeting, Commr. Lucki expressed her "disappointment" in the press briefings carried out by the Nova Scotia RCMP. Conveyed that they had "disobeyed" her instructions to include specific information on the firearms used by the perpetrator and that she had "promised" Minister Blair and the Prime Minister's Office that they would release that information as it was tied to pending gun control legislation that would "make officers and the public safer".

MAY 11, 2020

Nova Scotia RCMP issued a new release about their investigation, which had been named “Operation H-Strong”:

- Interviewed 500 witnesses and continuing to conduct interviews.
- All 17 scenes and search areas released.
- Three matters referred to SiRT; “[t]wo of those matters are being investigated ...: gunfire by RCMP officers at the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade hall on April 19 and the death of the gunman. The third matter, which is related to whether Cst. Heidi Stevenson fired her weapon at the gunman, continues to be part of Operation H-Strong.”

Update on investigation into the incidents on April 18 and 19

📅 May 11, 2020

📍 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

News release

The Nova Scotia RCMP continues to investigate the incidents of April 18 and 19, an operation that has been given the name of H-Strong.

Operation H-Strong is being led by the RCMP Major Crimes Unit (MCU) with the assistance of specialized resources from across the country, including crime analysts, digital forensic services, federal policing officers, forensic anthropologist, forensic identification and laboratory services, forensic pathologists, legal application supports, national weapons and enforcement support, special tactical operations, victim services, among many others.

There are many areas of investigation as we continue to piece together the gunman's movements, possible motivation and whether he received assistance leading up to the incidents. Also, three related matters have been referred to the Nova Scotia Serious Incident Response Team (SiRT). Two of those matters are being investigated by SiRT: gunfire by RCMP officers at the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade on April 19 and the death of the gunman. The third matter, which is related to whether Cst. Heidi Stevenson fired her weapon at the gunman, continues to be part of Operation H-Strong.

Investigators have identified the supplier that was used to make the RCMP decals that were on the gunman's car. The decals were created without permission of the business owner. The business owner and individual who made the decals are both cooperating with police.

When the gunman left the Portapique area on April 18, he was in possession of two semi-automatic handguns and two semi-automatic rifles. One of the guns has been traced to Canada. The remaining guns that were recovered are believed to have been obtained in the United States. The RCMP is working with the Canada Border Services Agency on the investigation on any cross-border or border-related elements. The calibre of the weapons is not being released, because determining where and how the gunman obtained the firearms is a central part of the investigation, and we use this detailed information to verify the credibility of some of the information we receive.

The RCMP's Behavioural Analysis Unit is conducting a psychological autopsy of the gunman, with the intent of gathering insights into why he committed the acts of violence. This includes an analysis of his personality, past behaviour and how he related to others.

Regarding the fires that were set by the gunman, investigators believe he used an accelerant. From witness statements, we know the gunman had a significant supply of gasoline at his home in Portapique.

Using ground penetrating radar, with support from Dalhousie University, forensic identification officers searched the underground of the gunman's property in Portapique. This was done to determine whether anything of relevance or interest to the investigation was buried on the property, and nothing was recovered.

The special tactical operations team has completed its ground searches, and all 17 scenes and search areas have been released. We thank the public and property owners for their patience in allowing us to do our due diligence in carrying out our work.

Investigators have spoken with 500 witnesses and are continuing to conduct interviews. We thank all those who have spoken with investigators and to all of those who have submitted tips and video.

The Nova Scotia RCMP is looking to speak with anyone who may have had a conflict with the gunman, whether professional or personal, at any time. Please call the tip line at 1-833-570-0121.

JUNE 4, 2020

Nova Scotia RCMP holds another press briefing. In addition to update on the investigation, C/Supt. Leather stated that the RCMP's response to the mass casualty was "subject to a number of reviews or independent investigations including SiRT, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Hazardous Occurrence Investigation Team (HOIT) and that "discussions underway to determine the best approach regarding a formal comprehensive review."

Remarks from the Commanding Officer, Assistant Commissioner Lee Bergerman - June 4, 2020

June 4, 2020
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Speech

[Check against delivery](#)

Thank you.

To begin, I must first acknowledge that today is June 4, a day many will never forget as it was six years ago that we tragically lost three RCMP officers in Moncton. Those incidents continue to affect all of us – the families of our fallen, the force and the community.

