

History of the Alberta Sheriffs Police Service

RMA Member Resource

Introduction

Overview

Through a series of legislative changes, the Government of Alberta (GOA) has been moving towards establishing a new policing organization. This independent agency police service (IAPS) was first introduced in March 2024 and has since been further defined by different bills and regulations.

Resolution

In Fall 2024, RMA members passed [Resolution 12-24F](#): Accountability in the Establishment of an Independent Agency Police Service in Alberta. This resolution calls for the GOA to be transparent in the costs associated with the creation of an IAPS, as well as to provide a breakdown of costs borne by municipalities through the Police Funding Model. It also clearly states that an IAPS should not be introduced until there is substantive consultation and quantifiable significant majority support from municipalities and Albertans-at-large.

Although the implementation of this new police service is clearly underway, RMA will continue to advocate for transparency surrounding its implementation.

Member Resource

This member resource will provide RMA members with an overview of the evolution of this new policing agency, key changes that are relevant to each update, and themes of unanswered questions that RMA has regarding this transition. RMA encourages members to use this information to advocate for answers to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, to local MLAs, and to the Alberta Sheriffs Police Service.

Prelude: Alberta Provincial Police Service

Overview

In October 2021, the GOA released the [Alberta Provincial Police Service \(APPS\) transition study](#), which was developed by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC). The transition study was the result of a recommendation made by the Fair Deal Panel, which states that the creation of a provincial police force that replaces the RCMP should be explored.

RMA Input

The GOA conducted a series of engagement sessions with municipalities and stakeholders regarding the potential transition to an APPS.

RMA remained neutral throughout the engagement process, but ultimately formally opposed its creation based on:

- ◆ It has not been demonstrated that this move will improve the level of police service for rural Albertans.
- ◆ There is no evidence that the transition will enhance local community input into policing.
- ◆ The Government of Alberta has failed to demonstrate the move will be cost neutral to all municipalities.

Current Status

The discussions surrounding a transition to an APPS have not proceeded. However, there remains speculation that the creation of the IAPS is a roundabout way of creating a provincial police force.

The Government of Alberta maintains that the IAPS is not meant to replace the RCMP and is not meant to be a new APPS, but is intended to work alongside other law enforcement agencies to fill gaps. Municipalities will have the option of receiving policing services directly from this new agency instead of through the RCMP or other means currently outlined in the *Police Act*, but there is still little clarity regarding the logistics of these changes.

RMA Resources

- ◆ RMA released a series of [resources](#) to help members understand the issue and prepare for the APPS engagement sessions.

Chapter 1: Bill 11

Overview

On March 13, 2024, the Government of Alberta introduced Bill 11: [Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act, 2024](#), which amends the [Police Act](#) to establish a new policing organization.

Key Updates

- ◆ Enables the creation of a new organization that would work alongside police services across the province.
- ◆ Officers would take on the responsibility of “police-like functions” that are currently carried out by the Alberta Sheriffs.
- ◆ This independent police agency will have the authority and jurisdiction to support the RCMP, municipal police services, and First Nations police services in Alberta, with the goal of allowing other police services across the province to spend more of their time on core operations and frontline duties.

RMA Resources

- ◆ [Bill 11: Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act – RMA Question Guide](#)

Chapter 2: Bill 49

Overview

On April 7, 2025, the GOA introduced Bill 49: [Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2025](#). Bill 49 allows for the establishment of a Crown corporation to form the IAPS and deliver police services independent of the government. Municipalities will also now have the option of receiving policing services directly from the IAPS instead of through the RCMP or other means currently outlined in the *Police Act*.

Bill 49 enables the Minister or Cabinet to take significant steps forward in forming the IAPS, especially in relation to its governance structure and resourcing. However, it provides little clarity as to what those steps will be or how the IAPS will be structured, because the majority of the power to next steps are conferred on the Minister and Cabinet in the form of regulation-making authority, rather than concrete legislative requirements to be worked towards.

Key Updates

- ◆ Establishes that all municipalities in the province will be eligible to enter into a policing agreement with the IAPS.
- ◆ All IAPS are responsible for preparing budgets and fiscal updates to be reviewed by the minister. The minister will then allocate funds to the IAPS, pending the allocation of funds in the provincial budget.
- ◆ Municipalities that choose to enter into an agreement to receive policing service through the IAPS must establish a policing committee.
- ◆ The [oversight board](#) will consist of the Deputy Minister of Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services and up to eight other members as appointed by the minister. The oversight board will oversee the policing services provided by IAPS, including additional duties and responsibilities laid out in the regulations.
- ◆ Many areas of IAPS operations and governance that will be determined through regulations.

RMA Resources

- ◆ [Bill 49: Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act – RMA Member Resource](#)

Chapter 3: Alberta Sheriffs Police Service

Overview

On July 2, 2025, the GOA announced [regulations](#) for the IAPS to provide further context for the duties and functions of the different policing committees, board of directors, and oversight board. One of the main outcomes of these regulations is the formal establishment of the Alberta Sheriffs Police Service (ASPS), the official title of the IAPS. The [oversight board](#) appointed Satpal Prahar as the Chief of the ASPS.

Key Updates

- ◆ The regulations give extensive Ministerial authority over appointments, financials, and general oversight of the ASPS.
- ◆ There is a lack of value placed on community input.
- ◆ There is an absence of engagement with municipalities about how the ASPS will work in practice.

Chapter 4: Bill 4

Overview

On October 30, 2025, the GOA introduced Bill 4: [The Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 \(No.2\)](#). Bill 4 focuses primarily on establishing labour and human resources frameworks for the ASPS. These changes are consistent with other municipal police agencies across the province and set the stage to create further regulations to implement strategies related to governance, oversight, funding, and recruitment and retention.

Key Updates

- ◆ ASPS officers will have the same unionization and collective bargaining rights as other municipal police officers.

- ◆ ASPS will receive the same coverage as other municipal frontline officers in relation to workplace injury coverage, benefits, and presumptive conditions.

Conclusion: What is Next?

Unanswered Questions

RMA has continued to ask the same questions about the formation of this new policing agency since it was first announced in March 2024. Questions remain related to:

- ◆ Governance and Oversight
 - ◇ There is no clear direction on how the ASPS governance and oversight mechanisms will work alongside those currently in place for other municipal policing agencies.
- ◆ Cost
 - ◇ There are no answers regarding how the ASPS will be funded.
- ◆ Municipal Engagement
 - ◇ There are no provisions around how the police agency and the corresponding governance/oversight mechanisms will seek input from the municipalities that they serve.
- ◆ Recruitment and Retention
 - ◇ There is no information available about how the ASPS will address recruitment and retention struggles, especially in rural areas.
- ◆ Deployment
 - ◇ There is no information available on where detachments will be located, how officers will be trained, or how infrastructure will be upgraded to account for new officers.

Next Steps

RMA will continue to update members on this transition as information becomes available and is committed to ensuring transparency through this process.