Ontario Provincial Police

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH
2007 – 2012

A Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Volume 2 of the Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry recommends that the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) prepare and distribute an annual report on the Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents (recommendation # 41). The Honourable Sidney B. Linden found the Framework approach to be …. "a best practice" (Vol 2, Policy Analysis p 202). In keeping with this recommendation, the OPP is pleased to provide an annual report for the Framework approach for the years 2007 – 2012.

A Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents (the Framework) is contained within an OPP system called Police Orders. Police Orders are policy, procedures, directions and guidelines issued by the Commissioner. Police Orders are structured to reflect OPP corporate direction, ensuring that core policing areas are effectively and efficiently addressed and that public safety and crime prevention are adequate and effective. Within Police Orders are 15 Critical Policies covering areas of greatest concern, impact and repercussion. The Framework is a Critical Policy. Police Orders and Critical Policy may involve operational matters, and are generally not publicly available.

This report, therefore, provides an overview of the principles contained in the Framework and outlines performance indicators for the application of the Framework approach over the six-year period from 2007 – 2012. It should be noted that the statistical information reflects available data and therefore does not include statistics for a full six-year period.

The Annual Report on the Framework Approach 2007 – 2012 is organized in the following manner:

Section II provides an overview of the Framework approach and its application through the conflict cycle, and distinguishes the kinds of incidents and events where the approach may have relevance. The Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) program is outlined.

Section III presents a timeline outlining the development and implementation stages of the Framework.

Section IV outlines four performance indicators and key activities undertaken in relation to each, for the period covered by this Annual Report. The performance indicators are sustainability, transparency, effectiveness and capacity building.

Section V provides an overview of considerations for each stage of the conflict cycle: pre, during and post incident.

Section VI provides examples of the use of the Framework approach.

SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

The Framework approach is a prominent and important policing strategy applicable to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, issue-related conflict that relies heavily on dialogue, communication and relationships for effectiveness.

A Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents (the Framework) is an Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) policy directive that guides police response to conflict. It is applicable to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, issue-related conflict. The Framework provides flexibility in how to manage individual conflict situations, within an overall approach that establishes consistency and meets policing core duties and statutory and common law responsibilities.

The Framework policy:

- provides an operationally sound, informed and flexible approach to resolving conflict and managing crises in a consistent manner;
- demonstrates accommodation and mutual respect for differences, positions and interests of involved Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and the police; and
- supports the development of strategies that minimize the use of force to the fullest extent possible.

The Framework recognizes three stages of conflict – pre-incident, incident and post-incident. It outlines requirements, resources and considerations for an informed, measured and flexible police response to each stage of the conflict cycle, with an emphasis on negotiation and mediation of police-related matters. The Framework policy specifies that its benefits are maximized if put to use before an issue becomes a critical incident. Therefore, relationship building and open lines of communication with involved parties are key components of the Framework approach.

Policing Objective

The Framework establishes a clear policing objective for conflict situations: to preserve the peace, prevent offences and enforce the law in a neutral manner that respects and protects the rights of all involved parties. To meet this objective, the Framework specifies that every effort should be made prior to a potential conflict situation to understand the issues and, throughout the cycle of conflict, to protect the rights of all involved parties.

The role of the OPP is set out in terms of its statutory and common law duty and its commitment to safeguarding the rights of individuals and Aboriginal persons of Canada as defined in federal and provincial laws, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and*

Freedoms. Fundamental rights extended by the Charter (section 2) include freedom of opinion, expression and peaceful assembly. A safe and secure environment for all participants and communities exercising these rights is a significant consideration of the Framework approach. Additionally the Framework specifies the role of the OPP in terms of the *Police Services Act* (PSA) section 4(2) – adequate and effective police services; and 42(1)(a) – peacekeeping.

The Framework approach emphasizes peacekeeping as a means to minimize violence, keep and restore public order, maintain neutrality, facilitate rights and work toward trusting relationships. Equally important, the Framework establishes that the OPP will investigate and take appropriate action in response to civil disobedience and unlawful acts, using discretion, a carefully measured approach and only the level of force necessary to ensure the safety of all citizens and to maintain/restore peace, order and security. The use of force is always a last resort. In keeping with the objectives of peacekeeping, police may exercise considerable discretion with respect to how and when enforcement initiatives are undertaken.

