



Lethbridge Police Service **2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



The Lethbridge Police Service acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Lethbridge and Area Métis.

CONTENTS

2	Mission-Vision-Values
3	Chief's Message
4	Organizational Structure
5	Community Collaboration
7	Siksikaitsitapi Values
8	Supporting Special Olympics
9	Charity Checkstop
10	Community Safety
11	Community Engagement
12	Healthy Organization
13	The Year in Numbers
14	Calls for Service
15	Statistical Methodology
16	Crimes Against Persons
17	Property Crime
18	Tactical Team Anniversary
19	Rescue Vehicle
20	Canine Anniversary
21	Traffic at a Glance
22	About our Employees
23	Long Service Medals
24	Trunk or Treat
25	New Facility Dog
26	Victim/Witness Services
27	The Watch
28	Professional Standards

MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE COMMISSION CHAIR

On behalf of the Lethbridge Police Commission, I am pleased to present the 2024 Lethbridge Police Service Annual Report to the citizens of Lethbridge. As Chair of the Commission, I want to take a moment to explain the role we play in supporting and overseeing the Lethbridge Police Service.

Under the Alberta Police Act, the **Lethbridge Police Commission** provides civilian oversight to the Lethbridge Police Service. The Commission can ask questions of the Chief and Executive, and make recommendations, but does not direct operations. Currently, all the members of the Commission are citizens of Lethbridge. Seven are appointed by City Council, including two members of Council, and two are appointed by the Government of Alberta.



DOUGLAS THORNTON

The police **budget** provided by City Council, is the largest single line item in the entire City budget. Funds are allocated for a four-year period to allow certainty of funding to the Service. During 2024, the City allocated \$45,461,000 in tax revenue (89%). The Government of Alberta provided \$3,087,000 (6%) and the Service generated other revenue in the amount of \$2,584,000 (5%). It is important to note that no revenue from fines or penalties are directly allocated to the LPS budget.

The **Lethbridge Police Service** has enjoyed a very successful year overall, in that, crime has diminished by nearly 20%. This is in part due to the fact that for the first time in several years the Service is operating with a nearly full complement of sworn members. Significant progress has been made in interdiction of drug trafficking and crime in the downtown and property crimes throughout the city. The latest Crime Severity Index from Statistics Canada highlights the significant progress Lethbridge has made in improving community safety. In recent surveys conducted by the Commission, it was found that members of LPS are feeling much more positive about their positions and their part in the Service.

Going forward, the Commission and our Police Service will face challenges with crime and social disorder. These problems will be addressed by our Chief and Executive team, and the members of our Police Service, both sworn and civilian. Our city is very fortunate to have such a committed, professional team dedicated to keeping us all safe, helping Lethbridge to continue to be such a great city in which to live and work.



MISSION

Through partnerships and collaboration, the Lethbridge Police Service strives to create a safe community for all.

VISION

Guided by the highest standards of policing, we are committed to supporting our community by addressing crime, maintaining public safety and strengthening public trust.

VALUES

*Respect
Courage
Accountability
Professionalism
Collaboration*

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF SHAHIN MEHDIZADEH



In 2024, the Lethbridge Police Service recorded a significant reduction in crime in all areas of the city and citizen perceptions of safety increased. I believe this is a direct reflection of the commitment and dedication of our sworn and civilian employees as they work to provide a safe community for all. I am grateful for our strong team and what we continue to achieve together.

I also want to acknowledge and thank our citizens, community partners, the Lethbridge Police Commission and City Council and Administration for their continued support.

I am pleased to report that overall crime in Lethbridge decreased by 16% which equates to an 18% reduction in the city's Crime Severity Index (CSI). This one year reduction in crime is significant and consistent with an overall downward trend the past five years.

In 2024, overall person crime dropped 11%, while property crime dropped 24%. Further, crime in all four of our patrol zones decreased. The most significant was a 25% reduction in crime violations in west Lethbridge, followed by 17% downtown, 15% in the south and nine per cent in the north. In addition, 70% of

respondents in our Community Survey reported feeling safe - up five per cent from the previous year.

Throughout 2024, LPS focused on hiring, adding 26 officers to our a team and increasing street strength to almost full capacity. Employee wellness was also a priority with the re-development of our early intervention program and the creation of a re-integration program for employees who have spent significant time away from the workplace. Both initiatives are anticipated for implementation in early 2025.

The continued use of Comp Stat was successful in the effective deployment of resources, resulting in increased offender condition checks, emerging crime hot spot checks and problem location checks - efforts that are all correlated to decreasing the CSI.

During the summer, we proudly unveiled the translation of our core values into Blackfoot with an accompanying artwork created by a local Blackfoot artist. This initiative symbolizes our past, present and future connections with the Blackfoot community.

In the fall, LPS hosted the inaugural Social Disorder and Urban Crime Conference - the first of its kind in Alberta - that brought together partners in law enforcement, health, mental health, social services and the justice system to facilitate intervention strategies and develop sustainable solutions to reduce the harm caused by addictions, mental health issues, poverty, crime and social disorder.



