

OIPRD says it will now release report into allegations of Thunder Bay police systemic racism in August

Watchdog's probe of police investigations of Indigenous people's deaths, disappearances started in 2016

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Gerry McNeilly is Ontario's Independent Police Review Director. (CBC)

Ontario's Independent Police Review Director says the results of its investigation into allegations of systemic racism in the Thunder Bay Police Service will be released a bit later than expected.

The province's civilian police oversight body is examining the way city police treat the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous people. The probe began back in November 2016.

- [Police review director still doing interviews, not probing more cases, in Thunder Bay police review](#)

- [**Thunder Bay, Ont., police face 'systemic review' of Indigenous death investigations**](#)

During that time, review director Gerry McNeilly and his staff have been reviewing [**30 death investigations**](#) and [**nine cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women**](#) that were handled by city police, in addition to conducting numerous interviews with individuals, First Nations leaders and organizations, community groups and members of the police and its services board.

The investigation also included [**a public meeting in Thunder Bay**](#) in the fall of 2017.

McNeilly's investigation was scheduled to be completed — and its report, including recommendations released — by the end of June. But a spokesperson for the OIPRD told CBC News in an email that the report is now slated to be released in August as the final draft is still being finished.

The police review director's investigation is separate from another probe by the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, who, under Sen. Murray Sinclair, is examining the conduct of, and oversight provided by, the Thunder Bay Police Services Board.

- [**Final report on investigation of Thunder Bay Police Services Board delayed until August**](#)

That report, which was originally scheduled to be released by the end of March, has also had its mandate extended; Sinclair's findings are also expected in August.

The independent police review director has also examined Thunder Bay police's handling of the death of Stacy DeBungee. The 41-year-old man from Rainy River First Nations was found dead in Thunder Bay's McIntyre River in 2015.

- [**'Neglect of duty' found in review of Thunder Bay police investigation into death of Indigenous man**](#)

The report into that investigation found "substantial" deficiencies in the way police treated his death. Three officers face Police Services Act charges of neglect of duty.

Two of them also face discreditable conduct charges, but disciplinary proceedings have yet to begin.

That's because the OIPRD's investigation into how police handled DeBungee's death took more than six months; provincial regulations state that it's now up to the police services board to decide whether the delay was reasonable and whether hearings will be held.

- [Thunder Bay police board to decide whether to hold hearings for officers over Stacy DeBungee investigation](#)

That hearing was expected to happen in April [but was cancelled](#) due to what the board called a "procedural matter."

Police board officials have confirmed that the hearing has yet to be rescheduled but that no decision has been made on whether to hold disciplinary hearings for the three officers.

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