



Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service Community Update

Spring Newsletter 2026

A Message from the Chief of Police

Dear Members of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory,

With the arrival of spring, our community enters a season of renewal, movement, and reconnection. As the days grow longer, we see more folks out on the land and water, youth enjoying outdoor activities, and community members gathering for work, travel, and recreation. This seasonal shift brings energy and opportunity — and it also brings shared responsibility for safety and wellbeing. As a police service, our focus remains on keeping our people safe while strengthening the relationships that support a healthy Territory. Our officers are present not only in enforcement roles, but also in schools, at local events, and alongside partner agencies working to prevent harm before it occurs.

You will see crime statistics included in this newsletter, and it is important to acknowledge them. Over the past year, arrests and charges have increased as a result of more proactive policing, enforcement of court-ordered conditions, and focused efforts to address repeat crime and organized criminal activity. These figures provide context for the work being done, but they do not define our community or the full scope of policing in Wiikwemkoong.

Equally important are the positive signs we continue to see. Youth involvement in crime has declined, prevention and engagement initiatives are making a difference, and more community members, including youth, are coming forward to share information and report concerns using new and confidential reporting tools. These actions help us respond earlier, more effectively, and in partnership with the community.

As we move into the spring and summer months,

safety becomes a shared priority. Whether it is boating, ATV use, trail safety, or impaired driving prevention, the choices we make as individuals directly affect the safety of others. I encourage everyone to look out for one another, make responsible decisions, and reach out for help or information when needed.

Community safety is not the responsibility of police alone. It is built through trust, communication, and collaboration between families, Elders, youth, leadership, service providers, and police. WTPS remains committed to transparency, professionalism, and respectful service as we continue this work together.

Thank you for your continued trust, support, and cooperation. On behalf of all WTPS officers and staff, I wish you a safe, healthy, and positive spring season.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.J.", is placed below the word "Sincerely".

Chief Ron Gignac
Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service



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RHT PCD Impact: What the Numbers Show Us

Since the Robinson Huron Treaty (RHT) Per Capita Distribution (PCD) payments began, crime has gone up across the Territory. Our police service is responding to more calls than before, and the cases we handle are becoming more serious and take much longer to resolve.

Key Facts



↑ 56%

Persons charged from 2015-2024



↑ 4%

Total police occurrences from 2024 to 2025



↑ 40.1%

Total charged persons from 2024 to 2025



↑ 59%

From 2021 to 2025, total charges laid



↓ 34%

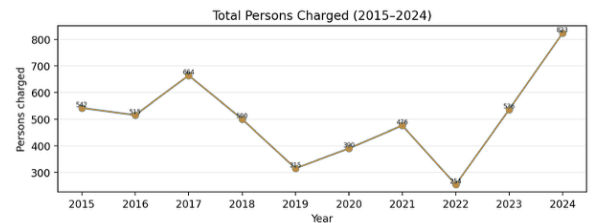
Youth charged males from 2024 to 2025



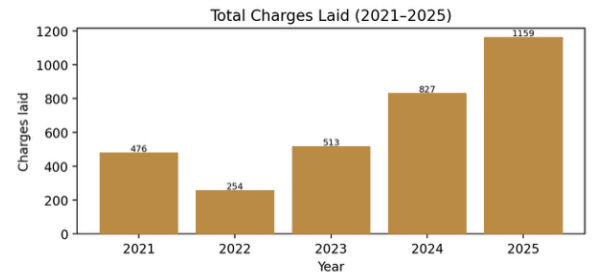
↓ 15%

Youth charged females from 2024 to 2025

Trend since 2015 (Persons Charged)



Total Charges Laid (2021-2025)



What does this mean?

Calls for service across the Territory have remained relatively stable. What has changed is how WTPS is responding. Officers are proactively identifying repeat and high-risk offenders, enforcing court-ordered release conditions, and laying charges where appropriate. This approach focuses on accountability and prevention, with the goal of reducing further victimization and improving community safety.