As Cpl. Clarke noted, Superintendent Campbell will provide an update on our investigation into the incidents on April 18 and 19. Before he does that though, I would like this opportunity to address the families of the victims, Nova Scotians and our RCMP Nova Scotia employees.

To the families of the victims so deeply impacted by the incidents here on April 18 and 19th. Your lives have changed in ways that most will never understand.

This was a horrific incident directed at innocent people and no one has felt this more than you.

Please know that your family members and you will remain at the forefront of every decision we make in relation to Operation H-Strong.

We know you are looking for answers with broken hearts.

I can assure you that since day one we are investigating to uncover the why and how this happened, and we will continue to go where the facts lead us.

We have leaned heavily on our officers who are serving as liaisons to the families of the victims. Our RCMP and the Provincial Victim Services have also provided remarkable assistance. Keeping the families supported and informed are critically important pieces and we are fully committed to ensuring an ongoing open dialogue with you.

To Nova Scotians.

To say these have been trying times is an understatement. I have accepted there will never be words to describe the impact of these days because the effects of the gunman's actions are deep, far reaching and for many, life changing.

It has become very clear that for Nova Scotians there will always be a "before" April 18 and an "after".

We have endured a terrible attack on our province, which was unprecedented and unlike anything we have seen before.

In the past six weeks, Nova Scotians have experienced every emotion and have rallied together united in grief, in outrage, and in resolve to honour the innocent victims and preserve and defend the true culture of Nova Scotia– one of kindness, hospitality and compassion.

Amid this cloud of tragedy, we have felt your outpouring of condolences and support. We will continue to be there for Cst. Heidi Stevenson's family and for Cst. Chad Morrison who is recovering from his injuries. We share in the collective inability to gather and celebrate those tragically lost in April, but what you have done for us is truly appreciated and I thank you.

Many of us in the RCMP have found comfort in your notes, public displays, and personal expressions of thanks – we have felt your embrace.

To all Nova Scotia RCMP employees, who I've never been more proud of.

Well over 100 employees were part of the response on April 18 and 19 and hundreds more are involved in Operation H-Strong, on the investigation and behind the scenes, but we're all one family.

What those who responded on April 18 and 19 faced is unlike anything most have been faced with before and your experiences and first-hand accounts of what unfolded are heart breaking on many levels.

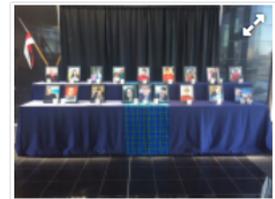
They also demonstrate the type of people you are; selfless, brave, trained, skilled and heroic. We all feel privileged to work with you and I have never in my career been more proud to be a member of the RCMP.

As Superintendent Campbell will reference in more detail, the Operation H-Strong investigation is well underway.

Related links

[Update on Operation H-Strong by Supt. Darren Campbell - June 4, 2020](#)

[Remarks from Criminal Operations Officer, Chief Superintendent Chris Leather - June 4, 2020](#)



June 4 NS RCMP Press Briefing

VICTIMS: In response to questions, Supt. Campbell said survivors who called 911 were "instructed to shelter in place and to hide while the IARD team members continued their search for the threat. IARD members set up containment around the survivors' residences while other first responders set up containment around the community of Portapique". He said perpetrator did not use his replica police cruiser to pull over victim's vehicles.

POLICE PARAPHERNALIA: RCMP investigators had "uncovered a familial association between the gunman and two retired members of the RCMP. Both of these retired members were estranged from the gunman and both have fully cooperated with the investigation." Perpetrator had purchased former police vehicles and equipment through local and online auctions.

RCMP Knowledge: April 24 to June, 2022

| VICTIMS | SiRT | FIREARMS |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">By April 28 press briefing, RCMP had interviewed Lisa Banfield three times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">By April 24 the RCMP had learned further details about the “Blue on Blue” incident at the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade hall, including that Csts. Brown and Melanson had discharged their weapons in the direction of Cst. Gagnon and his RCMP cruiser. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">By April 24, the RCMP had completed report on the firearms recovered in the Mazda3:Glock 23 pistol with a CTC laser point grip attachedRuger P89 pistol with a CTC laser point grip attachedColt Carbine 5.56 semi-automatic rifleRuger Mini 14 semi-automatic rifleRCMP-issue Smith & Wesson handgunEight additional magazines and rounds of unused ammunition |

