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Court Facility Security Review 2007

November 2007

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Court Facility Security Review Committee  
Province of Nova Scotia  
Court Facility Security Review

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October 2007

The Court Facility Security Review Committee was established to provide guidance and assistance regarding the review process and to provide recommendations as required. We, the members of the Review Committee, have reviewed all data and findings generated from the Review and have provided the Department of Justice with eleven (11) recommendations which are included in this report.

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## Executive Summary

In 2006/2007, the Department of Justice completed a Court Facility Security Review of its 34 court facilities across Nova Scotia. The project was undertaken to ensure that security measures provide a safe and secure environment for the Judiciary, staff, and citizens of Nova Scotia.

A review committee of security experts was established to assist in the review process and provide recommendations. The review committee assisted in the development of a comprehensive study, which gathered information through six separate processes: policy and procedure reviews, two targeted surveys, in-person consultations, facility assessments, and a focused risk study using entryway metal detection devices.

The results of the Court Facility Security Review indicate that security requirements are being met. Sheriff Services' policies and procedures demonstrate a strong risk management approach, and court users report that they feel safe and secure.

The results of the Review also provide information on areas where Sheriff Services can strengthen security, including increased training, security awareness programs, Sheriff officer deployment and strategic facility improvements.

The Court Facility Security Review Advisory Committee has made eleven key recommendations in the following areas: training, communications, security technology and security protocols. The Department of Justice accepts all of the recommendations and has formulated a Sheriff Services action plan to respond to each recommendation.

Court Facility Security Review

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## Mission Statement

*The Department of Justice is committed to the fair and effective administration of justice and to excellence in service to the people of Nova Scotia. We are accountable to the citizens of Nova Scotia. We will strive to inform the public of our activities through a policy of openness and accessibility.*

## Introduction

The Court Facility Security Review was initiated in November 2005 and provides a comprehensive review of the security status of the thirty-four court facilities across the Province and the Sheriff Services Division, which is mandated to provide a secure environment for the work of the courts. The study was structured as a six-part review.

The review was initiated to accomplish the following goals:

- Develop a baseline study of the security provisions in place at all court facilities;
- Determine whether the current framework of security measures is meeting the security needs of these facilities;
- Seek public input regarding perceptions of safety in court facilities;
- Seek input from regular facility users on best practices which are enhancing security and any areas where security could be strengthened; and
- Develop a follow-up plan to respond to the findings.

The follow-up plan will ensure that Sheriff Services continues to provide a safe and secure environment for the Judiciary, court facility staff, other professionals accessing the courts, and the citizens of Nova Scotia who conduct business within court facilities.

## The Context: Court Facilities and Sheriff Services

### Court Facilities

There are thirty-four court facilities in Nova Scotia. Fourteen are full-service Justice Centre facilities and twenty are satellite court facilities with a more limited range of services and operations.

The majority of these facilities are in excess of fifty years of age. Many have been renovated to enhance security, increase the number of courtrooms, provide office space for staff, and accommodate technological advancements. A number of court facilities are not “stand-alone” buildings and are leased from private sector landlords, and in some sites share space with other government and non-government tenants.

Construction of three new “state of the art” replacement courthouses has been completed or is in process. A new court facility in Port Hawkesbury is fully operational, and sites in Bridgewater and Yarmouth are under construction.

Nova Scotia’s court facilities are very active public settings, and offer a wide range of services. Given the nature of the business of the courts and their function in society, a large part of any court facility functions as a public space. This brings with it a certain level of risk which needs careful management. Each court facility, regardless of its particular configuration, must be provided with a similar level of security. This critical security management role is the principal mandate of Nova Scotia’s Sheriff Services, under the auspices of the Court Services Division of the Department of Justice.

### Sheriff Services

Sheriff Services are provided across the province by uniformed Sheriff officers whose service is authorized under the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Nova Scotia Court Security Act*. Sheriff Services is further governed by a structure of standard operational procedures set out by the Court Services Division.

It is the responsibility of all Sheriffs (supervisory staff) and Deputy Sheriffs (full time and casual roster personnel) to provide a safe environment for all persons accessing a court facility in Nova Scotia. Sheriff officers are also responsible for prisoner transportation. The following table provides a detailed summary of the security responsibilities which fall under these two core areas.