**Deputy Chief
Gerald Grobmeier**



**Inspector
Jason Dobirstein**



**Inspector
Russell Lawrence**

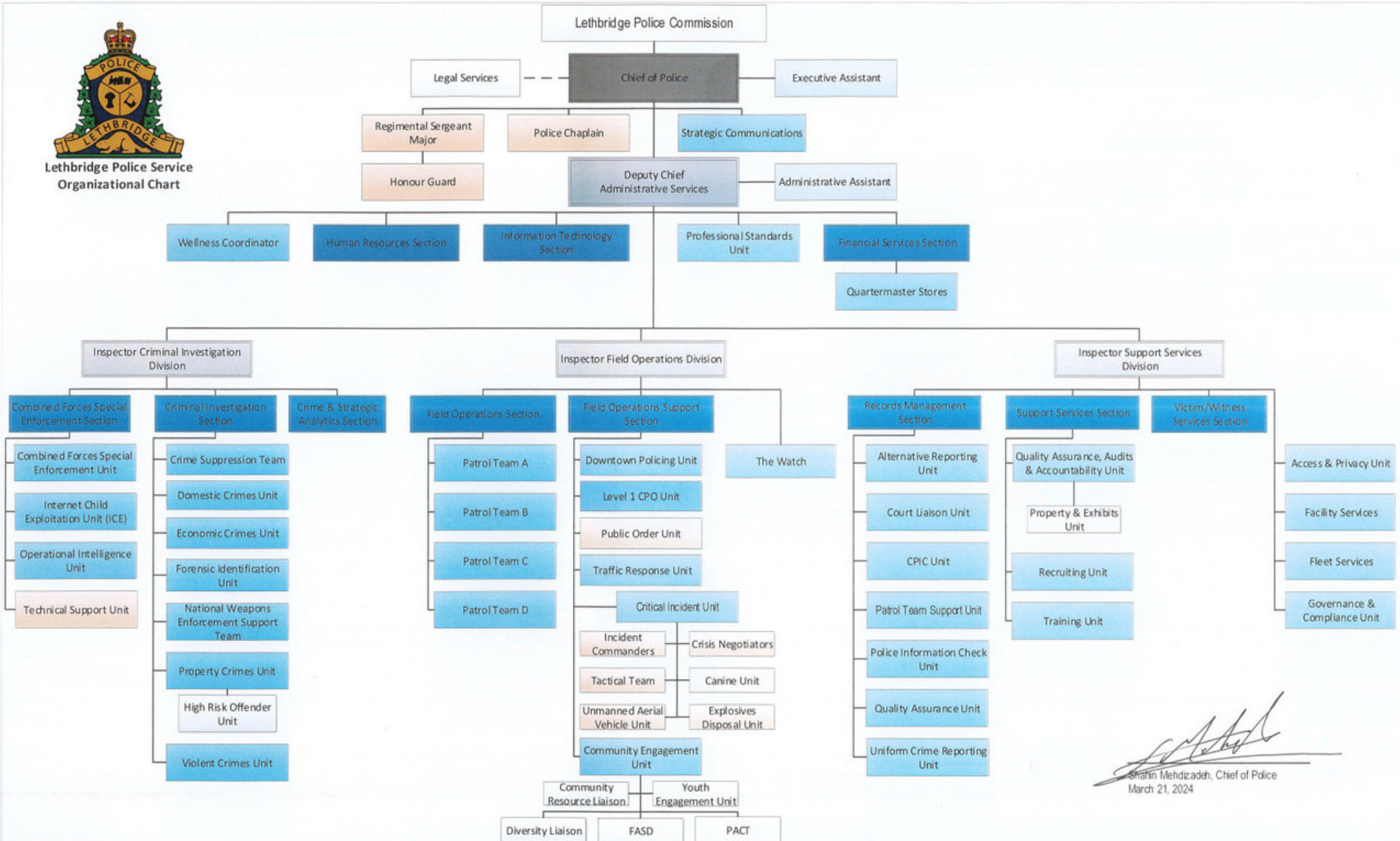


**Inspector
Jason Walper**

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Lethbridge Police Service
Organizational Chart



Shahin Mehdizadeh
Shahin Mehdizadeh, Chief of Police
March 21, 2024



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Our mission is a safe community for all and collaboration with our citizens provides the foundation required to identify challenges, drive operational decision-making and set priorities.

In 2024, LPS contracted PRA Inc. to conduct our annual Community Survey, collecting feedback from Lethbridge residents on their perceptions of the Police Service, community safety and policing priorities.

WHAT OUR CITIZENS SAID:

- 70% feel safe in Lethbridge - up five per cent from the previous year
- 84% satisfaction with the policing services provided
- 85% believe LPS is doing a good or adequate job policing the community
- Top policing priorities: drug crime, crimes against persons and property crime
- 71% reported a desire for more crime prevention activities
- 62% want more community visibility
- 43% would like to see more community partnerships and engagement
- 30% reported a need for more traffic enforcement

In addition, LPS hosted four Town Hall meetings in each patrol beat in the city. The sessions focused on policing in the downtown core, the Service's use of Comp Stat, fraud prevention and property crime prevention.

The information shared during the Town Hall meetings and Community Survey was discussed further and used as LPS began development of its 2025 Annual Policing Plan, which sets out yearly goals and initiatives aligned with the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.