RCMP Knowledge: April 24 to June, 2022 cont.

| POLICE PARAPHERNALIA | ALERTS | COURSE OF EVENTS |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the morning of the April 28 press briefing, the perpetrator's uncle, who was a retired RCMP member, told the RCMP that he gave the perpetrator his Red Serge jacket and his High Brown boots.• See Police Paraphernalia Foundational Document. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As noted earlier, RCMP members did not consider the Alert Ready system to be a resource available to them during the mass casualty.• Previous information about the use of the Alert Ready system shared by the RCMP in press briefings before April 24 did not identify that there was a "localized incident".• While EMO said it kept the RCMP updated on the emergency Alert Ready System, RCMP did not have a policy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Containment Points in and Around Portapique Foundational Document contains information shared by witnesses about the Blueberry Field road.• RCMP had also obtained video surveillance footage of the perpetrator's replica RCMP cruiser entering the Industrial Park in Debert at 11:10 PM on April 18. |



Public Communications: July 2020 to December 2021

JULY 23, 2020

Ministers Blair and Furey announced a joint review into the events of April 18 and 19, 2020.

RCMP issued a news release on behalf of Assistant Commissioner Bergerman, regarding the announcement of a joint review.

A week later, in response to public pressure, the Governments announced their intent to convert the joint review into a joint Provincial/Federal Inquiry

Statement from Nova Scotia RCMP Commanding Officer regarding announcement of joint review

📅 July 23, 2020

News release

📍 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

The RCMP welcomes today's announcement of a joint review into the devastating incidents of April 18 and 19, 2020. We support the independent review and will cooperate fully.

What took place in Northeast Nova Scotia was unprecedented and has forever affected victims' families foremost, but also RCMP employees across Nova Scotia, particularly those who were involved in the incident, community members and Nova Scotians from one end of our province to the other. We owe it to the memory of those we lost to learn as much as we can from this terrible tragedy.

The confirmation of a joint review does not shift our focus in relation to the ongoing H-Strong investigation. Our priorities will continue to be the victims' families and learning more about why the gunman did what he did and what help the gunman received leading up to the incidents.

The Nova Scotia RCMP will work closely with Public Safety and the Department of Justice to ensure that the review has all available information required.

- Commanding Officer, Assistant Commissioner Lee Bergerman

JULY 30, 2020

In response to the release of information about the H-Strong investigation to the public (pursuant to a court order), the RCMP published a statement intended to provide additional context for some of the information released. This included:

- The absence of any credible or actionable information that the perpetrator was involved in any other murders prior to the murders on April 18 and 19, 2020.
- Information that the perpetrator was involved in procuring firearms illegally, but they had not uncovered information that the perpetrator was involved in organized crime.
- Information about the bank accounts and personal investments available to and accessed by the perpetrator prior to April 18, 2020.
- Connections between the perpetrator and individuals from Maine.
- Information the perpetrator had hidden rooms or compartments in his residences.

DECEMBER 4, 2020

RCMP published a statement by Supt. Campbell on its website announcing new criminal charges against three individuals accused of providing ammunition to the perpetrator. The statement continued, to “ensure a fair trial for those who have been charged and with the public inquiry now ongoing,” the “RCMP will respectfully refrain from further commenting on these matters outside of the inquiry.”

In an interview with the Commission, Director Scanlan stated that December was the conclusion of the investigation because at that point in time, the inquiry was announced. She felt that there was a limit on what you could say and not say, and that they needed to be mindful of not influencing anything.

2021

There were no further updates on the H-Strong investigation, but the RCMP published other official statements including memorial messages from Commissioner Lucki and A/Commr. Bergerman on April 18.

Key Summary Observations

- Initial public statements from the RCMP and governments about the mass casualty contain differing and sometimes conflicting information, reflecting evolving understanding of the events.
- While the RCMP had a significant amount of information about the events within days of the mass casualty, it avoided sharing certain details with the public, citing the ongoing H-Strong investigation, SiRT and other independent investigations, and then later the public inquiry.
- Some information is never formally provided in a public statement, e.g. names of the civilian victims.
- Last RCMP press conference on mass casualty held June 4, 2020.



MASS CASUALTY
COMMISSION
COMMISSION
DES PERTES MASSIVES