Police Discretion

Police discretion is a recognized legal term which describes an officer's obligation to use reason in the course of performing his/her duties. The officer is expected to use good judgement while keeping the peace and protecting the public. Police may use discretion to avoid inflaming an unstable situation, waiting for less dangerous circumstances to make arrests or enforce court injunctions, for example. Police discretion must be used in the best interests of all; it cannot be used to favour or discriminate against an individual or a group.

Applying the Framework

The Framework approach has relevance in a variety of operational incidents and events, primarily major and critical incidents and Aboriginal critical incidents. The Framework defines each.

A *major incident* is an occurrence that, by circumstance, requires employees, equipment and resources beyond those required for normal police service delivery; for example civil disturbances or disasters such as an airplane crash.

A *critical incident* is a high-risk incident requiring mobilization of the OPP Integrated Response, for example a hostage taking or a barricaded person. OPP Integrated Response may include police resources such as a tactics and rescue unit; an emergency response team; and/or crisis negotiator(s).

While some major and high-risk incidents occur very quickly and do not permit the Framework's pre-incident approach, the Framework remains relevant during, and post incident.

An *Aboriginal critical incident* is any critical or major incident where the source of conflict may stem from assertions of inherent, Aboriginal or treaty rights; or that is occurring on a First Nation territory; or involving an Aboriginal person(s), where the potential for significant impact or violence may require activation of an OPP Integrated Response.

The Framework further identifies the uniqueness of Aboriginal occupations and protests, which are often complex in nature and qualitatively different from single issue labour or political disputes. It provides guidance for OPP engagement: every effort is to be made to foster awareness of related historical and cultural factors so these may be considered in determining what police resources may be required to peacefully resolve such incidents. The Framework approach underscores the importance of understanding what is at issue and the complexities; the various positions being taken; the range of interested and influential parties – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, with potential to impact achievement of a peaceful resolution of Aboriginal critical incidents.

Stages of Conflict Cycle

Conflict cycles through recognized stages: pre-incident, incident and post-incident, each with its own cues and behaviours. The Framework provides police personnel with an overview of what to look for and outlines what may be done, at each stage, to avoid, de-escalate or appropriately manage a situation. Section V of this Report provides more detail on the observable factors and resolution opportunities to be considered.

Given the potential conflict cycle, the Framework acknowledges the benefit of applying the approach as early as possible and maintaining it through to the post-incident stage. In addition to governing operational considerations, the Framework identifies OPP resources that may be accessed or engaged.

Communication and Liaison

The OPP recognizes that informed dialogue, appropriate mediation and consistent liaison with different, involved communities, groups and individuals is necessary, beneficial and common to a range of events and circumstances involving the police.

The Framework outlines a flexible approach to engaging interested parties and stakeholders to: i) identify and resolve conflict situations; ii) facilitate legal and constitutionally protected rights and freedoms; and iii) restore relationships. Effective communication and consistent, informed liaison between police and stakeholders in a

range of events and circumstances, including active major events and critical incidents, can help to successfully mitigate issues, diffuse tensions and avoid conflict escalation.

The *Provincial Liaison Team (PLT)* program, and before it, the Aboriginal Relations Team (ART) and Major Event Liaison Team (MELT) initiatives represent key Framework application resources, focusing on relationship building and opening lines of communication with involved parties, as a component of police response. Active efforts to maintain open communication and deliver accurate policing messages are an important means to facilitate safe and lawful environments for free speech and peaceful assembly, and ultimately to avoid conflict situations.

The ART program, first established in 2004 in OPP West Region, became a province-wide asset shortly thereafter supporting the Framework approach. It operated within a mandate to provide specialized support and assistance in the spirit of partnership to build mutually respectful relations between police services and Aboriginal peoples and communities. The MELT program was initially established in 2004 to liaise with various stakeholders at major events, such as international summits or dignitary visits. The MELT role evolved to include liaison and communication with all stakeholders who may be affected, directly or indirectly, by major events. This included liaison between police and non-Aboriginal communities during Aboriginal critical incidents. The PLT program was established in 2009, amalgamating ART and MELT initiatives under a revised mandate.

Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) Program

The PLT mandate is to establish and maintain open and transparent lines of communication with all stakeholders who may be affected, directly or indirectly, by major events. PLT members are specially trained, experienced officers who operate openly as part of a police response to major events. They receive intensive, two-week training on building trusting relationships, effective communication, mediation and negotiation, as well as relevant, regular ongoing training in specialized areas. PLT team leaders and experienced officers mentor new members of the Team.