Table 1

Security Responsibilities: Sheriff Services	
Risk Assessments	<p>In order to be prepared on a daily basis for any threats to perimeter or courtroom security, the Sheriff conducts risk assessments using a range of confidential procedures. It is within the discretion of the Sheriff to determine whether information respecting enhanced security measures need to be communicated to court users.</p> <p>Sheriffs have a number of methods available to them to meet any security risks including restricting access, increasing officer presence and deploying metal detection devices.</p>
Facility Security	<p>Sheriff officers provide security within the general public areas of the court facility. Sheriff officers conduct patrols throughout the facility's public areas. All Sheriff officers carry an enhanced communication system which links all officers, providing immediate response where required.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of Sheriff officers to periodically patrol the areas immediately outside a court facility throughout the day to ensure, to the extent possible given the features of the particular facility, that all persons are safe and that no damage has occurred to the building.</p>
Courtroom Security	<p>Sheriff officers are responsible for ensuring that members of the Judiciary, lawyers, staff, and general public are safe and secure while in the courtroom. This includes maintaining court decorum by dealing with any disruptions in a timely fashion. Sheriff officers have the authority to remove a person from a court facility.</p>
Escort of Persons in Custody	<p>Sheriff officers are responsible for the secure escort of persons in custody to and from the courtroom. One or more Sheriff officers will escort an individual to court, remain with the person during the hearing and escort the person back to the cell area, unless the person is released by the Judge. The primary responsibility with respect to secure escort is to ensure that the person in custody does not come into physical contact with others while in the court facility.</p>
Prisoner Transportation	<p>Sheriff Services provides all court ordered prisoner transportation for both young persons and adult prisoners. Sheriff officers assigned to transportation move prisoners from federal correctional institutions, provincial correctional institutions, and the East Coast Forensic Hospital to all court facilities in the province.</p>
Civil Process Support	<p>Other responsibilities that fall under the Sheriff Services jurisdiction include the enforcement of certain court orders.</p>

## Methodology

To ensure that the Court Facility Security Review was sufficiently comprehensive, a review committee of security experts was established. The review committee membership included:

- Director of Sheriff Services, Nova Scotia Department of Justice
- Director of Security Operations for the Province of Alberta (retired)
- Co-ordinator of Security Services for the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works
- Staff Sergeant of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Departmental Security Section - Atlantic Region

The review committee assisted the Court Facility Security Review Project Manager to develop the planned approach, and supported the review itself with the following specific terms of reference:

1. Conduct site visits in conjunction with the facility assessment component of the study;
2. Review all Sheriff Services standard operating and administrative policies and procedures;
3. Review all information collected during the review; and
4. Make recommendations to ensure the continued security of court facilities in Nova Scotia.

A range of data-gathering approaches were used to accomplish the goals of the Court Facility Security Review, to both assess the operational approaches to security currently in place and to learn from facility users. This included both the general public and those who work regularly within the facilities, to learn their perspectives and what insights they could contribute to the study.

The six methodologies presented in the chart below were used to gather the data for the Court Facility Security Review:

Table 2

Surveys and Document Reviews
1. Policy and Procedures Review (P. 7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sheriff Services Standard Operational and Administrative Policies and Procedures as well as other relevant policies and procedures were reviewed.</li></ul>
2. Court Facility User Survey (P. 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sheriff officers conducted a random survey of users of the court facility as they entered various court facilities throughout the province.</li></ul>
3. Judges, Lawyers and Facility Staff Survey (P. 10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On-line questionnaire was distributed to the Judiciary, court facility staff, Crown attorneys, legal aid and private practice lawyers, including presidents of local bar associations.</li></ul>



## Focus Group Discussion and Field Assessment

### 4. Individual and Group Consultations (P. 15)

- Group and individual consultations were conducted with regular facility users including Judges, lawyers and staff.

### 5. Facility Assessments (P. 17)

- Sheriff Supervisors, trained and qualified in court facility audits and inspections, conducted on-site assessments of all 34 court facilities.

### 6. Focused Risk Study (P. 18)

- A metal detection screening device was set up at the entrance of each full-service Justice Centre facility for a period of five working days to determine the number of persons entering the Justice Centres and to survey the types of articles Sheriff officers were required to seize.

## Summary of Key Findings

### Areas of Strength:

- 99% of the Nova Scotians surveyed in the study reported that they felt safe and secure in court facilities; (see pg. 8)
- Both public and internal surveys demonstrated a high level of Sheriff officer presence; (see pgs. 9 and 11)
- Internal surveys and consultations resulted in a positive assessment of Sheriff officer response in regard to courtroom security, incident management and communication; (see pg. 11)
- Policy and procedure reviews demonstrated that Nova Scotia has a comprehensive training and operational management framework for Sheriff Services; (see pg. 7)
- The policy and procedure review highlighted a risk management approach within Sheriff Services operations. (see pg. 7)

### Areas for Strengthening Sheriff Services: (see recommendations, pages 21-23)

- Continued use of metal detection devices as indicated by daily risk assessments;
- Continued use of standardized video monitoring and alarm systems and expanded availability;
- Additional security protocols, including a clarified reporting structure and an ongoing security assessment program;
- Improved communication to key stakeholder users in the court facility by providing a safety and security awareness orientation to help them better understand and be aware of risk assessment planning conducted by Sheriff officers;
- Safety and security awareness education for staff and additional risk assessment training for Sheriff officers.

