

SIRT

Serious Incident Response Team

Investigation Summary:

Incident Type: Officer-Involved Shooting (Fatal)

SIRT File No.: 2023-31

Incident Date: December 19, 2023

Agency Involved: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Civilian Executive Director: Greg Gudelot

Date of Report: November 10, 2025

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Introduction

On Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at approximately 7:16 a.m., the Saskatchewan Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT) received a notification from the Saskatchewan RCMP regarding an officer-involved shooting that had taken place that morning on the Red Earth Cree Nation. SIRT's Civilian Executive Director accepted the notification as within SIRT's mandate and directed an investigation by SIRT.

On that day at approximately 3:41 a.m., members of the Carrot River RCMP Detachment, the Nipawin RCMP Detachment, and the Provincial Protective Services (PPS) Branch responded to multiple reports of gunshots on the Red Earth Cree Nation. Two individuals were located and taken into custody.

Police continued to search for the male who was the subject of the calls, and observed a third individual, a 25-year-old male, subsequently referred to as the affected person. As police located this individual, a firearm was discharged, striking the driver's side window area of one RCMP vehicle, causing non-life-threatening injuries to an RCMP member.

RCMP members repositioned and exited their vehicles, attempting to re-locate the affected person, who had walked away from police into an open area where the firearm was discharged once again and the affected person sustained a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. Once police again located the affected person, a confrontation occurred during which one member of the RCMP discharged their service carbine, striking the man several times.

RCMP members provided first aid until EMS arrived. EMS attended the scene and provided care to the man before he was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Timeline

SIRT was notified of the incident on December 19, 2023, at approximately 7:16 a.m. A SIRT team consisting of the Civilian Executive Director and five SIRT investigators was immediately deployed to begin the investigation. On August 12, 2025, the completed investigation was submitted to the Civilian Executive Director for review.

The Investigation

SIRT's investigation was comprehensive and thorough, conducted using current investigative protocols, and in accordance with the principles of Major Case Management (MCM). During the course of the investigation, all relevant police and civilian witnesses were interviewed, a scene examination was conducted of the incident location, and all relevant audio, video, and documentary evidence was seized. Numerous physical exhibits were seized, both during the scene examination and the autopsy examination, with several of those exhibits subsequently submitted for testing.

Audio recordings seized during the investigation captured the RCMP radio communications during the incident, as well as the numerous calls for service received by the RCMP prior to the incident from several

individuals. These calls reported numerous gunshots as well as an attempt to gain entry into the residence of one caller. Video footage related to the incident was obtained from the involved RCMP vehicles, a local business, and from the affected person's phone. RCMP in-car digital video (ICDV) confirmed the timing of various events, as well as the movements of police and the affected person during the incident. Video recovered from a search of the affected person's phone depicted the affected person in possession of a firearm shortly before the incident, as well as an audible gunshot. Documentary evidence obtained by SIRT investigators provided information on the affected person's background, including a lifetime firearms prohibition imposed as a result of a prior conviction.

Seven police officers were designated as Witness Officers and were interviewed during the course of SIRT's investigation. These included six members of the RCMP and one member of the PPS, who had attended to assist police as part of the provincial Protection and Response Team (PRT). Those statements described the actions of police and the affected person during the incident, as well as the first aid subsequently provided to the affected person. Eleven civilian witnesses were interviewed during the course of SIRT's investigation, describing the events in the community leading up to and during the police response to the various calls for service. Civilian evidence confirmed the affected person's possession of a firearm prior to the incident, the affected person receiving verbal direction from another male to shoot the occupants of a residence, the discharge of a firearm into a residence, and the shooting of a dog, which was killed during the incident. Civilian witness evidence also confirmed verbal commands given by police during the incident to drop a weapon.

While under no legal obligation to do so, the Subject Officer voluntarily provided a statement during the investigation by participating in a recorded interview. Evidence directly from a Subject Officer, when voluntarily provided, is often invaluable as it can assist both with the factual determination of what occurred and provide evidence of the subjective beliefs and perceptions of the Subject Officer.

Numerous physical exhibits were seized during the course of SIRT's investigation, with some submitted for further analysis as the investigation proceeded. These exhibits included a Winchester 12-gauge shotgun and a hunting knife recovered from the location where the affected person was shot, numerous live and spent shotgun shells recovered from various locations at the incident scene, as well as the RCMP-issued firearm fired during the incident.

The shotgun recovered from the incident scene was submitted for testing and was confirmed to be an operable firearm within the meaning of the *Criminal Code*. Several of the spent shotgun shell casings recovered from the incident scene were submitted both for ballistic and DNA testing, with laboratory results confirming that the shotgun recovered from the incident scene had fired the spent shell casings, as well as the presence of the affected person's DNA on those same casings. The RCMP-issued firearm seized during the investigation, a carbine-style rifle, was tested and confirmed to be in proper working condition, passed all function testing and inspection, and was confirmed as a firearm within the meaning of the *Criminal Code*.

An autopsy was conducted, which determined the affected person's cause of death to be blood loss due to a shotgun wound to the head as well as multiple gunshot wounds to the body. It was also noted that the shotgun wound to the head led to respiratory compromise, also contributing to the affected person's death. Toxicology results noted the presence of methamphetamine and THC in the affected person's blood, with the methamphetamine levels falling within the range which could have contributed to intoxication. During the

autopsy a number of additional exhibits were recovered including several small bags of a white powder substance, which were subsequently submitted for laboratory testing and confirmed to contain methamphetamine.

