

Toronto police accountability a hot topic at city hall

String of high-profile incidents eroding public confidence in police, says Coun. Michael Thompson

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Toronto's mayor still has confidence in the city's police force, but at least two councillors are speaking out about police accountability in the wake of several high profile incidents.

On Monday, Const. James Forcillo was found guilty of attempted murder in Sammy Yatim's 2013 shooting death aboard a TTC streetcar. On Wednesday, police announced an officer had been charged under the Police Services Act for firing 15 bullets into a stopped car during an arrest. And earlier Thursday, four officers were charged with perjury and obstructing justice in connection with a drug investigation that was thrown out by a judge.

- [4 Toronto police officers charged with perjury, obstructing justice](#)
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- [At least 50 police officers currently suspended with pay in Ontario](#)

CBC News has learned that in total, 14 Toronto officers are currently suspended with pay. At city hall, Coun. Michael Thompson told reporters these incidents are eroding public faith in police.

"They are not above the law. They must abide by the rules," Thompson said.

'In a big organization they are going to have instances that sometimes occur in bunches that are troubling.' - *Mayor John Tory*

"People have to have confidence that if they are pulled over by the police that they are going to be treated fairly."

Before these latest findings and incidents, Toronto police also faced criticism for their reliance on carding and how officers deal with people in crisis, which was the focus of two major reports.

Mayor John Tory, who sits on the Toronto Police Services Board and attended a police training session focused on dealing with people in crisis on Wednesday, defended the police on Thursday.

"I will tell you I most certainly have confidence in the chief and the Toronto Police Service," he said.

"In a big organization they are going to have instances that sometimes occur in bunches that are troubling."

Coun. Shelley Carroll, who also sits on the police board, said police are rolling out some programs aimed at increasing accountability among officers, including the body-worn cameras that are in use in certain areas as part of a pilot project.

"The public need to take some comfort from the fact that police are now adjusting to the fact they do their work in front of a camera," she said.

Carroll said she "absolutely" believes cameras would have changed the behaviour of some of the officers who got in trouble this week.

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