

THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (is both a federal and a national police force of Canada. The RCMP provides law enforcement at a federal level in Canada, and also on a contract basis to the three territories, eight of Canada's provinces (the RCMP does not provide provincial or municipal policing in either Ontario or Quebec), more than 150 municipalities, 600 aboriginal communities, and three international airports.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was formed in 1920 by the merger of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (RNWMP), founded in 1873, with the Dominion Police founded in 1868. The former was originally named the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP), and was given the Royal prefix by King Edward VII in 1904. Much of the present day organization's symbolism has been inherited from its days as the NWMP and RNWMP, including the distinctive Red Serge uniform, paramilitary heritage, and mythos as a frontier force. The RCMP-GRC wording is protected under the Trade-marks Act.

Despite its name, the RCMP is not an actual mounted police, with horses only being used at ceremonial events. The predecessor NWMP and RNWMP had relied on horses for transport for most of their history, though the RNWMP was switching to automobiles at the time of the merger.

As Canada's national police force, the RCMP is primarily responsible for enforcing federal laws throughout Canada while general law and order including the enforcement of the Criminal Code and applicable provincial legislation is constitutionally the responsibility of the provinces and territories. Larger cities may form their own municipal police departments.

The two most populous provinces, Ontario and Quebec, maintain provincial forces: the Ontario Provincial Police and Sûreté du Québec. The other eight provinces contract policing responsibilities to the RCMP. The RCMP provides front-line policing in those provinces under the direction of the provincial governments. When Newfoundland joined the confederation in 1949, the RCMP entered the province and absorbed the then Newfoundland Ranger Force, which patrolled most of Newfoundland's rural areas. The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary patrols urban areas of the province. In the territories, the RCMP is the sole territorial police force. Many municipalities throughout Canada contract to the RCMP. Thus, the RCMP polices at the federal, provincial, and municipal level. In several areas of Canada, it is the only police force.

The RCMP is responsible for an unusually large breadth of duties. Under their federal mandate, the RCMP police throughout Canada, including Ontario and Quebec (albeit under smaller scales there). Federal operations include: enforcing federal laws including commercial crime, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, border integrity, organized crime, and other related matters; providing counter-terrorism and domestic security; providing protection services for the Monarch, Governor General, Prime Minister, their families and residences, and other ministers of the Crown, visiting dignitaries, and diplomatic missions; and participating in various international policing efforts.

Under provincial and municipal contracts the RCMP provides front-line policing in all areas outside of Ontario and Quebec that do not have an established local police force. There are detachments located in small villages in the far north, remote First Nations reserves, and rural towns, but also larger cities such as Surrey, British Columbia (population 468,251+). There, support units investigate for their own detachments, and smaller municipal police forces. Investigations include major crimes, homicides, forensic identification, collision forensics, police dogs, emergency response teams, explosives disposal, and undercover operations. Under its National Police Services branch the RCMP supports all police forces in Canada via the Canadian Police Information Centre, Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, Forensic Science and Identification Services, Canadian Firearms Program, and the Canadian Police College.

The RCMP Security Service was a specialized political intelligence and counterintelligence branch with national security responsibilities, replaced by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in 1984, following revelations of illegal covert operations relating to the Quebec separatist movement. CSIS is not part of the RCMP, but is its own entity.

The Mounties have been immortalized as symbols of Canadian culture in numerous Hollywood Northwestern movies and television series, which often feature the image of the Mountie as square-jawed, stoic, and polite, yet with a steely determination and physical toughness that sometimes appears superhuman. Coupled with the adage that the Mountie "always gets his man," the image projects them as fearsome, incorruptible, dogged yet gentle champions of the law. The RCMP's motto is

actually *Maintiens le droit*, French for "Defending the Law". The Hollywood motto derives from a comment by a Montana newspaper, the Fort Benton Record: "They fetch their man every time".