



Memorandum

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*Leading and
Partnering
in our Community*

Date: 10 May 2019
To: Chair, Board of Police Commissioners
From: Robin McNeil, Chief of Police
Re: Information Memo – Armoured Rescue Vehicle (ARV)

Chair Craig:

I am writing this as a follow up information item to the Board in relation to the recent presentation on an Armoured Rescue Vehicle (ARV) that was part of this year's Capital Budget. As this has generated much public conversation, I am hopeful this report may provide some assurance that this is not a routine patrol asset, and it will be used sparingly and appropriately by those trained to use it.

In recent years we have assessed our capability response, and a significant gap was identified regarding our ability to fully address the potential hazards related to critical incident responses in the Capital Region. This is not something that we have taken lightly, and we have considered alternatives to address this gap. As civilian police we already have this responsibility, and a rescue vehicle will ensure we are doing all we can to do it safely.

The primary function of an ARV is to enable officers to rescue an injured person from a hostile open-air environment and to enable tactical officers to safely approach a dangerous situation.

As the person who is ultimately responsible for emergency response to critical incidents and public safety matters requiring police, this is something I can no longer afford 'not' to have. My obligations to ensuring the safety of the public and our employees would be seriously questioned from various perspectives we did not address our response capabilities particularly from what Atlantic Canadian communities have experienced over the past few years.

There has been discussion regarding the need to develop policy regarding its use. We are some time away before we will receive this asset and my team is actively working on other policy priorities. We will prepare a policy specific to this vehicle; however, it is important to note that in the absence of a functional policy, it would fall under our current policy regarding critical incidents.

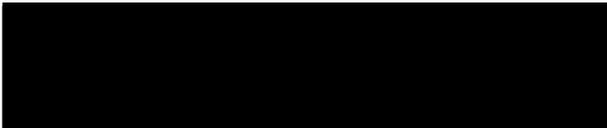
HRP has a Critical Incident Command program for response to planned or emergent events that are beyond the ability, equipment and skill set of first responders, often referred to as Level II response. In these events, we will deploy members of our emergency response team (ERT), crisis negotiators team (CNT), Patrol officers and any other resource necessary as determined by the assigned Critical Incident Commander (CIC). This commander is a rank of Staff sergeant or Inspector. All CICs have successfully passed a Critical Incident Commanders' course delivered by the Canadian Police College. All resources and equipment at a level II incident are under the command authority of the CIC. All decisions made by the CIC are documented and follow a nationally recognized process and assessment.

The approvals for Level II deployments are made by Divisional Superintendents or the "On Call" Duty officer. The deployment and use of a rescue vehicle would be under the command of a CIC and would automatically fall under this command and approval structure, except for training. Deployment for training would be managed by the Operations Support officer.

There has also been discussion regarding response to crowd control incidents. We have several events, walks and protests in HRM every year. The vast majority of these protests conclude without any involvement of police intervention other than traffic control. The goal is for people to protest in safety and without interference. Most of our crowd management deployments are of a pedestrian/traffic control nature. Arrests, use of force or tactical options are rare. Police deployments for public protests are generally not considered a Level II incident however when intelligence or action dictates an enhanced response our Public Safety Unit (PSU) would be deployed. This deployment follows the same approval criteria Divisional Superintendents or the "On Call" Duty officer. In some cases, PSU may be deployed for large planned events such as concerts or larger protests with a lot of people. This is due to the number of people present and ability of crowds to evolve without notice based on a single event, such as a fight in the crowd. Only if things escalated would a more formal approach to crowd management take place.

At no time would an ARV be deployed in a routine PSU event. Our current deployment model, training and command structures ensures this. As with any planned event, should the situation erode requiring specialized response, decisions would be made within the CIC program to ensure public and officer safety and I'm confident HRP will respond appropriately.

Yours truly,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Robin McNeil.

Robin McNeil
Chief of Police