

## **2.28 Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Firearms Review**

The RNC is responsible for policing three regions of the Province - the Northeast Avalon, Corner Brook and Labrador West. The population of these regions is approximately 201,000 (2001 census). In providing these services, the RNC currently employs 313 police members and 78 civilian staff.

In 1998, members of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary were permitted to wear firearms as part of their regular uniform. The Select Committee of the House of Assembly which recommended the new arming policy also recommended that a firearms audit be performed annually and submitted to the House of Assembly. As a result, this is our fifth annual firearms audit.

Although the RNC has adequate systems in place to record, monitor and secure its firearms, each year we identify instances of non-compliance with policy.

Our review identified a number of issues which should be addressed. For example:

- The firearms and ammunition inventory system is not accurate in that we found 5 instances where firearms were found in a location other than that recorded in the system.
- We found instances of non-compliance with the Firearms Policy during an inspection in October 2003. Instances included 3 members who had a loaded firearm in their locker, the amount of ammunition in the lockers of 11 members did not agree with the inventory system, and there were 4 members who did not have pepper spray stored in their lockers.
- The required monthly inspections of firearms storage lockers are not always performed.
- The required annual qualification for the use of firearms training had not been provided to 55 members. Furthermore, we determined that information in the training database is neither complete nor accurate. Of

particular concern is that, as the system is used to determine what use of force training has already been provided and what training is left to be provided, inaccuracies may result in a situation where a member may not receive all of the necessary use of force training.

- Although the Use of Force Review Board is required to review all instances of use of force, the Board has not met since October 2002. Furthermore, although all Board members used to receive copies of the use of force reports, this practice was discontinued after May 2002. Instead, only one member of the Board, the Firearms and Use of Force Instructor, receives the reports. There were 494 use of force incidents reported between 1 November 2002 and 31 August 2003. Of these 494 incidents, 40 related to firearms, 37 of which involved drawing and/or pointing a firearm at a person while the remaining 3 involved the discharge of a firearm regarding animals.

## **Select Committee of the House of Assembly**

The arming policy of the RNC is to be reviewed at the end of five years by a Select Committee of the House of Assembly, i.e. March 2003. As at November 2003 the arming policy has not been reviewed.

### **2.29 Mining Act**

To commence a mining or quarry project in the Province, a lease has to be obtained from the Department of Mines and Energy. At 31 March 2003, there were 38 lessees holding 66 active leases. After obtaining a lease, the lessee must comply with the requirements of the *Mining Act* in carrying out these operations.

The Department is not obtaining all of the information required under the *Mining Act* and *Mining Regulations* necessary to monitor mineral development in the Province.

Twenty-one lessees holding 31 active mining and quarry leases have applied for designation as a small scale operation which would exempt them from the requirements of the *Mining Act*. However, as