

# Advocating for Community Peace Officers (CPOs): The Call for Presumed PTSD Coverage

## THE NUMBERS

3,000

approximate number of  
Community Peace Officers in  
Alberta.<sup>1</sup>

23%

of first responders or public safety  
officers screened positive for PTSD. A rate  
that is 4-5 times higher than what's  
found in the general population.<sup>2</sup>

50%

of Canadian public safety officers have  
one or more mental health disorders or  
psychological injuries compared to 10%  
of the general population.<sup>2</sup>

## CPOs and Sheriffs

### Similarities:

- Both are Peace Officers and first responders.
- Traumatic work events may be life-threatening, disturbing, or stressful and can result in debilitating symptoms that require treatment.
- Both CPOs and Sheriffs can be exposed to shocking or frightening incidents, disturbing scenes, injury, bodily harm, or death to oneself or others.
- Legislated by the Peace Officer Act.
- Independent from, but work alongside other police services like the RCMP.
- Have important roles in keeping communities safe.
- Enforce provincial legislation.



### Differences:

- **CPOs** work in municipal policing, bylaw enforcement, and provincial enforcement. CPOs are employed by municipalities and provide enforcement services that align with municipal priorities.
- **Sheriffs** work primarily in provincial policing, with roles including inmate transport, traffic enforcement, and investigations.

The **Worker's Compensation Act** considers Sheriffs a first responder who receives presumed PTSD coverage. When first responders are diagnosed with PTSD or a psychological injury, their PTSD is attributed to their work unless proven otherwise. This special protection does not extend to CPOs, despite their involvement in similar work.

## CLAIMS PROCESS

**CPOs:** Psychological injuries require a formal diagnosis where causality is attributed to their work. WCB approved and funded treatment and recovery cannot begin until causality has been determined to be work.

**Other first responders:** Psychological injuries require a formal diagnosis. Determination of causality is presumed to be work. When the claim is approved, the first responder begins receiving WCB approved and funded treatment and recovery.

CPOs' lack of presumed PTSD coverage can prolong the claims process and slow or prevent access to the support immediately available to other first responders. Presumed PTSD coverage for CPOs will help promote a strong and healthy work force with less turnover and help with professional attraction and retention.

**RMA, ABmunis and AACPO are appealing to the Government of Alberta to amend the Workers Compensation Act to ensure all Peace Officers, including CPOs, have presumed PTSD coverage.**

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 14-24F

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation of the Initiatives to Address Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries (PTSI) Evaluation Report

<sup>3</sup> WCB Employer Fact Sheet