PLT members work toward establishing relationships of trust, mutual understanding and respect between police and constituents. They use proactive relationship-building to assist with identifying and resolving issues. They may attend meetings to build these relationships, to ascertain the intentions of groups and individuals planning protests or other actions likely to affect the public and to work with them so they may exercise their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression without violating the law or endangering themselves or the public. Prior, in-person contact is one way to help facilitate events that are lawful, peaceful and respectful of everyone's rights.

These activities are not an indication that the officers or the OPP support or endorse the action. The OPP role is to ensure public safety, enforce the law and keep the peace.

SECTION III – TIMELINE:

- **Development of A Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents**
- **Resources in Support of Framework Approach**

1999 – 2000	Drafted as: A Framework for Police Preparedness to First Nations Related Issues
2004	Aboriginal Relations Team (ART) initiative established in OPP West Region; followed by province-wide rollout of ART resources
	Major Event Liaison Team (MELT) initiative established within OPP
2005	Framework revised and entrenched as an OPP Critical Policy; re-titled A Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents
2006	Framework approach introduced and discussed as part of OPP presentation to Ipperwash Inquiry Part 2 hearings.
2007	Framework approach described as a best practice in *Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry*
2008	Aboriginal Critical Incident command and coordination positions established
2009	Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) program established through amalgamation of ART and MELT initiatives under revised mandate
2012	Update to Framework Critical Policy reflecting organizational changes

SECTION IV – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS / IMPLEMENTATION

I. Objective: Sustainability

- Embedding organizational commitment to a flexible, consistent and professional approach to policing Aboriginal and major critical incidents.

> *"Policies contained in Police Orders … reflect the OPP's corporate direction … to effectively and efficiently address … core policing functions, mandates and standards… All employees are expected to understand that Police Orders must be interpreted thoughtfully, responsibly, and with due regard for emerging legal changes and public safety."*
>
> Commissioner – from POLICE ORDERS

Key Activities:

- Established in Ontario Provincial Police Orders as Critical Policy in 2005. Police Orders provide organization-wide policy direction, structured to effectively and efficiently address core policing functions, mandates and standards. Critical Policy addresses areas of greatest concern, impact and repercussion. The Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents is one of 15 critical policies.

- Mandated element of training for all uniform personnel. OPP recruit training includes presentation/discussion of the Framework approach. Framework training is required for Major Critical Incident Command management, specialty teams, including tactics and rescue units, emergency response teams, provincial liaison teams, and other specialty support services, including public order units and crisis negotiators.

- In 2009 Framework training was mandated for all uniform personnel through annual block training.

- Articulated in operational planning for major events, establishing that plans are developed, read and used in conjunction with the Framework and other pre-existing standard operating procedures.

- Included in OPP Native Awareness education programming available to all OPP employees and open to justice sector and law enforcement partners.

- Reinforced through the mandate of the Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) program to act proactively to establish relationships; to communicate, mediate and negotiate police-related interests; and to work to maintain/restore relationships following an event / incident.

	2007 *	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Framework Presentations delivered		102	46 +	41	55	40
Internal OPP Audiences						
Recruits / Employees *(combined total)*		1878	5700 +	618	805	1962
External Audiences						
Police (First Nation / Other), Community Members / Gov't / Other (*combined total)*		428	--	86	245	--

** Not available*

+ Presentations delivered during all annual block training sessions.

II. Objective: Transparency

- Broadened awareness of the Framework approach and use in relation to incidents and events that may require police intervention, through awareness building, dialogue and communication with interested, involved and affected people and communities.

> *"Critical incidents are often avoidable. The benefits of the Framework are maximized if put to use before an issue becomes a critical incident. Identifying, establishing and maintaining open and transparent relationships with all stakeholders are vital to maximized public safety."*
>
> Preamble – Framework Critical

Key Activities:

- Community outreach initiatives, undertaken proactively and in response to requests, providing information about and explaining the Framework approach. Recipients may include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members and leaders, groups, government, business and industry representatives, and activists.

- Efforts to build and/or restore relationships among communities and stakeholders with potential interest / involvement in contentious situations, including protests, demonstrations and high-risk events.

- Focused efforts to ensure informed liaison and effective communication with involved and affected parties as a component of police response to major events and critical incidents. This is the principal focus of Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) program.

- Through open dialogue and mediation, cooperation of all parties is sought by police as a means to avoid unlawful or violent activities, prevent injury or harm and avoid potential conflict.