CONNECTING WITH PARTNERS

The Lethbridge Police Service hosted the inaugural Social Disorder and Urban Crime conference, bringing together frontline police, justice, health and social service workers from across the province and beyond. Proposed, by Downtown Policing Sergeant Ryan Darroch, the event was the first of its kind in Alberta. More than 100 stakeholders from throughout Alberta and across Canada, gathered to share best practices, promote partnerships, facilitate meaningful intervention strategies and develop sustainable solutions to reduce the harm caused by addictions, mental health issues, poverty, crime and social disorder.

SIKSIKAITSI TAPI VALUES

The Lethbridge Police crest symbolizes our identity and our core values define who we are and how we work. We serve a community built on Indigenous lands and to demonstrate our respect for the rich history and culture that came before us, our values were translated into Blackfoot and an accompanying artwork was created. This powerful image, designed by Ina Fairbanks (Old Shoes) a member of Kainai First Nation, stands as a symbol of our past, present and future connection with the Blackfoot people.

Translation of the Service's values - respect, courage, accountability, collaboration and professionalism - was initiated by Trissy Blackwater, also a member of the Kainai First Nation, in collaboration with our Indigenous Advisory Committee. Blackwater, who was working as an LPS summer student at the time and is now an employee, proposed the translation as a way to bridge the connection between police and the Blackfoot community.

Following the translation, Fairbanks was selected to create a visual representation. Her artwork depicts a pipe ceremony, which takes place to reconcile differences between people after conflict.

Fairbank's explained her design, featuring an officer and member of the Blackfoot Confederacy, is intended to inspire both police and the Blackfoot people to renew their efforts to live their values, share compassion, draw closer and learn to better understand one another.

The artwork and values are proudly displayed in the foyer of the police station, on a police vehicle and within other areas of the building.



SIKSIKAITSI TAPI VALUES

- **Inakootsiyssini** - Respect
- **likitapiysini** - Courage
- **Aisstakataa** - Accountability
- **Isspomaanitapiysinni** - Collaboration
- **Okamotapotakssini** - Professionalism



Ina Fairbanks (Old Shoes)

ARTIST STATEMENT

The logo depicts a traditional custom of my people - the pipe ceremony. This ceremony exists to reconcile differences between people after conflict. The stem of the pipe is straight, signifying the truth and sincerity of each person's words. The stone that crowns the stem is as solid as your word and evokes the truth that is foundational to the peace that is being promised. As the smoke curls toward the sky, both people see their enmity dissipate and carried to the Creator's hands.

We see an officer who is courageous because they are engaging with First Nations culture; not because of their orders, but because of their desire. We see an officer who is respected, and invited to participate in a meaningful, compassionate interaction; a professional who has honed their craft and goes above and beyond to create cross-cultural relationships; a collaborator who ensures mutual benefit by utilizing each culture's strengths and recognizes their accountability to gain the necessary knowledge to truly understand the culture, customs and dignity of the people they serve. We see a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy wearing a headdress symbolizing their determination to live the Siksikaitsitapi values, who can bring themselves to find peace, through those values, by forgiving those working to aid our future.

My desire is that both parties see themselves as one of the two individuals pictured and will be inspired to renew their efforts to live their values and share compassion – not because of any logo, but because they seek genuine change. I believe that if those who are First Nations can see themselves sitting across from an officer with sincerity, they embody the logo. I believe that if those who serve as officers can see themselves sitting across from First Nations with familiarity, they embody the logo. Through those efforts, there could be more outstretched hands, more mutual respect and more compassion between communities. I offer this logo in the hope that it will inspire both our people to draw closer and understand one another. Through proximity we will gain tolerance and understanding we never thought possible.



SUPPORTING SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The Lethbridge Police Service is a proud supporter of Special Olympics and officers and civilian staff hosted and participated in numerous community events, raising thousands of dollars to benefit local athletes.

In 2024, the LPS' fundraising efforts kicked off with the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge with many individuals and teams braving the cold weather to take an icy dip into Henderson Lake. Next up, was the Torch Run Final Leg for the 2024 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games which set off from City Hall. LPS volunteers - sworn and civilian - joined Special Olympics athletes and other law enforcement volunteers, to carry the Flame of Hope through 12 Alberta cities, culminating in a community celebration in Calgary.

Throughout the year, other fundraising events included the the LPS Run and Cops, Pops and Pizza.



Cst. Braylon Hyggen received the 2024 Rob Plunkett LETR Award, presented to a Law Enforcement Torch Run representative who exemplifies the spirit, philosophy, dedication and goals of the LETR and Special Olympics movement.

Hyggen has served 14 years as a member of the Alberta Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, consistently going the extra mile. From coaching his basketball team of nearly a decade, serving as the LETR Alberta's provincial director, to representing Canada as a Final Leg Torch Runner at the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin alongside athlete David Hall, his leadership has left a lasting impact.

Hyggen's innovative fundraising efforts have raised over \$300,000 for Special Olympics Alberta.

In 2024, Hyggen was also awarded MP Rachel Thomas' Community Builder Award for his years of dedication to support the Law Enforcement Torch Run, Special Olympics and many other community engagement activities.

CHARITY CHECKSTOP

In partnership with the Christmas Hope Campaign, the Lethbridge Police Service hosted its 5th annual Charity Checkstop, collecting toy and food donations to help make the holidays a little brighter for the less fortunate in our community.

