



INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN URBAN RESEARCH STUDIES (ICURS) 30 year analysis of Service delivery and Costing in BC Policing

This research explored how demands for police services varied in the past 30 years and the extent to which police capacity met the calls for services. Police services have traditionally been staffed and funded according to formulas based on populations served. Populations have grown in the past 30 years and so have police staff levels and expenditures.

However, senior managers believe there has been substantial erosion in the capacity to respond to crime and call for services due to increasing complexity of the job, legislative and court ruling increasing processing time per case, and increasing administrative work due to technology advancements.

The research used a series of measures on case handling times, interviews and focus group to show that in the last 30 years

- increase in demand for police services exceeded increases in police employees
- court decisions substantially increased the process and paperwork in handling cases - 40% more time spent on paperwork than on response to calls
- legal requirements increased the processing steps for specific types of cases - the 1982 Canadian Charter of rights and Freedoms has redefined substantive procedural and evidentiary law (*Stinchcombe* disclosure) without proportional increase in budgets
- increases in administrative processing with introduction of computer systems - training, re-training, connecting, waiting for tech support, etc

Examples of the processing time issues, comparing 2003 case management times to 1983 base:

- break and enters - 58% more time - was 37 steps now 45
- driving under the influence - 250% more time - was 29 steps now 42
- domestic assault - 964% more time - was 36 steps now 58

The report suggests that the “erosion” in police capacity to respond - increased police resources and declining police services - is reflected in many aspects

- crime clearance rates have declined substantially - break and enters down from 25% to 8%, homicides from 90% to under 70%
- police are more selective about which calls to “physically” attend
- anecdotal changes in processing - abandoning homicide or 6 figure fraud investigations because they don't justify the costs involved, suspensions for impaired driving or seizing contraband instead of laying charges, etc
- private security increasingly investigating corporate fraud and computer crime

Bottom line findings

- police resources allocated on the basis of residential populations are inadequate
 - BC has 25% fewer police to population than US, Australia and UK
- changes in legal and technology environments have made the “job” much more time consuming
 - the amount of time needed to handle a case from “call to Crown” has increased from 60% to 1000% depending on the type of case



Additionally other costs have increased dramatically - training requirements for increased accountability and liability (use of force, vehicle operation, domestic violence, labour codes, etc); increased equipment, training, testing, legal associated with health and safety