	2007*	2008*	2009	2010	2011	2012
Framework Approach Applied to Incidents / Events						
PLT Event Outreach / Liaison			80	128	104	153

** Not available*

III. Objective: Effectiveness

- Demonstrated benefits of an informed and flexible response to the conflict cycle and effective management of critical incidents and high risk events.

> *"… the role of the OPP and its employees (is) to make every effort prior to a critical incident to understand the issues and to protect the rights of all involved parties throughout the cycle of conflict. The policing objective is to preserve the peace, prevent offences and enforce the law in a manner that respects the rights of all involved parties."*
>
> Preamble – Framework Critical Policy

Key Activities:

- Application of the Framework approach is mandatory for Aboriginal critical incidents.

- Use of the Framework maximizes the potential to manage and resolve incidents, and avoid escalation necessitating heightened police response.

- Provides best practice options to communicate the policing position and interest in terms of priorities, e.g. public safety, and to achieve effective resolution through negotiation and/or mediation.

- Supports the use of police discretion as an effective means of managing conflict situations and serving the best interests of all involved.

- Ensures compatibility with current best practices for managing incidents generally.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Framework Approach Applied to Aboriginal Incidents						
Critical Incidents / High Risk Incidents	103	68	40	10	22	76

IV. Objective: Capacity Building

- Promoting a best practice approach to resolving crises and managing conflict in a consistent manner within law enforcement and justice sector.

> *"… the Framework provides a guideline for police response to conflict and has applicability to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal issue-related conflict. … Its focus on negotiation and mediation applies to police-related matters during a conflict. The Framework is recognized as a best practice for police response to an Aboriginal critical incident."*
>
> Preamble – Framework Critical Policy

Key Activities:

- Acted on recommendation from Chiefs of Ontario, as part of Ipperwash Inquiry Part 2 process (2006), to disseminate the Framework to First Nations self-directed and OPP-administered police services, and First Nations communities policed directly by the OPP.

- Wide sharing of the Framework with law enforcement community in advance of major events, including National Day of Action (2007).

- Foundational piece for OPP-sponsored Aboriginal Policing Forum (2008) bringing together First Nations community members and leadership, representatives of Chiefs of Ontario, First Nations police and OPP.

- Integral part of operational security planning for G8 Summit in Huntsville (2010).

- Continued OPP commitment to inform, build awareness of and encourage consistency in addressing Aboriginal critical incidents and managing incidents generally, through articles, discussion, presentations and workshops for policing organizations provincially, nationally and internationally, police services boards and Ontario government ministries with enforcement responsibilities.

- Provided a basis for development of Ontario government *Policing Aboriginal Occupations and Protests Guideline* PO-003 (2012).

- Two-week Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) training, required for all OPP PLT personnel, is made available to other municipal, provincial and federal law enforcement agencies interested in applying the Framework approach as part of conflict situation response.

SECTION V – FRAMEWORK APPLICATION: THROUGH THE CONFLICT CYCLE

The Framework provides an overview of signs, behaviours and cues that may be present at each stage of the conflict cycle and suggests resolution techniques to avoid, de-escalate or appropriately manage a situation. The following outlines some of the resolution opportunities that may be available through the cycle.

I. Pre-Incident Stage:

What to look for:

- real or perceived inequities in privilege or power within the community or between the community and society;
- an initiative or event being planned that could lead to conflict;
- high probability that an ongoing initiative or event could lead to conflict or crisis;
- words and images used to describe an initiative or event that could generate negative emotions, dissension, disagreement, or conflict; and/or
- involved persons stating that if an initiative or event is not dealt with sensitively, a conflict or crisis will ensue.

What may be done:

- be informed about issues of concern by participating in discussions with First Nation Councils (as defined by the *Indian Act*), First Nations police, community members and groups, other levels of Aboriginal leadership, etc.;
- remain informed of positions and impact of non-Aboriginal stakeholders;
- consider the policing implications of the local issues identified;
- develop and display respect for all concerned by listening;
- always be honest: overt and consistent honesty is the best way to earn trust;
- build positive trusting relationships with members of all communities, First Nations police officers and other agencies;
- be open, talk to all parties;
- contact elected and traditional leaders of the community if an issue arises that may precipitate a dispute or conflict;
- consult with community leaders on potentially conflicting issues using existing opportunities for dialogue;
- encourage people to come together around issues and activities where agreement exists;
- engage Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) for guidance and support;
- make appropriate notifications through established chain of command;
- consult with the Aboriginal Critical Incident (ACI) Co-ordinator for advice and assistance in evaluating/developing operational plans;
- notify the ACI Commander of circumstances that could indicate a pre-critical incident through the established chain of command;

- pre-identify community and agency representatives who can serve as resource persons or mediators;
- review local emergency plan to ensure it adequately addresses potential conflict situations, e.g. diversion routes, likely blockade locations.