## Detailed Findings

### 1. Policy and Procedures Review

The Court Facility Security Review Committee conducted a detailed review of the various Sheriff Services policy and procedure manuals. The goal was to ascertain whether the current policies and procedures reflected national standards. The review committee reported that the Nova Scotia Sheriff Services policies and procedures were comprehensive and provided an excellent risk management framework for the daily work of the Sheriff Services Division. The review highlighted key areas of strength, many of which were mirrored by the respondent feedback in the survey tools. These areas of strength are summarized below.

Table 3

Policy and Procedures Review	
Policy/Procedure	Noted Strengths
Officer Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sheriff officers wear a distinct and easily identifiable uniform.</li><li>• Sheriff officers are present while court is in session and are also situated within the court facility.</li></ul>
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sheriff officers are trained to deal with threats, and a Sheriff Services threats protocol is in place.</li></ul>
Crisis Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sheriff officers are trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, which teaches verbal techniques to de-escalate disturbances.</li><li>• Sheriff officers are trained in the use of force continuum and are equipped and trained in the use of several tools to control violent acts. Those tools include pepper spray, batons and ground fighting techniques.</li></ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The use of secure frequency two-way radios by Sheriff officers in court facilities has improved internal communications dramatically and has significantly reduced the response time of officers.</li></ul>
Facility Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policies and procedures are in place to conduct daily searches to detect any unattended packages in the facility and for the handling and disposing of these packages.</li><li>• Sheriff officers are required to conduct internal and perimeter security checks.</li></ul>

## 2. Court Facility User Survey

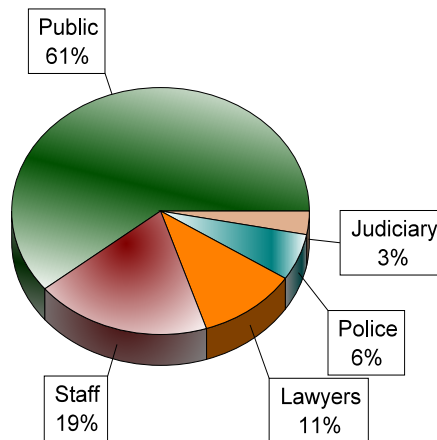
One hundred and thirty-nine (139) members of the public were asked to complete a user survey as they entered the various court facilities across the Province. The questions focused on respondents' sense of safety and awareness of security measures. The following are the key findings:

### Feeling Safe and Secure

When asked whether they felt safe entering the facility, 99% (138) of respondents indicated they felt safe entering and conducting business within the Justice Centre.

