



## Serious Incident Response Team

Civilian Director's Report  
SIRT-NL File No. 2026-0023

Stephen Ring  
Director  
August 21, 2026

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## Introduction

On May 12, 2026, the Serious Incident Response Team of Newfoundland and Labrador (SIRT-NL) received notification from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) that a member discharged his firearm at a vehicle associated with a reported armed robbery. The investigation considered whether the discharge constituted an assault with a weapon contrary to section 267(a), reckless discharge of a firearm under section 244.2, or any other criminal offence under the **Criminal Code**.

## Mandate

SIRT-NL is a civilian-led oversight agency that conducts investigations into serious incidents. Serious incidents include matters involving serious injury, death, sexual offence, domestic violence, or any matter of significant public interest arising from the actions of a police officer in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As the allegation involved an alleged assault with a weapon it fell within SIRT-NL's mandate. As such, I directed a SIRT-NL investigation into this matter.

The strategy for the investigation was a traditional one focusing on interviewing witness officers, civilian witnesses, the subject officers and obtaining any corroborating and/or refuting evidence that was available.

## Terminology

I have made the following substitutions to protect the privacy of those involved:

- “Affected Person” or “AP” for the occupants of the vehicle in which the SO discharged his firearm.
- “Subject Officer” or “SO” for the police officer who is the subject of this investigation.
- “Witness Officer #” or “WO#” for any police officer who provided relevant information.
- “Witness #” or “W#” for any civilian who provided relevant information.

## Investigation

The SIRT-NL investigation began on May 12, 2026, and concluded on July 20, 2026.

During the investigation, SIRT-NL took the following steps:

- Collected and reviewed:
  - Copy of RCMP investigative file
  - Body Worn Camera videos (BWC)
  - Video captured by two of the civilian witnesses

- RCMP Watchguard Video
  - Drone footage
  - RCMP Operations Communications Center (OCC) recordings
  - Crime Scene photos, video, and crime scene examinations
  - Notes and reports of 17 witness officers.
  - RCMP policies
- Obtained audio recorded statements from:
  - 2 affected persons, 15 witnesses, and 17 witness officers.

## Overview

This report addresses whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Subject Officer committed an assault with a weapon contrary to section 267(a), reckless discharge of a firearm under section 244.2, or any other criminal offence when he discharged his firearm into an occupied vehicle associated with a reported armed robbery.

## Affected Persons (AP)

Two of the three affected persons provided statements to SIRT-NL. Collectively, they described being occupants of a vehicle that was the subject of police containment efforts on Salmonier Line. Both reported that police vehicles were following the vehicle and that police had established roadblocks and deployed spike belts in an attempt to stop it. They recalled that the vehicle continued to travel despite those efforts and both reported hearing gunshots at some point during the incident, although neither identified the officer who discharged the firearm. One affected person reported hearing shots while still inside the vehicle, while the other reported hearing shots after exiting the vehicle. Both were subsequently taken into custody by police.

The two affected persons expressed concerns regarding aspects of the police response, including the discharge of a firearm and their treatment during the arrest process. The third affected person declined to provide a statement. The accounts provided by the affected persons were reviewed together with witness officer evidence, civilian witness evidence, video recordings, RCMP communications recordings, and forensic evidence. While there were differences in some individual observations and recollections, their statements were generally consistent with the objective evidence concerning the overall sequence of events, including the vehicle's failure to stop for police, the deployment of spike belts, the exit of a passenger from the moving vehicle, and the eventual stopping of the vehicle.

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## Civilian Witnesses

Fifteen civilian witnesses provided statements to SIRT-NL. Many of the witnesses observed the same events from similar vantage points near the final police roadblock and their accounts were largely consistent regarding the principal events. To avoid repetition, witness statements with substantially similar observations have been grouped together in this report according to the nature of the evidence they provided. The summaries that follow reflect the common themes emerging from the civilian witness evidence while identifying any notable observations relevant to the investigation. Collectively, the civilian witness evidence was reviewed together with the affected person statements, witness officer statements, video recordings, RCMP communications recordings, and forensic examinations.

### Witnesses Present at the Final Roadblock

W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, W6, W7, W8, and W9 were among the civilian motorists stopped near the final police roadblock. Collectively, they described observing police vehicles, officers positioned near the roadway, and a spike belt deployed across the road. These witnesses observed the suspect vehicle approach the checkpoint, and several reported seeing a passenger exit the moving vehicle shortly beforehand. They consistently described the vehicle continuing through the roadblock despite police efforts to stop it and travelling away with damaged tires and visible smoke or steam. While several witnesses reported hearing sounds they believed may have been gunshots, others were unable to distinguish those sounds from tire failures or contact with the spike belt. Video recordings obtained from civilian witnesses captured portions of these events.