II. Incident Stage:

Increasing frustration that involved persons' issues have not been appropriately addressed. A range of possibilities exist as to how an incident may evolve, from a passive demonstration to one that significantly affects all stakeholders, e.g. blockade of transportation route.

What to look for:

- involved persons expressing a perception that their concern are not being satisfactorily addressed;
- comments about the incident increasing in frequency or intensity, indicating greater likelihood of crisis;
- communicated positions becoming entrenched and polarized;
- involved persons becoming increasingly vocal, forceful and threatening;
- demands being made known directly to police or through the media;
- conciliatory efforts not effective;
- increasing media coverage with potential to further divide positions;
- persons or agencies not directly involved taking public positions concerning the dispute; and/or
- persons from the Aboriginal community, including leaders, looking for police personnel of Aboriginal ancestry to assist as a point of contact.

What to do:

- consider assigning an ACI or critical incident commander for the duration of the incident, to be responsible for overall command and control of an Integrated Response;
- ensure all parties to the incident have the opportunity to contribute to resolution strategies. OPP employees to use established relationships for effective communication with involved persons as well as other members of the community;
- provide options that are transparent to the parties in conflict to promote a safe resolution. OPP employees shall state their position and interests clearly so as to be understood by all. This may defuse an incident and lead to a safe resolution; and
- key messages may be developed at any stage of an incident to support consistent, clear messaging.

What may be done:

- establish the policing interest as it relates to the dispute at hand, e.g. explain that the police intend to maintain an orderly flow of traffic while allowing participants to

lawfully demonstrate; and where possible attempt to re-route traffic in order to avoid confrontation and minimize impact;
- emphasize that negotiations will be used at every opportunity;
- acknowledge the existence of underlying factors within the incident;
- communicate to disputants that all demonstrators and other members of the public will be treated with dignity and respect – consider the values, traditions and interests of the affected communities;
- seek out common ground between all stakeholders and aspects of the dispute where agreement exits – take every opportunity to facilitate productive communication;
- establish with disputants a means by which information and progress will be communicated to media;
- consider the impact of decisions on the safety of police officers, demonstrators and other members of the public;
- respond to conflict with minimal use of force;
- explain that a cooling off period and its length, if needed and possible, will be jointly agreed to; and/or
- ensure OPP personnel are kept informed.

III. Post-Incident Stage

What to look for:
- emotional and physical exhaustion of participants;
- differing perceptions of the incident by those involved; and
- stakeholders wanting to reflect on what has occurred, discuss lessons learned and identify peace-building actions.

What may be done:
- operational debriefings to review and assess operations and seek lessons learned;
- develop and implement a strategy to restore relationships with all involved communities. The strategy should consider general objectives, responsibilities and potential activities to restore relationships and be adapted in practice to specific circumstances as necessary. Resources, such as PLT, may provide support to develop, implement and assess the strategy.

SECTION VI – APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH: EXAMPLES

I. First Nation Opposition to Harmonized Sales Tax – 2009 / 2010

In late 2009, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed a Memorandum of Agreement to create the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

First Nations people and political leaders across Ontario immediately opposed this new tax as there was no consultation with First Nations as to how harmonization would impact them and there were no provisions in place to ensure the existing Point of Sale tax exemption would continue. Frustration boiled over in the form of protests and other organized events across the province for many months.

Following the Framework, the OPP began outreach to First Nations leaders and research into the new legislation (pre- incident stage). Proactive efforts during this pre- incident stage positioned the OPP well and ensured a consistent and coordinated response to planned events as they happened (incident stage). Each detachment was provided an Operational Plan template to be completed, followed and filed with the Emergency Management Unit. Using one template ensured that the Framework was embedded in each operational plan, making it necessary for all OPP members associated to an event to understand it.

Weekly conference calls were implemented with representation from OPP Regions, Intelligence Unit, Provincial Liaison Team, Emergency Management Unit, Aboriginal Critical Incident Command and Corporate Communications to maintain a consistent and knowledgeable approach to events associated to the HST implementation.