Table 4

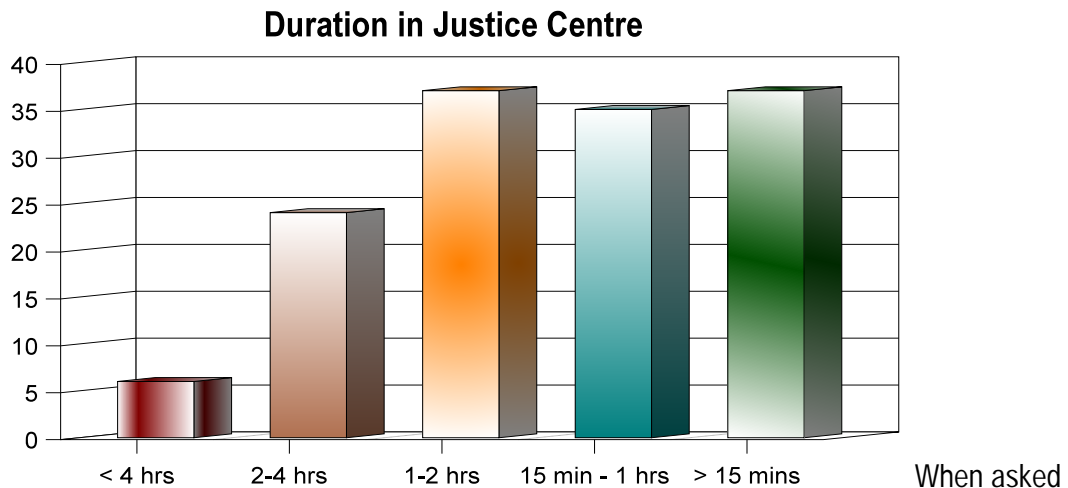
### Persons Entering Justice Centre



### Length and Purpose of Visit

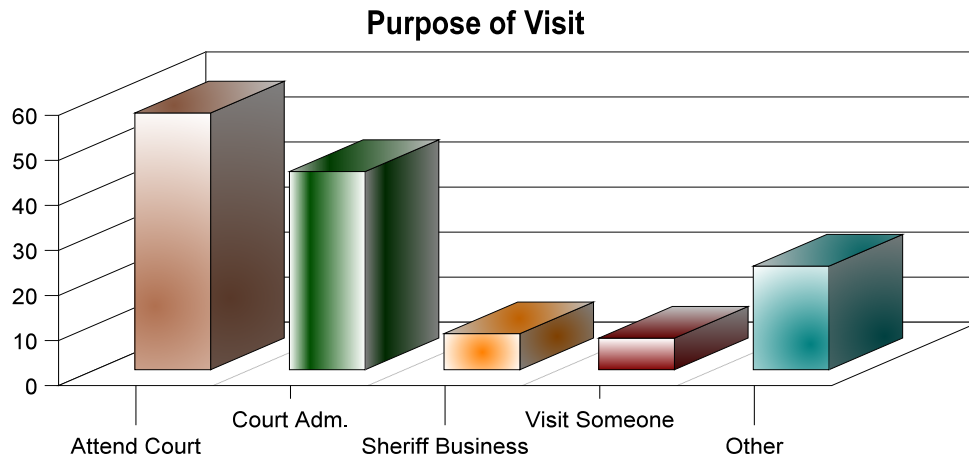
The majority of persons indicated that they were in a Justice Centre for fifteen minutes or less.

Table 5



about the purpose of their visit, 40% (56) of respondents indicated that they were at the court facility to appear in court, 31% (44) had business with the court administration office, 6% (8) wished to speak with the Sheriff, 5% (7) were there to visit someone and 16% (23) indicated they were there for miscellaneous reasons, including accompanying a friend or driving someone to the Justice Centre.

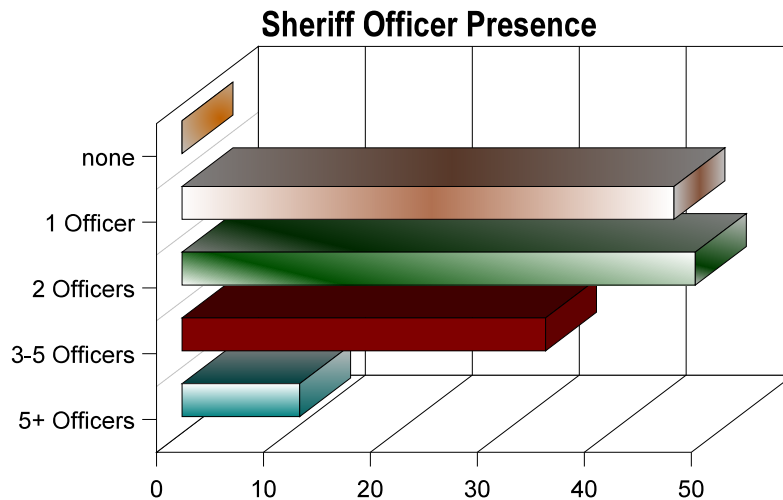
Table 6



Awareness of Sheriff Officer Presence

100% (139) of respondents indicated that they saw at least one Sheriff officer in the court facility (Sheriff officers wear a distinct and easily identifiable uniform while on duty).

Table 7



### 3. Judges, Lawyers and Facility Staff Survey

An on-line survey was conducted targeting people who work within or regularly use the court facilities, including Judges, Crown attorneys, private practice lawyers, legal aid lawyers, and court staff. The backgrounds of the various respondents, as demonstrated in the table below, indicated that they would have helpful insights to offer.

Table 8

Judges, Lawyers and Facility Staff Survey - 196 Responses Percentage of Responses by Category	
Support Staff	26%
Crown Attorneys	23%
Judiciary	22%
Supervisory Staff	13%
Private Practice Lawyers	6%
Legal Aid	6%
Bar Association Presidents	3%
Site Supervisors	1%

The survey focused on 3 key themes:

- Officer presence and communications;
- Experience with disturbances in the court facility; and
- Awareness of security procedures.