Christmas Hope coordinated donations for the Interfaith Food Bank, Lethbridge Food Bank, Lethbridge Family Services Angel Tree, MyCityCare Shop of Wonders, the Salvation Army Toys for Tots and Volunteer Lethbridge.

In 2024, the event was sponsored by the Lethbridge Police Association, Murray Chevrolet Cadillac and the Park Place Mall.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, a record-breaking 2,981 unwrapped gifts were collected - the highest number ever received since the onset of the event! In addition, a total of 534 pounds of food and nearly \$500 in cash donations were shared between the recipient charities.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: COMMUNITY SAFETY

“

It is our goal to provide safe communities. We will continue to maintain public safety through prevention, detection and resolution of crime and disorder.

”

INCREASE CAPACITY

- Lethbridge Police continued to implement strategies to increase capacity for officers, including the expansion of the online reporting system. The expanded system increases reporting thresholds for mischief and theft offences and a new category for traffic concerns was added.
- In addition, LPS worked with 311 to update contact information and ensure the appropriate diversion of calls. Efforts to expand bylaw officer responsibilities are ongoing.

INCREASE PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

- Throughout 2024, LPS conducted numerous targeted enforcement projects that resulted in a highly visible police presence, the seizure of thousands of doses of fentanyl and methamphetamine and hundreds of arrests and warrants executed. The 2024 Community Survey showed an increase in perceptions of safety - 70% feel safe, up from 65% the previous year.

INCREASE CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

- Public awareness opportunities were leveraged through social media with a focus on crime prevention messaging related to fraud, traffic safety, property crime mitigation and other crime trends impacting our community.
- Members of the Economic Crimes Unit also provided in-person presentations on fraud prevention.
- In addition, Community Peace Officers were trained in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), providing sessions to businesses throughout the city.

REDUCE CRIME RATES

- In 2024, LPS hired 26 police officers and four Community Peace Officers, which brought the Service to near full capacity. The additional strength, along with the service's use of Comp Stat, enabled the strategic deployment of resources. There were significant decreases in both violent crime and property crime - 20% and 10% respectively - in 2024.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INCREASE SATISFICATION WITH LPS

- The LPS website was completely re-designed to automate processes, increase accessibility and enhance user experiences. This project was part of a broader goal to increase digital assets, including video production, to share information and engage with the community.
- In-person Town Hall meetings were held in each area of the city, featuring crime prevention topics and an opportunity for citizen feedback and questions.

INCREASE COMMUNITY VISIBILITY

- In addition to operational activities, LPS participated in numerous community events and charitable events, including the LPS Run and Charity Check Stop. The organization is also exploring further opportunities for police participation in local citizenship ceremonies.
- Chief Mehdizadeh personally attended more than 120 community events.

PROMOTE INFORMATION SHARING AND COLLABORATION

- LPS hosted the inaugural Social Disorder and Urban Crime Conference, a multi-agency initiative that explored best practices to address drug and mental health issues impacting communities across western Canada and beyond. Participants included law enforcement agencies, health, social services, mental health and justice representatives.
- Members of the Watch took on an expanded outreach role, working closely with City of Lethbridge Community and Social Development, to connect encampment occupants with resources and referrals.

“

We will advance public safety by continuing to build and invest in relationships and work collaboratively with our partners and members of the community we serve.

”

“

We recognize the value of our employees and volunteers. We want all employees to be healthy, well-trained, committed and reflect the demographics of the communities we serve.

”

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

ENHANCE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS INITIATIVES

- A reintegration program was developed for returning employees who have been off work for extended periods of time due to injury, on-duty incidents or medical/mental health issues.
- In addition, the Service's early intervention program was re-developed. Both programs are expected to be implemented in early 2025.

INCREASE DIVERSITY

- The Service developed an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Plan that will be implemented in 2025. The purpose of the plan is to celebrate the unique talent of all employees, provide a safe space to grow as a team, work towards becoming more reflective of the community and provide inclusive services to all.
- As part of the 2024 recruiting strategy, targeted events, including female boot camps, were hosted to attract females, who are underrepresented at LPS, to the organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL REALIGNMENT

- The Watch was realigned to Field Operations from Support Services. In addition a Fleet Services Unit was created and a civilian Fleet Coordinator was hired.

LPS MASTER PLAN

- The Master Plan was reviewed, with some initiatives already completed. The plan was presented and adopted in principle by City Council.

ENHANCE TECHNOLOGY

- Upgrades to the Service's records management system were initiated with a major platform upgrade anticipated for 2025.
- Multifactor authentication was also put in place to enhance network security.
- In an effort to increase work mobility, iPads were implemented and phased remote use of workstation computers was initiated with further deployment planned for 2025.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

111,400

2024 Statistics Canada

POLICING POPULATION



286

EMPLOYEES

Community Peace Officers: 10
Police Officers: 179
Civilians: 97

90

VOLUNTEERS

Victim Services: 65
The Watch: 25

124

**SQUARE KILOMETRES
OF POLICING
JURISDICTION**

**CALLS FOR
SERVICE**

31,879

ONLINE

1,501

CRIME REPORTS

SOCIAL MEDIA

65,700

FOLLOWERS

BUDGET

\$45.8M

(Salary & Benefits): \$40.7M
Operating Costs: \$10.4M
Grants and Revenues: \$5.3M



