



**IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF A WOMAN
IN AN INCIDENT INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE
SURREY POLICE SERVICE
IN SURREY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ON DECEMBER 14, 2025**

**DECISION OF THE CHIEF CIVILIAN DIRECTOR
OF THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE**

Chief Civilian Director:

Jessica Berglund

IIO File Number:

2025-286

Date of Release:

July 24, 2026

INTRODUCTION

In the early evening of December 14, 2025, the Subject Officer (“SO”) was driving an unmarked police vehicle southbound on 152 Street in Surrey. He was responding to a report of a domestic violence incident and had activated the vehicle’s emergency lights and siren. The night was dark and rainy. As the police vehicle was passing a small cluster of civilian vehicles, it collided with the Affected Person (“AP”), who was crossing the street from west to east. Despite immediate life-saving attempts by police and paramedics, the AP was declared deceased.

The Independent Investigations Office (“IIO”) was notified and commenced an investigation. The narrative that follows is based on evidence collected and analyzed during the investigation, including the following:

- statements of four civilian witnesses and two witness police officers;
- police Computer-Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) and Police Records Information Management Environment (“PRIME”) records;
- mechanical inspection of the involved police vehicle and download of its on-board data, including GPS;
- scene examination;
- records from BC Emergency Health Services and Surrey Fire; and
- autopsy report.

NARRATIVE

At about 7:06 p.m. on December 14, 2025, Surrey police received a call reporting apparent domestic violence at an address near 152 Street and 64 Avenue in Surrey. A man was said to have dragged a struggling woman from a car into the residence, with crying children present. At 7:14 p.m., as officers were being dispatched, the caller stated that the man could be heard screaming in the home. A second caller also reported that the man had been yelling for over five minutes.

The Subject Officer (“SO”), driving an unmarked police vehicle with Witness Officer 1 (“WO1”) as passenger, was noted on CAD as the first unit responding. At 7:16 p.m., the dispatch was updated with the information that the woman was believed to have left the

residence with two children. WO1 later told IIO investigators that despite the likelihood that the apparent victim of the assault was now safe, police could not be sure that no one else was still in danger, as the man was still shouting inside the home. As a result, officers continued responding Code 3 (high priority) with emergency lights and sirens activated

Data obtained by investigators from the SO's police vehicle show it turning south on 152 Street from 72 Avenue and accelerating to a maximum speed of 120.9 km/h (the speed limit on 152 Street is 60 km/h).

Civilian Witness 1 ("CW1") and Civilian Witness 2 ("CW2") were also driving southbound on 152 Street, in the left (passing) lane, ahead of the police car. In his IIO interview, CW1 recalled that the evening was dark and the roads were wet. He said he was driving at about 60 to 65 km/h and was using his windshield wipers. CW1 said that as he approached 66A Avenue, he noticed the flashing lights of a police car in his side mirror. He said he switched on his right turn indicator and pulled to the right as quickly as he could, taking care not to brake too rapidly as there was another (civilian) vehicle behind him.

CW1 said he saw a "dark figure" leave the west sidewalk and start to cross 152 Street. The police vehicle was now passing on his left, and he saw it collide with the pedestrian:

I noticed the, the person start jogging from the sidewalk into the road and um then, I am not sure if they [the police vehicle] were in the process of moving over into the passing lane or if they were still in the centre lane um but ... I don't remember seeing them hit the brakes until after the impact.

CW1 said that the pedestrian (the AP) was dressed in dark clothing and had her hood up. He said he did not recall seeing her look in the direction of the approaching traffic, and said she was moving quickly, straight across the street. He estimated that the police vehicle's driver would have had less than a second to react.

After the collision, CW1 said, the police vehicle stopped and two officers came back to the AP and started providing CPR.

CW2, who had been riding as the front seat passenger with CW1, later told investigators that a podcast was playing in the car. She said she was looking down at her phone when she heard a police siren: "I just heard 'wee woo' and then they were already kind of passing us." CW2 described seeing the AP as a "dark silhouette" running into the road and being struck by the police vehicle. "That could have been us," CW2 added, explaining that if CW1 had been driving in the left lane at normal speed instead of pulling over and slowing, it might have been their car that struck the AP, rather than the police vehicle.

Also interviewed by the IIO after the incident, Civilian Witness 3 (“CW3”) described driving southbound on 152 Street at the time of the collision. He said he noticed the police vehicle coming from behind and said both the emergency lights and the siren were activated. In this section of 152 Street, there are two through lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions, and an additional centre lane marked for vehicles turning either left or right. CW3 said he saw the police vehicle pass and begin to move back from the centre turning lane into the southbound passing lane before striking the AP, who he first saw as she was thrown backwards by the force of the collision. CW3 said it would have been difficult for the police driver to see the AP leaving the sidewalk because of the civilian vehicles pulling into the curb lane.

CW3’s passenger, Civilian Witness 4 (“CW4”) also stated that the police vehicle was using both lights and siren as it drove southbound. She said she saw it pass “quickly” on the left, and she then heard a loud “thud.”

In his IIO interview, WO1 said that the call to which they were dispatched that night was rated as “Priority One,” meaning one of the most serious, high priority calls that police are called to. He and the SO, he said, were the “primary unit” dispatched. He said they responded using lights and siren and described the SO’s driving as a “normal Code (3) run that we’ve gone on before.” He said that around 66A Avenue, he saw that there were vehicles ahead in both the southbound lanes on 152 Street, and the SO steered into the centre turning lane to pass them.