## Officer Presence and Communication

The feedback on this aspect of the survey mirrors the public survey findings. Sheriff officers have a very strong presence within the court facility, particularly in the courtrooms and in restricted areas of the facility. The deployment of Sheriff officers in the public areas such as corridors, waiting rooms, and within the perimeter of the facility was highlighted as an area to strengthen.

With respect to communication, the respondents indicated that they regularly seek out the advice of Sheriff officers regarding security concerns, but are not as aware of the Sheriff's risk assessment procedures and would like more follow-up in the aftermath of an incident.

*Table 9*

Judges, Lawyers and Support Staff Internal Survey	
Sheriff Officer Presence and Communication	Response Rate
Presence and Accessibility	
• Sheriff officers demonstrate a strong visual presence, particularly when court is in session	97%
• Sheriff officers can be contacted easily when required	93%
• Sheriff officers are less visible in public waiting or service areas	77%
• Have viewed Sheriff officers conducting internal and perimeter security checks	50%
Assessment of Risk/Communication	
• Site supervisory staff report awareness of daily risk assessments conducted by Sheriff officers	92%
• Sheriff officers' response to report of an incident is prompt and timely	82%
• Follow up debrief after report of an incident is always provided by Sheriff officers	47%
• Judiciary report awareness of daily risk assessments conducted by Sheriff officers	55%

## Disturbance within a Court Facility

Court facilities are busy public settings where people come together often at a crisis point in their lives. Given this reality, it is not unexpected that there are disturbances within a court facility. The survey probed respondents' experiences in regard to disturbances they had witnessed or experienced in a court facility. Disturbances can range from a person in crisis exhibiting strong emotions, using foul language, being disorderly and so forth, to persons making threats and carrying out acts of physical violence.

Most Judges, Crown attorneys, private practice lawyers, legal aid lawyers and court staff surveyed (80%) indicated that they witnessed non-violent disturbances in the court facility. Only 6% had experienced violence in the court facility.

Table 10

Judges, Lawyers and Support Staff Internal Survey	
Disturbance Within the Court Facility	Response Rate
Witnessing a Disturbance (i.e. strong emotions, foul language, causing a disturbance)	
• Have witnessed a disturbance in the court facility	80%
• Disturbances witnessed were non-violent	66%
• Disturbances witnessed involved verbal threat of violence	34%
Experience with Threats of Violence/Physical Violence	
• Have not experienced any violent incidents	82%
• Have experienced being threatened with violence	12%
• Have experienced violence	6%
Unattended Packages in the Court Facility	
• Have not noticed any unattended packages or containers in the court facility	72%

## Signage in Court Facilities

Clear signage and identification are important tools in maintaining high quality security in courts. The on-line survey sought out respondents' awareness of the following types of signage:

- way finding;
- restriction to access;
- prohibited activities; and
- awareness of emergency contact information.

The respondents' input has highlighted that while the presence of signage and general awareness of signage are strong, there are aspects of signage awareness which can be improved. A summary of this input is presented below.

Table 11

Judges, Lawyers and Support Staff Internal Survey	
Signage in Court Facilities	Response Rate
Way Finding Signs	
• Aware of way finding signs that help people locate various functions in the court	89%
Restrictions	
• Aware of signs which identify restricted areas of the facility	60%
• Aware of signs regarding restriction of use of cell phones	72%
• Aware of signs regarding restriction of use of recording devices in the courtroom	59%
Prohibitions	
• Aware of signage related to prohibitions on the use of alcohol in the court facility	5%
• Aware of signage related to prohibitions on weapons or contraband within the court facility	7%
Other	
• Aware of signs indicating that video monitoring is in effect	10%
• Aware of signs indicating that persons may be subject to a search by a Sheriff	26%



## Awareness of Security Procedures

The Judges, Lawyers and Support Staff Internal Survey highlighted the need for further education of staff, Judiciary, and members of the bar on the security procedures beyond those followed by deputy sheriffs. In particular, there was a general lack of awareness of emergency contact protocols and other procedures that apply to all users of a facility in an emergency. This is an area for improvement.

The survey also looked at the reporting of security incidents by staff, Judiciary and members of the bar to Sheriff officers, and follow-up on those reports. Although most of the respondents were comfortable with and complimentary about the actual reporting process to Sheriff officers, in a majority of cases there was no debrief conducted by Sheriff officers.

97% of respondents reported that they are aware that they can report security concerns to the Sheriff Supervisor. Respondents indicated that they always reported security concerns.