6,246

CRIMINAL CODE CHARGES

ALBERTA TRAFFIC SAFETY ACT



5,098



CHARGES

CALLS FOR SERVICE

TOP 5 CALLS CITYWIDE

- 1) Public Service
- 2) Trespassing/unwanted
- 3) Disturbance/nuisance
- 4) Suspicious person/wanted
- 5) Theft

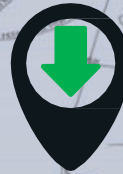


NORTH

2024: 6,834

2023: 7,435

LPS20

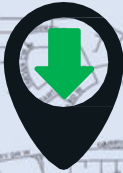


DOWNTOWN

2024: 10,165

2023: 13,193

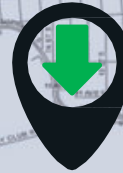
LPS10



WEST

2024: 5,373

2023: 6,439



SOUTH

2024: 9,507

2023: 10,815

LPS30

LPS40

STATISTICAL DATA: METHODOLOGY

Unless otherwise indicated, this report covers events that occurred between January 1 and December 31, 2024.

Calls for service and collision totals were determined with data from the Public Safety Communications Centre (PSCC) Computer Aided Dispatch database and the Lethbridge eCollision database respectfully.

Totals for Criminal Code Charges, Alberta Traffic Safety Act Charges, Crimes Against Person, Property Crimes, Drug Violations, and Traffic Violations were calculated using data from the LPS Niche Records Management System (RMS), which has been quality checked by the Service's Record Management Uniform Crime Reporting Team. Violations that were unfounded (confirmed to be without merit) were not included.


To be consistent with how crime data is reported to the province of Alberta, crime totals in this report were calculated at the violation level, instead of the occurrence or incident level (each occurrence can have one to many incidents, and each incident can have up to four violations). Due to this change in reporting, the totals for Child Sex Offences, Fraud, Hit and Run, and Collisions with Property Damage will differ significantly to the totals on previous annual reports.

AD	HR	WNS	PLD	EDR	URT	OPS
1,823 (+28)	20,389 (+500)	890 (-20)	6,280 (-200)	10,985 (+500)	648 (-10)	6,800 (+100)
MBC	CR	HR	POK	RFH	SM	SMI
3,405 (+210)	9,542 (+120)	2,409 (+20)	7,654 (+100)	6,522 (+120)	1,632 (+50)	3,652 (+100)
YBV	GMN	NMI	IT	NLN	CO	SMN
3,204 (+30)	5,211 (+150)	7,100 (+20)	7,190 (+100)	702 (+70)	1,901 (+100)	2,280 (+100)
HBB	WPI	HRW	DL	LSO	SMW	SMY
3,320 (+120)	712 (+12)	134 (+5)	2,023 (+100)	431 (+40)	4,287 (+50)	12,430 (+300)



OTHER POLICE RESPONSES

CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM DEPLOYMENTS

 **18**
 2023: 17
 2022: 17

MISSING PERSONS

 **759**
REPORTED

ADULTS: 157
 YOUTH: 602

2023: 533
 ADULTS: 178
 YOUTH: 355

2022: 362
 ADULTS: 143
 YOUTH: 219

CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS

	2024	2023	2022
 HOMICIDE	1	1	2
 ATTEMPTED MURDER	2	0	2
 SEXUAL ASSAULT	108	159	133
 CHILD SEX OFFENCES	63	72	27
 ASSAULT	1,456	1,633	1,423
 CHILD PORNOGRAPHY	25	30	24
 ROBBERY	61	73	46
 CRIMINAL HARRASSMENT	82	84	70
 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	2,288	2,225	1,752

PROPERTY CRIMES

	2024	2023	2022
 ARSON	25	44	14
 BREAK AND ENTER	686	1,052	965
 THEFT/SHOPLIFTING	2,801	3,705	4,002
 THEFT OF VEHICLE	253	320	375
 ATTEMPTED VEHICLE THEFT	32	59	46
 POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY	255	283	360
 FRAUD	1,511	1,592	978
 MISCHIEF	1,250	1,593	1,302

DRUG OCCURRENCES

GENERAL ACTIVITY

255 
REPORTS

2023: 372
 2022: 334

POSSESSION

704 
REPORTS

2023: 837
 2022: 485

TRAFFICKING

221 
REPORTS

2023: 232
 2022: 159

TACTICAL TEAM 50th ANNIVERSARY

The Lethbridge Police Service celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Tactical Team – a specially trained unit that responds to high-risk calls.

Over the past five decades, about 70 officers have served on the Tactical Team and witnessed an evolution in training, equipment and tactics.

In celebration of the 50-year milestone, current and former Tac members met for a reunion to reminisce, and for the retired members, check out some of the Team's current equipment, including the new Armoured Rescue Vehicle (ARV) that was acquired to enhance officer and public safety.

On December 31, 1974, Chief Ralph Michelson authorized the creation of a Special Weapons and Tactics Sniper Team to respond to “hostage, armed and dangerous situations.” The original team consisted of five members: Glen Michelson (team commander), Frank Bathgate, Len Kolpak, Bill Plomp and Norm Whelpley. Michelson, Kolpak and Plomp are the only surviving members of the original five.

Today, the Tactical Team as it is now known, is part of the Critical Incident Unit, which includes the Explosive Disposal Unit, Crisis Negotiators, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Unit, Scribes and Incident Commanders. There are currently 17 members with one Team Commander.