As they were passing the leading civilian vehicle (subsequently determined to be CW1’s), the SO started to move back into the southbound passing lane. At that moment, WO1 said, he saw the AP “running” directly across 152 Street from west to east:

I do remember as soon as we passed the vehicle is when we, when I first saw this pedestrian running, ... pedestrian is already on the roadway. I believe they were close to the dotted line that separates the one and the two lanes so the dotted white line, um at that point we had one maybe two seconds before we made contact with this person. I did not see the person stop running, I saw them continuing running until I heard a bang and my partner swerved.

WO1 described the AP as small in stature and dressed entirely in dark clothing.

Subsequent examination of the involved police vehicle showed that the impact with the AP had occurred near the front right corner. There was damage to the bumper, the right headlamp, the wheel well and the front passenger door. The passenger side mirror was missing and there was damage to the right side of the windshield.

The AP's autopsy report indicated the cause of death as "multiple blunt force injuries due to or as a consequence of a pedestrian-involved motor vehicle accident."

Interviewed later by IIO investigators, family members of the AP said that she had been deaf in her left ear and partially deaf in the right.

ANALYSIS

The Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia is mandated to investigate any incident that occurs in the province in which an Affected Person has died or suffered serious physical harm and there appears to be a connection to the actions (or sometimes inaction) of police. The goal is to provide assurance to the public that when the investigation is complete, they can trust the IIO's conclusions, because the investigation was conducted by an independent, unbiased, civilian-led agency.

In most cases, those conclusions are presented in a public report such as this one, which completes the IIO's mandate by explaining to the public what happened in the incident and how the Affected Person came to suffer harm. Such reports are generally intended to enhance public confidence in the police and in the justice system as a whole through a transparent and impartial evaluation of the incident and the police role in it.

In a smaller number of cases, the evidence gathered may give the Chief Civilian Director ("CCD") reasonable grounds to believe that an officer has committed an offence in connection with the incident. In such a case, the *Police Act* gives the CCD authority to refer the file to the BC Prosecution Service ("BCPS") for consideration of charges.

In a case such as this one, involving potentially unlawful driving behaviour by an officer, IIO investigators collect evidence about potential justifications for that behaviour. The CCD will then apply legal tests to determine whether there are reasonable grounds to consider that the officer may have committed an offence, under either the *Criminal Code* law or a provincial statute, such as the *Motor Vehicle Act*.

The *Motor Vehicle Act* grants exemptions for compliance with the legislation to operators of emergency vehicles in limited circumstances. Regarding the privileges it provides for a peace officer to violate requirements regarding stop lights and speed limits, section 4 of the *Emergency Vehicle Driving Regulation* states, in part, that the officer must:

have reasonable grounds to believe that the risk of harm to members of the public from the exercise of those privileges is less than the risk of harm to members of the public should those privileges not be exercised; and must operate an emergency light and siren.

In summary, then, the officer is required to judge reasonably the balance between the harm he is trying to avoid (in this case, potential harm to anyone at the scene of the reported domestic disturbance) and the harm risked by exceeding the speed limit (in this case, in dark and rainy conditions).

The officer is also required to use the police vehicle's emergency lights and siren, although there will sometimes be circumstances where that will not be sufficient to avoid a tragic accident. Training materials used in police emergency driving courses at both the Justice Institute of British Columbia and the RCMP's Pacific Region Training Centre highlight this risk:

It cannot be assumed that all drivers [or pedestrians] will see or hear your emergency equipment any time it is activated and so before enjoying the protections afforded to a police officer exercising the privileges granted to them under the Motor Vehicle Act, the police officer must once again consider public safety.

Public safety in this case means that a police officer also has a duty to consider how observable their equipment is to other drivers and must make decisions and drive accordingly. A police officer merely activating their emergency equipment alone is not automatically enough to provide them with the absolute right of way on the road or an exemption from consequence under the law.

In this case, although the SO exceeded the speed limit, he used lights and siren. The evidence does not establish that the officer's actions were so unreasonable as to fall outside the terms of the exemption.

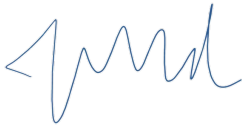
The more serious potential offence in this case would be dangerous operation of a conveyance (a motor vehicle) causing death. The SO would have to be found to have driven in a manner that was objectively dangerous in the conditions that existed at the time and that amounted to a marked departure from the standard of care reasonably expected of him in all the circumstances.

Ultimately, the evidence shows that even if the police vehicle had been travelling at the speed limit, this tragic accident could still have occurred. When the AP, dressed in dark clothing and apparently neither seeing nor hearing approaching traffic, ran out into the

roadway in the middle of the block, she might have been struck by a civilian vehicle as easily as by the SO's police vehicle. Her tragic death was not caused by any criminal breach by the SO of the standard of care expected of an officer responding "Code 3" to a serious call.

While it can be said that it might have been prudent, given the driving conditions at the time, to have reduced speed once it was reported that the apparent victim of the initial assault had left the scene, the decisions made by the SO based on his apparent overall assessment of the situation were not so unreasonable as to amount to criminality.

Accordingly, as Chief Civilian Director of the IIO, I do not consider that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an officer may have committed an offence under any enactment and the matter will not be referred to the BCPS for consideration of charges.



Jessica Berglund
Chief Civilian Director

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