Table 12

Judges, Lawyers and Support Staff Internal Survey	
Awareness of Security Procedures	Response Rate
Adherence to Restrictions	
• Have seen persons in restricted areas of the facility with no visible identification	59%
• Aware of individuals who may have had card or key access to the facility and who were no longer employed within the facility	11%
Security Procedures	
• Aware of posted emergency contact lists and obligations in the event of an emergency	45%

#### 4. Individual and Group Consultations

Consultations were conducted in all full-service Justice Centre facilities and included separate meetings with Judges, Crown attorneys, private practice lawyers, lawyers with Nova Scotia Legal Aid and local Nova Scotia Bar Association members. The objective of these consultations was to capture any issues that may not have been covered in the two surveys, and issues specific to the court facility where they attended. The distribution of the 116 participants is noted in the table below.

*Table 13*

Individual and Group Consultations with Selected Respondents	
Support Staff	31% (36)
Crown Attorneys	12% (14)
Judiciary	35% (41)
Private Practice Lawyers	9% (10)
Legal Aid	13% (15)

The open forum consultations provided helpful input which mirrored much of what was brought forward in the other information gathering elements of the study, and provided site specific input which will be very helpful in resolving site specific issues.

The feedback from these sessions showed that the respondents had a positive view of the security services Sheriff Services provide at court facilities. The table below summarizes the topic areas emerging from the individual and group consultations.

Table 14

Individual and Group Consultations	
Topic Area	Feedback
Officer Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheriff officer response to requests is prompt and their visibility has increased in recent years.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication between Sheriff officers and other court users, including lawyers, court staff and the Judiciary, is very good.</li> </ul>
Court Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems associated with courtroom layout in some older facilities can cause security issues with regard to the flow of persons in custody walking in close proximity to court staff and lawyers. In some courtrooms, the layout of seating arrangements presents security concerns.</li> <li>• Traffic flow in the public space areas of older facilities (corridors, entrances, stairways and waiting areas) presents security concerns, where members of the public, accused persons, victims and justice professionals pass though or congregate at different points in the day.</li> <li>• Separate entrances for accused persons would be an improvement in some facilities.</li> <li>• Inadequate number of interview rooms in some facilities.</li> <li>• Counter areas in some administrative offices do not provide adequate security or protection for staff.</li> </ul>
Courthouse Perimeter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some courthouse locations would benefit from improved lighting and security.</li> <li>• Sheriff officer patrols of these areas need to be increased, as resources and risk indicate.</li> </ul>
Deputy Sheriffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of training and certification for Sheriff officers has increased over the past five years.</li> <li>• Increased security can be provided when required/requested or when a risk assessment warrants.</li> <li>• Although fully trained, casual deputy sheriffs are not in the facilities often enough to become familiar with the site specific court procedures.</li> </ul>
Metal Screening Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally, the use of these devices is not a concern and is becoming more common place. There is a growing expectation that this type of equipment will be used more regularly and will be available to all court facilities in the future.</li> </ul>

## 5. Facility Assessments

Four supervisory members of Sheriff Services, trained and qualified in court facility audits and inspections, conducted assessments of all thirty-four court facilities over a seven-month period. The goal of these assessments was to establish a baseline review and to identify areas for improvement. The review focused on facility layout, signage and facility security procedures.

### Facility Layout and Signage

A number of court facilities are not stand-alone buildings. Security management in these sites requires strong officer presence to mitigate against the challenges presented by facility age, design and lease provisions. For example, shared tenancy arrangements present challenges with respect to both interior and perimeter security. Courtroom security must be managed in the context of layout and design of courtrooms, which varies throughout the province, due in large part to the age of the facilities. In recent years, new court facilities have been designed to accommodate the security requirements, and these requirements will be incorporated in future construction.

The majority of the 14 full-service Justice Centre facilities where support staff are employed are equipped with emergency alarm systems. These systems are maintained for the safety of all staff and facility users, and when activated, will trigger response from Sheriff officers and/or emergency response personnel.

Directional signage is present in the majority of court facilities. However, each facility has developed its own signs and this lack of provincial uniformity and consistency can lead to confusion and present difficulties for court users in readily identifying the location of the services and courtrooms they are seeking.

### Facility Security Procedures

Key control systems exist within all facilities. However, in some facilities, this is managed by the landlord, and the court facility does not have full control of procedures, which can cause difficulties when staff leave the landlord's employ and keys are not always recovered. New control procedures need to be developed as part of lease agreements.