Serving with Tac is a collateral or secondary duty and all members have full-time roles in other units throughout the Police Service. Joining Tac involves a rigorous day of extensive physical testing many have described as the hardest day of their career. But beyond physical fitness, members are selected based on criteria such as decision-making, teamwork, weapons proficiency and integrity. They go on to receive specialized training in firearms, less-lethal weapon systems, driving tactics, operation of remote camera systems, chemical agents, First Aid and other areas of tactical operations.

The Tactical Team is called out during high-risk incidents, including calls involving weapons, high-risk search warrants, hostage-takings, active assailant situations, barricaded subjects and other circumstances where the nature of the incident puts the public, police or subjects at significant risk.





RESCUE VEHICLE

The Lethbridge Police Service's new Armoured Rescue Vehicle (ARV) was acquired in 2024 to better protect members of the public and police during violent, armed confrontations and high-risk incidents that have increased over the past few years.

The Teradyne Gurhka MPV replaced a 1993 converted armoured carrier truck. In 2024 there were 18 Tactical Team deployments involving armed, barricaded subjects, high-risk warrant executions and large-scale public protests and demonstrations, compared to 17 in 2022 and 2023.

Over the past three years, LPS has responded to nearly 12,000 calls for service involving firearms and other weapons.

Armoured rescue vehicles provide ballistic coverage to keep occupants safe and allow police to maintain closer containment to prevent subjects from causing further harm or enter a crisis point to save hostages. These vehicles also have specialized capabilities to rescue citizens and officers, safely deploy chemical munitions and enable medics to be closer to the scene for rapid-response when every second counts.

The Teradyne vehicle was purchased for just over \$500,000 and is expected to have a working lifespan of approximately 20 years. The vehicle is now ready for deployment when required. In addition to call response, members of the public can also expect to see the vehicle up close during future community events.



CANINE UNIT 60th ANNIVERSARY

In 2024, the Lethbridge Police Canine Unit celebrated 60 years of holding the line.

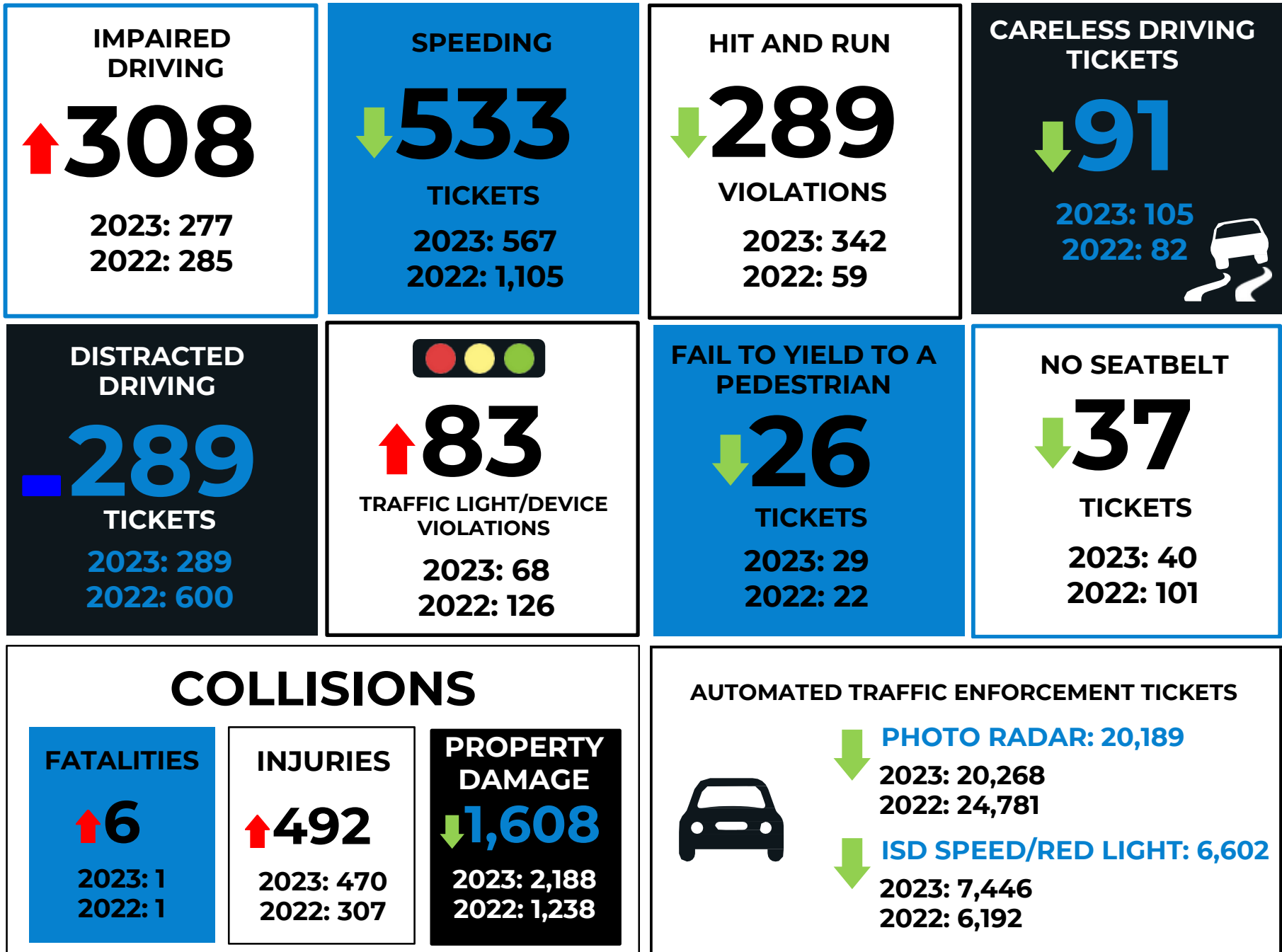
LPS acquired its first dog in 1964, Thors Yorker, better known as York, who was initially handled by Cst. Glen Berry, then Cst. Joe Schenk. York came from a kennel in Devon, Alberta and served with LPS until 1972. In the early days, police dogs were trained in Belt, Montana. In the mid-90s an in-house training program was developed and has been used ever since. Since the inception of the police service dog program, there have been 29 canines – including the dogs who are currently serving.