On July 1, 2010, the HST was implemented, while at the same time the provincial and federal governments announced that an agreement was in place to continue the existing Point of Sale tax exemption for First Nations.

Across Ontario, there were 25 protests involving more than 30 communities over a six month period. Local detachment commanders and Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) members continued to work with individuals and First Nation communities, after the fact, in efforts to maintain relationships that had been established (post incident stage).

II. Post-Incident Follow-up – OPP Integrated Response on First Nation Territory – 2010

In 2010, OPP members were deployed as part of an Integrated Response to assist Treaty Three Police Service with a barricaded person situation on a First Nation Territory. The suspect eventually surrendered to police and was arrested without incident. The OPP Provincial Liaison Team (PLT) followed up, after the successful resolution of the call, to

explain and answer concerns from community members about the OPP presence, the different resources used and the number of officers deployed to the incident. Members of the Band Council had concerns and questions about the number of officers responding to the incident and the different (green) uniforms worn by some of the officers at the scene. The explanations and information provided served to assure the leadership and community members that the incident was managed with the overall safety of the officers involved and the community and its members as priorities. Further follow-up was provided in response to a community request for a presentation about the OPP Emergency Response Team (ERT).

III. Building Relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Communities: Moving Beyond Allegations of Racism – 2011 / 2012

An historical undercurrent of racism involving members of two northern communities, a remote First Nation and the neighbouring small town, became a public issue in 2011. The town's policing was provided by the OPP.

Elders from the First Nation community were told they could not sit at the front of a bingo hall in the town: they "had to sit at the back of the hall with all the other Indians." This immediately raised tensions between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. In a proactive effort (*pre-incident stage*), the OPP, through the Provincial Liaison Team (PLT), outreached to the operators of the bingo hall and the town's mayor, and facilitated an official apology to the elders and their families, and to the First Nation's Chief and Council. This took several meetings and a communication approach based on understanding and respect.

Shortly afterwards, the OPP was again called to assist when several businesses in the town were involved in allegations of racism. As a result, the First Nation's Chief called for a moratorium on any spending by band members in the town. Buses were hired to take band members to the next town to shop, and protests were initiated outside the involved businesses. The OPP again did outreach (*pre-incident stage*) with the Chief and Council, the town's Mayor and Council and the Mayor and Council of the second community, as well as other area stakeholders with an interest in improving the relationship between the First Nation and neighbouring towns. The OPP PLT worked closely with businesses in both communities to facilitate safe, peaceful protest events, and provided insight to Chamber of Commerce members prior to the bussed shopping event (*pre-incident and incident stages*).

The OPP worked with all stakeholders from both communities to facilitate and take part in a two-day awareness workshop, which attracted more than 100 people including municipal and community leaders, forestry industry leaders, business leaders and band members (*post-incident stage*). Since the workshop, there have been no allegations of racism, and several new business, sport, cultural and social activities have taken place

between the two communities. Relationship building and open and honest dialogue with all stakeholders played a vital role in improving local conditions, and providing valuable insight into First Nations issues locally, and in a broader context.

In 2012, a longstanding and unresolved contractual conflict between the First Nation and a mill located on its territory reached a head when the band and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) issued a notice to vacate. The operation was situated on land leased from the First Nation, and employed approximately 200 workers, mostly from the neighbouring community. Mill workers, many of whom had attended the Native awareness workshop, the mill owners and management, and band leadership all independently reached out to the OPP PLT to request assistance in the matter (*pre-incident stage*).

Mill workers planned a demonstration on the main highway and worked with the OPP to plan and coordinate a safe, peaceful event. Mill workers and band members – formerly not the best of friends and far from likely to coalesce on any matter – stood side-by-side at the protest, aimed at getting the provincial and federal governments to assign mediators to end this dispute. Throughout, the OPP PLT maintained dialogue with all stakeholders, working out and facilitating all safety measures with event organizers, and calling upon a number of stakeholders to assist (*incident stage*). Eventually a new contract was successfully reached.

The OPP PLT was cited by the leaders of both communities as being instrumental in the steady progress on many of matters, and the peaceful resolution of a number of very contentious situations.

While this series of incidents did not escalate into an Aboriginal critical incident requiring OPP Integrated Response, they clearly show how the Framework, if followed properly, can 'minimize the use of force to the fullest extent possible'. Several key components of the Framework and the PLT approach were used effectively throughout, including relationship building, open and honest dialogue, proactive engagement of stakeholders, facilitating partnerships, and key messaging, among others.