### Witnesses Observing the Vehicle After the Roadblock

W10, W11, W12, W13, and W14 observed portions of the incident from locations removed from the final roadblock. Their evidence described seeing the suspect vehicle continue along Salmonier Line with visible tire damage, smoke, and a significant police presence in the area. Some observed police vehicles following or responding after the vehicle passed. W14 also observed police officers dealing with a male who had exited the vehicle earlier in the incident. None of these witnesses observed the firearm discharge directly.

### Fire Department Witness

W15 of the Holyrood Fire Department attended the scene after receiving a report of a vehicle fire. Upon arrival, he observed the vehicle disabled on the roadway with all four tires deflated and damage to the front of the vehicle. Fire department personnel secured the vehicle and confirmed there was no active fire.

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## **Witness Officers**

SIRT-NL obtained statements from 17 witness officers. Many of the officers were involved in different aspects of the same police operation and provided evidence concerning overlapping events. To avoid unnecessary repetition, witness officer statements have been grouped according to their roles and level of involvement in the incident. Officers who participated in command, coordination, and containment efforts have been summarized together, as have officers involved in Emergency Response Team and Police Dog Services operations. Officers who were present at the final roadblock have been summarized separately due to their direct observations of the events immediately preceding and following the firearm discharge. Although individual officers observed different portions of the incident, their evidence was generally consistent regarding the efforts to locate and stop the suspect vehicle, the deployment of multiple spike belts and roadblocks, and the events surrounding the final containment point on Salmonier Line. The witness officer evidence was reviewed together with the affected person statements, civilian witness evidence, video recordings, RCMP communications recordings, and forensic examinations.

### **Command, Coordination, and Containment Officers**

WO1, WO2, WO3, WO4, WO5, and WO6 were involved in various aspects of the police response and containment efforts. Collectively, their evidence described the investigation of a reported armed robbery, efforts to locate the suspect vehicle, the deployment of multiple roadblocks and spike belts, and the coordination of police resources along Salmonier Line. Their evidence established that the vehicle repeatedly failed to stop for police, bypassed or continued through containment measures, sustained tire damage from spike belts, and continued northbound toward the final roadblock. None of these officers witnessed the firearm discharge. Several attended the final scene afterward and assisted with arrests, scene security, traffic control, evidence preservation, and post-incident investigative responsibilities.

### **Emergency Response Team and Police Dog Services Officers**

WO7, WO8, WO9, WO10, WO11, WO12, WO13, and WO14 participated in efforts to locate, monitor, and contain the suspect vehicle. Their evidence described receiving information regarding the reported armed robbery, locating or tracking the suspect vehicle, and coordinating containment efforts with other police resources. Most did not witness the firearm discharge and became aware of it through radio communications. Several attended

the final scene after the vehicle had stopped and assisted with arrests, containment, and scene management. WO7 also provided information regarding Emergency Response Team training and Ballistic Vehicle Intervention.

### **Officers Present at the Final Roadblock**

WO15, WO16, and WO17 provided evidence regarding the final roadblock on Salmonier Line. They described the deployment of police vehicles and a spike belt, the suspect vehicle approaching the checkpoint, and a passenger exiting the moving vehicle shortly before the vehicle reached the roadblock. WO15 and WO16 reported hearing gunshots after the vehicle continued through the checkpoint, although neither observed the firearm being discharged. WO17's involvement focused on the arrest of the passenger who exited the vehicle. Their evidence was generally consistent with the available video recordings and RCMP communications recordings.

### **Subject Officer**

Rather than provide an interview, the SO provided a prepared statement. Following is a summary of that statement:

The subject officer stated that he was working as a member of the RCMP Emergency Response Team (ERT) when he became aware of an armed robbery involving suspects believed to be armed with a knife who had fled in a white vehicle. He said he received ongoing updates indicating the vehicle had repeatedly failed to stop for police, had driven around roadblocks, continued despite spike belt deployments, and had been involved in contact with a police vehicle. Based on the information available to him, he assessed the vehicle as posing an ongoing risk to police officers and members of the public.