LPS has four dog teams, who work alongside the frontline patrol teams providing 24-hour coverage.

In addition to the milestone anniversary, two Police Service Dogs - PSD Myke and PSD Robby, celebrated their retirement, and two new dogs - PSD Macho and PSD Jens, joined the pack. A third dog, PSD Brandon, was also added to the unit after an injury forced PSD Zap into an early retirement.



TRAFFIC SAFETY AT A GLANCE



ABOUT OUR EMPLOYEES

 **179**
POLICE OFFICERS
FUNDED POSITIONS: 182

 **10**
COMMUNITY
PEACE OFFICERS
FUNDED POSITIONS: 15

 **97**
CIVILIANS

 **90**
VOLUNTEERS



**AVERAGE IN-SERVICE
TRAINING HOURS**

28

PER MEMBER/PER
YEAR

**OFFICER
EXPERIENCE**

0-10
YEARS
37%



10-20
YEARS
49%

20-30
YEARS
13%

30-35
YEARS
1%

**TOTAL VOLUNTEER
HOURS**

9,197

**ORGANIZATIONAL
STRUCTURE**

CHIEF (1)
DEPUTY CHIEF (1)
INSPECTORS (3)
STAFF SERGEANTS (8)
SERGEANTS (26)
CONSTABLES (141)



SERVICE MEDALS

ALBERTA EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDAL

Cst. Chris Andrade
Cst. Mike Dowsley
Cst. Andrew Firby
Cst. Dwayne Harrison
Cst. Cole Iwaasa
Cst. Curtis Johnson
Cst. Jack Krystofiak
Cst. Michelle LeBlanc
Cst. Chris Middleton-Hope
Cst. Don Realini
Cst. David Wharf

ALBERTA POLICE OFFICER LONG SERVICE MEDAL

Staff Sgt. Trevor Sheppard
Staff Sgt. Mike Williamson
Staff Sgt. Christy Woods
Sgt. Ryan Darroch
Sgt. Denton Michelson
Sgt. Rick Semenuik
Cst. Mike Darby
Cst. Ryan Kiddine
Cst. Lyle Millhouse
Cst. Sammy Scarpelli
Cst. Dan Shurtz





TRUNK OR TREAT

The Lethbridge Police Service hosted its second annual 'Trunk or Treat' event in 2024, handing out candy from decorated police vehicles to little ghouls and goblins.

A number of police vehicles were stationed at locations in north and west Lethbridge and officers were on hand to take pictures and most importantly hand out over 1,000 pounds of candy!

The free family event provided police with an opportunity to connect with community members young and old to help foster positive relationships with law enforcement.

The event continues to be wildly successful, and the police service is grateful to the many community members who stopped by to show off their costumes, take a few pictures and add some tasty treats to their loot bags.





The Lethbridge Police Victim/Witness Services Unit (V/WSU) is a police-based victim assistance program built on the belief that all victims and witnesses of crime and tragedy deserve the right to be well supported and find healing. The emergency scene and follow-up trauma-informed support offered can create opportunities to heal, foster hope and empowerment, while promoting a safer and healthier community. We recognize navigating the criminal justice system can be challenging and we are here to ensure victims and witnesses don't have to walk alone on this journey.

This dedicated team of both staff and volunteer Crisis Support Workers serve as first responders providing compassionate support, information, referrals, safety planning and education services that are designed with a victim-centered approach. V/WSU Crisis Support Workers are trained extensively in communication, crisis intervention, traumatic stress and the unique victim and/or witness experience. Our on-scene assistance and referrals may support individuals through incidents such as abuse and assault, domestic violence, harassment/stalking, homicide, suicide/sudden death, missing persons, fraud, major collisions and robbery.

Working alongside the Lethbridge Police Service and other community services within southern Alberta, V/WSU ensures our community's needs are met 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

VICTIM/WITNESS SERVICES UNIT

V/WSU invested a significant effort in 2024 to establish our team as willing, active participants in truth and reconciliation in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action 25, 40 and 42. Within V/WSU this work included humbly learning from Indigenous Elders in the community such as Warren Drunkenchief; Blackfoot Horn Society Grandfather, Janice Randhile, a Cree Knowledge Keeper and the Family Information Liaison Unit Coordinator, and Heidi Heavyshield, a Blackfoot Knowledge Keeper and Sociology Professor at the University of Calgary. They all graciously shared how to continue to support the community in a good way and went on to honour Program Manager, Cat Pooley with a Blackfoot name, Anut'sipsis'taakii, which means Pretty Owl Woman.