Although perimeter security patrols are conducted, a stronger Sheriff officer presence in this area was an identified need. Perimeter security procedures include all areas within a facility, including the immediate exterior and parking areas.

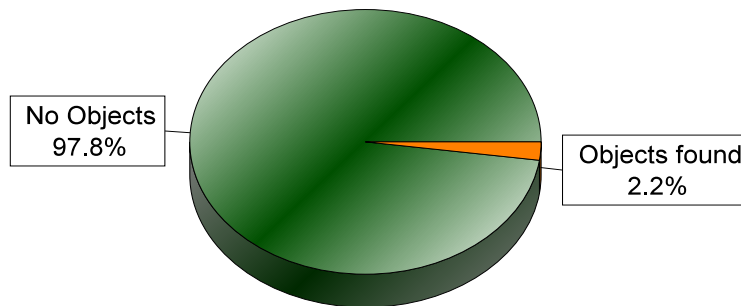
## 6. Focused Risk Study: Metal Detection

The focused risk study set out to accomplish two goals: to provide a baseline count of traffic through the main full-service Justice Centre facilities over a given period, and to learn what metal objects or possible contraband were being brought into the court facilities.

Over a five-month period, metal detection equipment was set up at the entrance of each full-service Justice Centre facility. 13,429 persons passed through the metal detectors. The majority of people accessing the Justice Centre facilities were members of the public, followed by members of staff.

*Table 15*

### Ratio of Objects found vs. No Object



During the metal detection screening across the province, most of the objects found were items which people would have with them in the normal course of their daily activities. There was nothing to indicate that the individuals carrying these items intended to use them as weapons. Where follow-up searches identified the presence of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, police were called if appropriate.

*Table 16*

Items Identified in Focused Risk Study	
Item Identified	Rate
Pocket knife	1.4% (192)
Nail clippers, fingernail files or letter openers	0.4% (56)
Box cutter	0.13% (18)
Scissors	0.11% (8)
Multi tool	0.05% (8)
Drugs and/or paraphernalia	0.08% (12)

## Summary and Recommendations

The Court Facility Security Review has confirmed that Nova Scotia's Sheriff Services is meeting security requirements. The comprehensive scope of the review returned this consistent finding from all study elements. The study has identified strengths and areas for improvement, and has provided a baseline which will form the foundation for any future court facility security reviews. These findings, coupled with the Review Committee's recommendations, provide the guiding framework for all action planning in response to the review.

The Court Facility Security Review Committee, which oversaw all of the elements of the Court Facility Security Review, has provided the Department with eleven recommendations, which are grouped in four key areas: Security Technology; Security Protocols; Communication; and Training. The eleven Committee recommendations are presented below:

### Security Technology

#### *Recommendation 1:*

- Enhance the use of screening/detection devices in all court facilities.

#### *Recommendation 2:*

- Standardize video monitoring, alarm systems and response procedures for Sheriff officers.

### Security Protocols

#### *Recommendation 3:*

- Streamline and clarify the reporting structure for Sheriff Services.

#### *Recommendation 4:*

- Standardize facility access controls to address security issues.

#### *Recommendation 5:*

- Provide a quick reference contact system for the Judiciary and court facility staff.

#### *Recommendation 6*

- Conduct regular site-focused audits to address unique security issues specific to individual court facilities.

- 

#### *Recommendation 7:*

- Using this review as a baseline, establish a system of regular security reviews in order to maintain a strong security framework over time.

## Communication

### *Recommendation 8:*

- Establish protocols for communication with the Judiciary, facility staff, law enforcement agencies, and emergency responders.

### *Recommendation 9:*

- Standardize court facility signage.

## Training

### *Recommendation 10:*

- Establish a risk assessment training program for all Sheriff Services supervisory staff throughout the Province.

### *Recommendation 11:*

- Develop a security awareness program for the Judiciary, court facility staff and other professionals accessing court facilities.

The Department of Justice accepts all eleven recommendations. The Department has already taken steps to implement aspects of the recommendations noted above and will put in place policies and procedures to respond fully to each recommendation. The chart below provides an update on actions taken to date and next steps to ensure full implementation of all recommendations.