The subject officer stated that he and another ERT member established a roadblock on Salmonier Line consisting of police vehicles and a spike belt. He explained that he had chosen the location because it provided a clear line of sight, limited opportunities for the vehicle to avoid the roadblock, and allowed officers to use available cover. He stated that as the vehicle approached, it initially slowed and a passenger exited the moving vehicle. According to his account, the vehicle then accelerated toward the roadblock rather than stopping or surrendering.

The subject officer stated that, based on the vehicle's previous actions and its approach to the roadblock, he believed the driver was determined to continue fleeing despite the risks involved. He explained that he considered the possibility that the vehicle might continue through the roadblock or strike police vehicles and officers positioned there. He stated that he assessed the

situation as presenting a significant risk to public and officer safety and that he believed immediate action was required.

The subject officer advised that he had received training relating to Ballistic Vehicle Intervention (BVI) and that, when it became apparent the vehicle was going to continue through the roadblock, he decided to direct fire at the vehicle's radiator area in an effort to disable it. He stated that his objective was to stop the vehicle while reducing the risk of injury to its occupants. He indicated that he fired three rounds from his issued carbine in rapid succession as the vehicle passed his position. He stated that he selected this point of aim because it targeted the vehicle's mechanical components rather than its occupants.

The subject officer stated that after the shots were fired he observed steam and fluid escaping from the front of the vehicle and believed the cooling system had been disabled. He said the vehicle continued a short distance before coming to a stop and that the remaining occupants were taken into custody. He maintained that his actions were intended to stop what he perceived to be an ongoing danger and that the tactic was carried out in a manner he believed was safe and appropriate in the circumstances. Following the incident, he surrendered his firearm, preserved his notes, and complied with post-incident directions.

### **Body Worn Cameras**

SIRT-NL obtained and reviewed the available RCMP body-worn camera recordings associated with the incident. Most of the footage related to the arrest of the affected persons and subsequent investigative activities. No body-worn camera footage was available from the subject officer or the witness officers who were present at the roadblock when the firearm was discharged.

The most relevant recording was captured by WO10 which documented the arrest of AP2 after he exited the vehicle. The footage shows police officers taking AP2 into custody and captures subsequent police actions at the scene. The firearm discharge itself was not captured on body-worn camera footage.

### **Video**

SIRT-NL reviewed WatchGuard video recorded from the RCMP vehicle operated by WO9. The video captures portions of the police response on Salmonier Line, including the suspect vehicle travelling northbound, police movements following containment efforts, the arrest location of a male occupant who exited the vehicle, and the final location where the suspect vehicle came to rest. The recording also documents police and emergency personnel at the scene following the incident. The firearm discharge itself was not captured on this recording.

SIRT-NL reviewed dashcam footage provided by W1. The footage captures the final roadblock on Salmonier Line, including police vehicles, the deployment of a spike belt, and officers positioned nearby. The video shows the suspect vehicle approaching and passing through the roadblock area, as well as an officer moving into and out of the roadway as the vehicle approached. The footage also depicts the vehicle continuing northbound after passing through the checkpoint and captures police activity shortly afterward.

SIRT-NL reviewed a cell phone video provided by W7. The recording captures the final roadblock, including a spike belt, police vehicles, and officers positioned near the roadway. The video shows the suspect vehicle approaching the checkpoint, a passenger exiting the vehicle, and the vehicle continuing through the roadblock area. The recording also captures sounds consistent with gunshots as the vehicle passes the officers and continues northbound.

### **RCMP Audio Recordings**

SIRT-NL reviewed RCMP communications recordings relating to the police response. The recordings documented the initial report of an armed robbery, the dissemination of information concerning the suspect vehicle, and the coordination of police resources as officers attempted to locate and stop the vehicle. The recordings also captured communications relating to several spike belt deployments, reports that the vehicle had continued despite tire damage, and updates on its movements along Salmonier Line.

The recordings further captured contemporaneous communications from officers at the final roadblock. During those communications, an officer reported that shots had been fired into the vehicle's engine area after the vehicle continued through the checkpoint. Subsequent radio transmissions indicated that the vehicle continued for a short distance before coming to a stop, that occupants were taken into custody, and that officers began securing the scene and preserving evidence. The recordings were reviewed in conjunction with the witness evidence, video recordings, and forensic findings obtained during the investigation.

