

The Mass Casualty Commission wants to hear from you about ways we can strengthen community safety.

The Commission has been working since its inception in October 2020 to examine the April 18-19, 2020 mass casualty in Nova Scotia and to provide meaningful recommendations to help make our communities safer. This work has included gathering tens of thousands of documents for review, conducting hundreds of interviews, hearing from witnesses and experts in public proceedings, and sharing information with the public about what happened, and how and why it happened. Information about all of this is available on the Commission's website: MassCasualtyCommission.ca.

In August and September 2022, the focus of the Commission's activities will be to consider findings and recommendations. This work builds on everything the Commission has learned through its earlier phases investigating what happened, and how and why it happened. The Commission is inviting recommendations from the general public, Commission Participants and community organizations. All of this information and input will be considered in preparing recommendations that could help prevent, intervene and effectively respond in the best ways possible in the future.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

Make it easier to share your suggestions for change by introducing issues analyzed by the Commission and asking questions to help you think about potential recommendations.

PREPARE

- Use this Discussion Guide to learn more about the kinds of issues the Commission is exploring
- Review our website, including the extensive information shared through **Foundational Documents**, **Research and Commissioned Reports**, **proceedings webcasts** and more
- Talk with your colleagues, family, friends or neighbours about potential changes you would like to see

SHARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

**Online**

MassCasualtyCommission.ca/PublicSubmissions

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ISSUES COVERED IN THE COMMISSION'S MANDATE

The following pages outline seven issues identified in the Commission's mandate and associated questions to assist you in thinking of recommendations or changes that can help make our communities safer.

1. Ensuring public communication during an emergency

Topics we have learned/are learning about from proceedings, research, experts and others with relevant knowledge

- The discussions and process for sending a public alert during the mass casualty
- Technical information about emergency alerting
- Design, implementation, capabilities and limitations of the Canada's emergency alerting system (Alert Ready) program
- Best practices and useful models for emergency communications in other countries
- How to convey important information to the general public as well as to first responders at the tactical level and to other emergency responder agencies
- How to share important information from the public in emergencies

Questions to help you think about potential recommendations

- How can we ensure that community members receive the information they need to stay safe during an emergency?
- What is the role of public education in ensuring emergency public communications produce the desired result of increased safety?
- How can we consider the needs of vulnerable or marginalized individuals and communities in designing and implementing these systems?

2. Supporting individuals, families, first responders, service providers and communities after a mass casualty

Topics we have learned/are learning about from proceedings, research, experts and others with relevant knowledge

- What worked or did not work for survivors, those most affected and support services of this mass casualty and other mass casualties
- American and Norwegian experiences with the sharing of information and support following mass casualties
- Best practices for addressing the needs of those most affected and models that support grief, promote healing and foster resiliency
- Key principles for supporting those most affected including comprehensive support services that are tailored to meet different needs

Questions to help you think about potential recommendations

- What kinds of support do individuals, families, first responders, service providers and communities affected by a mass casualty need?
- What role should communities and government play in designing and delivering these supports? What role can individuals play?
- Do you have additional suggestions for providing support for those affected by a mass casualty?

3. Preventing gender-based and intimate partner violence

Topics we have learned/are learning about from proceedings, research, experts and others with relevant knowledge

- The dynamics of violence generally and more specifically gender-based (GBV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) as linked to the causes, context and circumstances of the mass casualty
- How understanding the dynamics between these forms of violence could assist in the development of policies to better understand, prepare for, identify warning signs for and respond to mass casualty events
- Preventing GBV and IPV as a priority social and political objective and as a promising strategy for preventing some mass casualties
- Barriers to effective police and other institutional prevention, intervention and responses to IPV, GBV and family violence including cultural aspects

Questions to help you think about potential recommendations

- How can men and boys be encouraged to cultivate healthy relationships and to avoid using violence?
- What resources and supports do women and children need to be safe and protected from violence?
- What resources, supports and consequences do abusers need to break their cycle of violence?
- What is particularly needed in rural areas?
- What will make the biggest impact?