With their generosity and guidance, the unit was able to deepen their awareness, understanding and application of the Blackfoot Ways of Knowing, particularly, sharing the ceremony and practice of smudging. The team came together in September of 2024 after being gifted extensive teaching and wisdom in the act of harvesting medicines to create small smudge kits that can be shared with victims in their moment of need. These kits have been instrumental in developing an authentic and engaged relationship with the Indigenous community V/WSU serves by establishing cultural safety and trust.

Another milestone in the unit during 2024 was the successful answer to Facility Dog DWW Kourt's call for back up. Dogs With Wings Assistance Dog Society responded spectacularly by sending DWW Cruiser, a four-year-old specially trained black Labrador, to help. His role within the unit is to support victims through the interview and testifying process building trust and safety for those he supports. Together, they will play a crucial role in reducing stress and providing comfort during difficult times. Our first Facility Dog, DWW Kourt, has already made a profound impact, supporting LPS's internal wellness and ensuring staff and officers are at their best when responding to the community's needs.



2024 IN REVIEW

- **Volunteer hours: 7,298**
- **Volunteer shifts: 1,426**
- **Callouts: 255**
- **On-call hours: 13,066**
- **Training hours: 3,140.25**
- **Files reviewed: 11,959**

THE WATCH

The Watch Program is a volunteer-based initiative of the Lethbridge Police Service with the objective of enhancing the community as a safe and friendly place through social outreach, connection and intervention.

In 2024, the Watch moved from the Support Services Division to Field Operations Division and partnered with City of Lethbridge Community Social Development and the Encampment Response Team, to provide more extensive outreach to the vulnerable population. In its enhanced outreach role, Watch members assist Encampment Team Outreach Workers at encampment sites after eviction notices have been served, engaging with encampment occupants to help connect them with system navigators, providing service referrals, discussing treatment options and other resources that may be helpful.

The Watch also took on the role of obtaining and delivering medications for the Virtual Opioid Dependency Program (VODP). VODP provides opioid agonist medications for individuals who enter the custody of police within the LPS short-term holding facility.

As part of its ongoing commitment to provide safe walks to community members, a safety measure was added to ensure the well-being of volunteers and their clients. During a safe walk, after 20 minutes, a radio check-in is now conducted by the Public Safety Communications Centre.

2024 IN REVIEW:

- **Hours of service: 1,899**
- **Response to 7,907 events**
- **Wellness checks: 1,076**
- **Overdose events: 16**
- **Safe Walks: 239**
- **Needles located and reported for disposal: 688**
- **Transportation arrangements for vulnerable people: 249**
- **Use of Watch phone by vulnerable people: 616**
- **Detox intake applications: 10**



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The purpose of the Professional Standards Unit is to safeguard public trust and confidence in the Lethbridge Police Service by investigating and resolving complaints regarding policy, service delivery and employee conduct in a timely, unbiased and transparent manner.

Complaints are received from the public or initiated internally and may be criminal in nature and/or identified as an officer misconduct or complaint against police policies under the Alberta Police Act. Under Section 46.1 of the Police Act, serious and sensitive allegations are forwarded to the Director of Law Enforcement for review and may be assigned to the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team.

Statutory Investigations

In 2024, there were four statutory investigations. Two investigations resulted in officers being charged with a criminal offence, one investigation is awaiting Crown review and the other is ongoing.

Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT)

There were zero matters referred to ASIRT for investigation in 2024. ASIRT currently maintains carriage of a 2023 investigation.

Law Enforcement Review Board (LERB)

There is one outstanding matter before the Law Enforcement Review Board related to a 2021 disciplinary hearing decision where the complainant appealed the sanctions received by the cited officers.

Biased-Based Policing Complaints

In 2024, one public complaint was received where race was cited as a contributing factor to the overall treatment and police response to a call for service. The matter was investigated and determined to be unfounded.

PUBLIC COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS

In 2024, the Chief of Police directed investigations with respect to seven public complaints that involved the following allegations: corrupt practice (2), discreditable conduct (13), insubordination (1), neglect of duty (5), unlawful/unnecessary use of authority (7) and unlawful/inappropriate use of force (1)

Disposition/Actions Taken

- Zero sustained
- Four dismissed/not sustained
- Three remain under investigation

Service Investigations

In 2024, the Chief of Police directed five service investigations that involved the following allegations: breach of confidence (3), discreditable conduct (6), insubordination (5), unlawful use of authority (1), unlawful use of force (1)

Disposition/Actions Taken

- Zero sustained
- Three dismissed
- Two remain under investigation

Citizen Contacts

There were 65 citizen concerns resolved informally by way of Citizen Contacts

Administrative Review

There were no administrative reviews directed in 2024

Compliments

In 2024, LPS received a total of 82 compliments



Email: inquiries@lethbridgepolice.ca
General Inquiries: 403-327-2210
Non-Emergency Complaints: 403-328-4444

EMERGENCY 911

135 1 Avenue South
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0A1



CONNECT WITH LPS

www.lethbridgepolice.ca