### **Forensic Examinations**

SIRT-NL reviewed the results of forensic examinations conducted by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Forensic Identification Section and Accident Investigation Unit. Investigators processed the scene locations, documented and photographed physical evidence, examined the suspect vehicle, and recovered exhibits including spent cartridge casings, spike belt components, bullet fragments, and the subject officer's firearm and ammunition. Examination of the vehicle identified projectile damage to the front bumper, grille, radiator, cooling system, and associated front-end components. The vehicle also displayed extensive tire damage consistent with contact with spike belts.



The Accident Investigation Unit documented and mapped the relevant scenes, recorded the locations of physical evidence, and completed distance and line-of-sight measurements. In addition, drone imagery was obtained of the area between the initial containment efforts and the location where the vehicle ultimately stopped. A forensic firearms examination confirmed that the subject officer's carbine was a firearm within the meaning of the **Criminal Code** and that the ammunition functioned correctly during testing

## Issue and Conclusion

On May 12, 2026, the Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT), received notification from the RCMP regarding a RCMP member discharging his firearm at a vehicle that was expected to be used in the commission of an armed robbery. There were no injuries resulting from the incident.

The investigation established that RCMP officers were responding to a reported armed robbery involving a knife. Police received information that the suspects had fled in a white vehicle. Numerous police resources, including General Duty members, Traffic Services, Police Dog Services, and the RCMP ERT, became involved in efforts to locate and stop the vehicle. The evidence establishes that the vehicle repeatedly failed to stop for police, avoided or circumvented containment efforts, continued despite spike belt deployments and significant tire damage, and was involved in contact with a police vehicle while attempting to evade arrest.

The investigative material reviewed by SIRT-NL included statements from affected persons, witness officers and civilian witnesses, RCMP communications recordings, body-worn camera and WatchGuard video, civilian dash camera and cellphone video, photographs, forensic examinations, accident reconstruction materials, drone footage, firearm and ammunition examinations, RCMP policy materials, and a prepared statement of the subject officer.

Two of the three affected persons agreed to provide statements to investigators. The suspected driver declined to provide a statement. The two affected persons who did participate described the police pursuit and the events leading up to the final roadblock. Their accounts were generally consistent with the central sequence of events established through the remaining evidence, including witness statements, RCMP communications, video recordings, and forensic findings. In particular, their statements were consistent with the evidence that the vehicle failed to stop for police, continued despite containment efforts and spike belt deployments, and proceeded through the area of the final roadblock before ultimately being stopped. While there were some differences in individual recollections and observations, neither statement materially contradicted the objective evidence collected during the investigation.

The evidence concerning the final stages of the incident was generally consistent. Witness officers and civilian witnesses described a final police roadblock on Salmonier Line consisting of police vehicles and a spike belt. The evidence established that the suspect vehicle approached the roadblock, that a passenger exited the moving vehicle, and that the vehicle nevertheless continued through the spike belt area and past the police checkpoint. Multiple witnesses heard what they

believed to be gunshots, although some could not distinguish the sounds from tire deflation or contact with the spike belt. Despite minor variations in witness observations, the central sequence of events remained substantially consistent throughout the investigative record.

The video and audio evidence provided corroboration of witness accounts. Civilian video footage captured the spike belt deployment, officers taking cover, the vehicle's approach to the roadblock, the apparent gunshots, and the vehicle continuing northbound after passing through the checkpoint. RCMP communications recordings captured contemporaneous reports that shots had been fired into the vehicle's engine area after it reportedly attempted to drive through officers' positions. Shortly thereafter, SO advised over the radio that the discharge was a "BVI into grill."

The forensic evidence was likewise consistent with shots being directed at the front mechanical components of the vehicle. Investigators documented projectile damage to the front bumper, grille, radiator area, cooling fan components, frame members and associated front-end structures. Projectile paths and bullet fragments were identified in the front section of the vehicle. The forensic findings support the conclusion that the shots were directed toward the vehicle's engine and cooling components rather than at any occupant.

SO declined to participate in an interview but provided a detailed prepared statement. He advised that he was an experienced member of the RCMP Emergency Response Team and became involved in the response after receiving information that the suspects in an armed robbery were believed to be armed with a knife and had repeatedly failed to stop for police. He stated that, as events unfolded, he received information that the vehicle had evaded police containment efforts, continued despite spike belt deployments and substantial tire damage, and had made contact with a police vehicle. Based on those circumstances, together with his training and experience as an ERT member, he assessed the vehicle as presenting an ongoing danger to police officers, members of the public, and the vehicle's occupants. He stated that when the vehicle accelerated toward and through the final roadblock after a passenger exited the moving vehicle, he believed the driver was prepared to risk grievous bodily harm or death in order to escape. He further stated that he discharged three rounds at the radiator area of the vehicle in an effort to disable it and bring the dangerous situation to an end while minimizing the risk of injury to any occupant.