Table 17

Court Facility Security Review: Sheriff Services Response Plan		
Recommendation Area: Security Technology		
Recommendation	Response	Comments
<p><i>Recommendation 1</i> Enhance the use of the screening/detection devices in all court facilities</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portable metal detection devices have been placed in all full-service court facilities, and are available for transport to satellite facilities when required.</li> <li>• Protocols will be reviewed and enhanced with respect to the use of the metal detection devices.</li> <li>• These devices will be used in response to daily threat risk assessments and on a rotational basis to build public awareness and provide training and procedure awareness opportunities for Sheriff Services staff.</li> <li>• Data from ongoing use of metal detection devices will be compiled and reviewed on an ongoing basis.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Recommendation 2</i> Standardize video monitoring, alarm systems and response procedures for Sheriff officers</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancements such as video monitoring have assisted in increasing courthouse users' safety.</li> <li>• A review of all video monitoring and alarm systems will be carried out provincially. A schedule of installations/upgrades to industry standards will be developed.</li> <li>• A review of all response procedures will be conducted.</li> </ul>



Recommendation Area: Security Protocols		
Recommendation	Response	Comments
<i>Recommendation 3</i> Streamline and clarify the reporting structure for Sheriff Services	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocol has been developed for "Chain of Command" reporting structure.</li> <li>• Protocol will be reviewed with all Sheriff officers.</li> <li>• Protocol will be included in new employee orientation manual.</li> </ul>
<i>Recommendation 4</i> Standardize facility access controls to address security issues	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheriff officers have access to all areas in the court facilities.</li> <li>• Key control systems are being reviewed in all facilities.</li> </ul>
<i>Recommendation 5</i> Provide a quick reference contact system for the Judiciary and court facility staff	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick reference guide has been developed and is awaiting approval for implementation.</li> </ul>
<i>Recommendation 7</i> Conduct regular site-focused audits to address unique security issues specific to individual court facilities	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A schedule will be developed to conduct regular site specific visits.</li> </ul>
<i>Recommendation 6</i> Using the Court Facility Security Review as a baseline, establish a system of regular security reviews in order to maintain a strong security framework over time	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A program will be developed to conduct regular facility inspections to ensure that the recommendations from this review are being met.</li> </ul>

Recommendation Area: Communication		
Recommendation	Response	Comments
<i>Recommendation 8</i> Establish protocols for communication with the Judiciary, facility staff, law enforcement agencies, and emergency responders	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheriff Supervisors will maintain security by continuing to conduct daily threat risk assessments and through consultations with stakeholders.</li> <li>• All on duty Sheriff officers are equipped with a secure communication device to ensure quick response.</li> <li>• A formal communication protocol will be developed.</li> </ul>
<i>Recommendation 9</i> Standardize court facility signage	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visible Sheriff officer presence has been increased, and assists and supports signage. Sheriff officers are expected to respond to enquiries and provide directions.</li> <li>• The current signage policy will be reviewed and updated, and a review of facilities will be conducted to determine and address deviations from the policy.</li> </ul>
Recommendation Area: Training		
Recommendation	Response	Comments
<i>Recommendation 10</i> Establish a risk assessment training program for all Sheriff Services supervisory staff throughout the Province	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through qualified Sheriff Services instructor/trainers, all Sheriff officers will receive additional training to ensure risk assessments continue to be performed effectively and efficiently.</li> <li>• On-going security awareness training will be provided to supervisory staff.</li> </ul>
<i>Recommendation 11</i> Develop a security awareness program for staff, Judges and persons accessing court facilities	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judges, staff and lawyers will continue to be advised of security issues as they arise.</li> <li>• An enhanced education and communication plan for justice stakeholders will be developed as part of a security awareness program.</li> </ul>

## Appendix

### Definitions

The following definitions have been provided to assist in reading the report:

CFSR - Court Facility Security Review

Court Administrator - responsible for all daily operations of a full-service Justice Centre facility or Satellite Court facility in an assigned district.

Courtroom Security - security provided in a courtroom within any court facility.

District - the geographic area of responsibility of the Sheriff Supervisor and the Court Administrator. A district can include one county or as many as four. There is at least one full-service Justice Centre facility and one or more Satellite Court facilities in each district.

Facility - the physical building, whether a full-service Justice Centre or a Satellite Courthouse.

Facility User(s) - any person or group of people that would attend at any court facility, including Judges, staff, lawyers, law enforcement personnel and members of the general public.

Justice Centre - a full-service court facility containing courtrooms, administrative offices, resident staff, and resident Judiciary.

Perimeter Security - security measures within any Justice Centre and/or Satellite Courthouse, including the immediate exterior of these facilities.

Satellite Courthouse - court facilities in operation only when court is sitting. There are no permanent staff or Judiciary located in these facilities.

Sheriff Supervisors - also known as the "Sheriff". There are eight Sheriff Supervisors, each assigned a specific district within the Province. The Deputy Sheriffs report to the Sheriff Supervisor, who, in turn, reports to the Court Administrator.