At the outset of the investigation, as required by S.91.12(1) of *The Police Act, 1990*, a Community Liaison was appointed to assist the investigation. The liaison was provided with regular updates on the investigation, and at the conclusion of the investigation, was provided the opportunity to review the investigation in its entirety, and to make comments and recommendations as necessary.

Summary

On December 19, 2023, at approximately 3:41 a.m., the RCMP began receiving a series of 911 calls reporting gunshots on the Red Earth Cree Nation. Two RCMP members were immediately dispatched in response to these calls. Upon their arrival in the community, the RCMP members spoke with the community's emergency response coordinator and were informed that four individuals were involved in the incident.

The two RCMP members encountered a group who fled on foot, with two individuals, a male and a female, arrested shortly thereafter, at approximately 4:52 a.m. Those individuals remained in police custody as the incident unfolded, and no firearm was recovered during these initial arrests. The initially-responding RCMP members began checking residences as several other RCMP members and one member of PPS arrived in the community to assist with the investigation. As these additional resources arrived in the community, a gunshot was fired, striking the driver's side window of a police vehicle, and causing minor injuries to the RCMP member operating the vehicle.

After the police vehicle was struck by a gunshot, RCMP members backed out of the area to seek cover. While retreating, one RCMP member observed a male dressed in black holding a long-barreled firearm. The male, subsequently identified as the affected person, walked south into an open area with a baseball diamond and an outdoor rink, and an RCMP vehicle was repositioned in an attempt to light the area where the affected person had been observed. A short time later, another gunshot was heard coming from the baseball diamond area where the affected person had been seen.

An RCMP member deployed a drone and observed the affected person lying face down in the area between the baseball diamond and the rink, with blood around him and a long-barreled firearm beside him, having sustained a non-fatal self-inflicted shotgun wound to the head. A short time later, at approximately 6:32 a.m., the RCMP drone operator observed the affected person rise to his feet, retrieve the shotgun and walk west towards police. As the affected person reached the road, an RCMP member used a vehicle loudspeaker to give verbal commands to the affected person to stop and to drop the firearm.

The affected person did not respond to the verbal commands and continued to walk towards police who continued to give commands to stop and drop the firearm. At approximately 6:34 a.m., as the affected person raised the shotgun to his shoulder and aimed towards an RCMP member, another RCMP member, the Subject Officer, discharged several rounds from his carbine, causing the affected person to fall to the ground. As the affected person was lying on the ground, he attempted to reach for the firearm again, and at approximately 6:35 a.m., the Subject Officer fired a second volley of shots.

Following the second volley of shots, several RCMP members rushed towards the affected person, removed the firearm, commenced first aid, and called for EMS assistance.

At approximately 7:13 a.m., EMS arrived and assumed responsibility for the affected person's care, placing him inside an ambulance. At approximately 7:53 a.m., EMS pronounced the affected person deceased at the incident scene.

Analysis

Following a comprehensive review of the evidence gathered during the course of SIRT's investigation, a number of critical aspects of the incident are clearly confirmed by the available evidence. The affected person's possession of the shotgun prior to the incident is well-confirmed by civilian witness and video evidence and later corroborated by forensic evidence. The discharge of that shotgun at an RCMP vehicle during the incident, as described by involved police officers, is corroborated by both the forensic examination of the vehicle in question, and the injuries sustained by the member during that encounter.

The totality of the affected person's actions both prior to the incident, which included the discharge of a shotgun at a residence and the killing of a dog, and during the incident, which included the discharge of the shotgun at police vehicle, created an objectively reasonable perception of a risk of death or grievous bodily harm to the involved police officers as the incident unfolded.

Under S. 25 of the *Criminal Code*, a police officer is authorized to use as much force as necessary in the lawful execution of their duties. This can include force that is intended or likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm, when the officer reasonably believes that such force is necessary to defend themselves or someone under their protection from death or grievous bodily harm. Further, under S. 34 of the *Criminal Code*, any person, including a police officer, is entitled to the use of reasonable force in defence of themselves or another. Factors in assessing the reasonableness of force used can include the use or threatened use of a weapon, the imminence of the threat, other options available, and the nature of the force or threat of force itself.

While the affected person's self-inflicted gunshot wound during the incident gives rise to the possibility that his later action of raising a shotgun towards police was an attempt to provoke police action, there is no realistic way that either the involved police officers, or indeed the subsequent investigation could determine this. When viewed objectively, and with the knowledge that the affected person had already discharged a shotgun at a police vehicle, causing injury to the driver, the affected person's action of raising a shotgun towards police required immediate action to address that risk. This risk was both immediate and serious, and served to preclude the ability to rely upon a lesser degree of force. As such, the Subject Officer's response to this reasonably perceived lethal threat was both proportionate and necessary.

Similarly, despite the injury resulting from both the self-inflicted gunshot wound and the initial volley of shots by the Subject Officer, as the affected person attempted to reach for the firearm on the ground, his actions continued to represent an objectively reasonable risk of death or grievous bodily harm to those present.

Again, while the motivation underlying the affected person's actions is unknown, when considering the gravity of the threat, there was no realistic ability to rely on a lesser degree of force.

With all factors, including the nature of the threat presented by the affected person's actions, taken into account, the force applied by the Subject Officer during the incident falls within the range protected by law, and provides no reasonable grounds to believe that an offence was committed by any police officer during the incident. As a result of the application of the facts established by the evidence to the standard established by law, no charges will be laid.

Decision

There being no grounds to believe an offence was committed by the Subject Officer, SIRT's involvement with this matter is concluded without referral to the Attorney General for Saskatchewan in accordance with S.91.08(10)(a) of *The Police Act, 1990*.

Original Signed

Greg Gudelot
Civilian Executive Director
Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT)

November 10, 2025

Date of Report