The evidence establishes the act of intentionally discharging a firearm into an occupied motor vehicle, making section 244.2 of the **Criminal Code** the offence most directly engaged by the circumstances. The central issue is whether the Subject Officer was justified under section 25. Section 25(1) protects a peace officer who acts on reasonable grounds in the administration or enforcement of the law and uses no more force than is necessary. Under section 25(3), force intended or likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm must be based on a reasonable belief that it is necessary for self-preservation or the preservation of another person from death or grievous bodily harm. Section 25(4) also permits such force to prevent the flight of a person lawfully subject to arrest where the officer reasonably believes the force is necessary to protect the officer or another person from imminent or future death or grievous bodily harm and the flight cannot be prevented by reasonable means in a less violent manner.

In my view, the evidence does not provide reasonable grounds to reach that conclusion. The evidence establishes that SO was acting in the lawful execution of his duties as a peace officer during the response to a serious violent offence. The suspect vehicle had repeatedly fled from police, had not been stopped by previous containment efforts, and continued through a final police roadblock notwithstanding significant tire damage and the deployment of a spike belt. The affected person evidence, witness evidence, civilian evidence, RCMP communications, video recordings, and forensic findings all provide support for SO's stated perception that the vehicle represented an ongoing risk to police officers and members of the public.

The evidence also supports SO's explanation that his objective was to disable the vehicle rather than to injure an occupant. His statement that he aimed at the radiator area is consistent with the contemporaneous RCMP communications referencing shots fired into the engine compartment and with the forensic evidence demonstrating damage concentrated in the radiator, cooling system, grille, and associated front-end mechanical components. The objective evidence is substantially consistent with his account of the incident.

I have also considered RCMP policy materials during the investigation. Those materials generally prohibit the discharge of a firearm at a motor vehicle solely for the purpose of disabling it and contemplate such force only in circumstances involving the protection of persons from grievous bodily harm or death. The investigation further established that a formal RCMP Ballistic Vehicle Intervention policy had not yet been implemented at the time of the incident and that no specific authorization for a BVI had been provided. Consequently, there are aspects of the occurrence that may raise questions concerning policy compliance. Those issues may warrant consideration by the RCMP. However, policy compliance is not determinative of criminal liability. SIRT-NL's mandate is confined to determining whether there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, and a departure from policy does not, by itself, establish criminal conduct.

While there are some variations within the affected person, civilian witness, and witness officer evidence regarding matters such as the precise number of shots heard, the speed of the vehicle, and the specific observations of individual witnesses, those differences are unsurprising given the rapidly unfolding nature of the incident and the differing vantage points of those involved. They do not materially undermine the central sequence of events, which remains substantially consistent across the affected person statements, witness accounts, RCMP communications, video evidence, and forensic findings. The evidence supports that the vehicle was actively fleeing police, had continued despite repeated attempts to stop it, approached a final police roadblock, proceeded through the spike belt area, and was fired upon as it continued beyond the checkpoint.

Having reviewed the totality of the evidence, I am not satisfied that there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that SO recklessly discharged a weapon, committed an assault with a weapon, or any other criminal offence. Police had lawful grounds to arrest the driver and occupants in relation to the reported armed robbery and the driver's subsequent flight. The vehicle repeatedly failed to stop, avoided or continued through containment measures, made contact with a police

vehicle, and continued to be driven erratically on damaged tires. At the final roadblock, a passenger exited the moving vehicle before it accelerated through the spike belt area toward officers and nearby civilian traffic. In these circumstances, the evidence supports a reasonable belief that the continuing flight exposed police and members of the public to imminent or future death or grievous bodily harm and that previous, less forceful measures had failed to stop the vehicle. The available evidence therefore does not provide reasonable grounds to conclude that the protections afforded by section 25 of the Criminal Code are unavailable to SO.

Accordingly, I am unable to conclude that there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that SO used force that was unlawful or exceeded that which was justified under s. 25 of the **Criminal Code**.

SIRT-NL will now conclude this file.

**Final Report prepared by:**

Stephen Ring, Director  
Serious Incident Response Team - Newfoundland and Labrador  
August 21, 2026  
File No. 2026-0023