4. Improving community safety and well-being

Topics we have learned/are learning about from proceedings, research, experts and others with relevant knowledge

- Best practices for improving community safety that goes beyond crime and policing and includes mental, physical and social well-being
- Approaches focused on community development and contemporary community policing, coordinated leadership and enhanced ability to intervene early and employ preventive strategies
- Police and law enforcement agencies, public service institutions, organizations and systems that are mandated to help keep communities safe
- Individual and community opportunities to keep each other safer and to support each other in the future

Questions to help you think about potential recommendations

- What resources or strategies will help rural communities be safe, welcoming and inclusive places for everyone?
- What do police services need to do or understand better to contribute to community safety in rural areas?
- How can we consider the needs of vulnerable or marginalized individuals and communities?
- Are you involved in or aware of initiatives designed to improve community safety since the mass casualty?

5. Changing our current structure and approach to policing

Topics we have learned/are learning about from proceedings, research, experts and others with relevant knowledge

- The working culture and organization of policing and law enforcement within Canada and in other countries
- Numerous Nova Scotian and other Canadian reviews have made recommendations with respect to many issues such as police oversight, training, preparation, and organizational culture
- The need to break down silos of work internally (within) police agencies and externally (with) police and non-police partner agencies
- Too often these recommendations remain unimplemented
- Assessments of the implementation of past recommendations may provide an additional perspective into the police context and can identify recurring challenges in achieving reform
- Barriers to change and strategies for understanding and overcoming these barriers

Questions to help you think about potential recommendations

- Is change required to our current structure and approach to policing? If so, what changes could work?
- What are the tasks that police services are well-equipped to do? Are there some tasks they are presently doing that could be better done by other services or agencies?
- What steps can be taken to ensure our recommendations are fully implemented?
- What steps should be taken to improve how police services work with other agencies?
- How can we consider the needs of vulnerable or marginalized individuals and communities in designing and implementing police reform?

6. Regulating access to firearms

Topics we have learned/are learning about from proceedings, research, experts and others with relevant knowledge

- Policies about how police respond to reports of the possession of prohibited firearms, including communications between law enforcement agencies
- The broader context of rural gun ownership and community safety
- Past recommendations about access to firearms in the context of active shooter events and GBV/IPV
- Legal and policy interventions including the limitations of firearms registration systems, risk assessment, the limitations of reporting mechanisms when civilians are worried about safety as a result of the acquisition or presence of firearms and the use of pro-removal policies in situations of relationship violence

Questions to help you think about potential recommendations

- How should access to firearms be regulated in Canada? Do you think the current regulations are sufficient, or should they be revisited?
- How can laws about the possession, importation and transfer of firearms be effectively enforced?
- Do you have thoughts on the role of any agencies below?
 - Canadian Border Services
 - Provincial Firearms officers
 - Criminal Intelligence Services Canada and its provincial bureaus

7. *Regulating the private ownership of police paraphernalia*

Topics we have learned/are learning about from proceedings, research, experts and others with relevant knowledge

- The impact of the perpetrator's police paraphernalia and replica RCMP vehicle in the mass casualty
- The current regime for regulating procurement, access, and disposal of police paraphernalia
- Differing impacts of police symbols (i.e., source of pride for some or source of fear for others)
- The negative impact of criminal behaviour by police impersonators and its wider impact on trust in police
- A range of views on the question of whether the advantages of allowing police uniforms, equipment and vehicles to circulate in the general population outweigh the risks

Questions to help you think about potential recommendations

- What limits, if any, should be placed on the private ownership of police equipment, uniforms and vehicles?
- Do you have additional suggestions about the regulation of police paraphernalia?

DO YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS THAT ARE NOT COVERED ABOVE?

This is not a complete list of issues or questions. Please share your suggestions for change or related information on any issues within the scope of the Commission's work, which you can read more about on the website: [MassCasualtyCommission.ca/About/Mandate](https://www.masscasualtycommission.ca/About/Mandate).

Thank you for providing your input and for taking actions to help make our communities safer. Here are some other questions you might like to consider:

- What steps can we take to help ensure the Commission's report and recommendations are implemented and lead to substantive positive change?
- How do you want to be involved in making change happen?
- Who will lead change?
- What would make the biggest impact in making communities safer?