Why have arrests and charges increased?

Focused Enforcement of Court-Ordered Conditions

WTPS created and implemented the **Offender Management Apprehension Program (OMAP)** to identify and arrest individuals who are breaching judicial release conditions such as curfews, no-contact orders, or electronic monitoring. Prior to this program, there was no systematic way to verify whether released offenders were complying with court-ordered conditions.

Decisions about release or detention are made by a Justice of the Peace or a Judge, not by police. When offenders are released back into the community, WTPS is responsible for enforcing those conditions to help prevent further harm to others.

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Improved Bail and Intelligence Monitoring

WTPS partnered with the Province of Ontario and the Ontario Provincial Police by joining the **Bail Compliance Provincial Dashboard**. This system provides real-time notifications to officers regarding high-risk offenders released anywhere in Ontario for violent or firearm-related offences.

WTPS is also embedded with the **Criminal Intelligence Service of Ontario (CISO)**, providing officers with real-time intelligence from across the province and, in some cases, across Canada. This access has directly resulted in arrests of serious offenders entering or operating within the Territory.

Proactive and Specialized Policing

WTPS has adopted a proactive policing model and significantly enhanced officer training in criminal and drug interdiction, sexual assault investigations, major case management, clandestine operations, human trafficking, and organized crime investigations. These capabilities allow officers to identify criminal activity earlier and conduct more effective investigations.

Community Drug Strategy and Organized Crime Disruption

WTPS launched its **Community Drug Strategy** in December 2024, focusing on intercepting and dismantling drug trafficking networks operating within and around the Territory. This includes search warrants, vehicle and marine interdiction, and combined-forces operations with the OPP and UCCM Police Service.

Since these efforts began, **drug dealers arrested by WTPS have increased by 309% compared to 2023–2024**. Organized crime activity increased alongside broader regional drug movements, and proactive policing has brought this activity to light and disrupted it.

Increased Capacity, Technology, and Partnerships

Long-term funding and successful provincial grants have allowed WTPS to expand staffing, add detectives and specialists, and deploy modern policing technology. Advanced in-vehicle systems, automated licence plate recognition, and real-time intelligence tools have increased the ability of officers to identify wanted persons and disrupt criminal activity.

WTPS continues to work closely with the OPP, RCMP, and UCCM Police Service on coordinated enforcement and intelligence-sharing initiatives that support public safety across the Territory and the broader Manitoulin region.

Community Reporting and Engagement

WTPS launched a secure **online reporting system** in spring 2025, making it easier for community members, including youth, to confidentially report tips, crime, and suspicious activity without having to call police. Increased use of this system has led directly to additional investigations, arrests, and charges.

Community outreach initiatives, Crime Stoppers information sessions, and public events have also generated valuable information that has helped disrupt criminal activity and protect vulnerable community members.

Access our online reporting tool by scanning the QR code, or contact Crime Stoppers



<https://wtps.ca/>



Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477



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Spring Safety Reminders

As warmer weather returns, WTPS encourages everyone to keep safety in mind while enjoying the land, water, and trails.

Boating Safety

- ✓ Wear a life jacket - cold water shock can happen quickly.
- ✓ Check the weather before you go; spring winds and sudden storms are common.
- ✓ Tell someone your route and expected return time.
- ✓ Carry safety gear (phone/radio, lights, whistle, spare warm clothing).
- ✓ Never operate a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

ATV and Trail Safety

- ✓ Always wear a helmet and protective gear; make sure passengers do too.
- ✓ Slow down in spring conditions (mud, washouts, soft shoulders, standing water).
- ✓ Ride with a buddy when possible and keep a charged phone.
- ✓ Respect private property and stay on permitted trails/areas.
- ✓ Supervise youth riders and ensure the ATV is the right size for the operator.
- ✓ Never operate an ATV under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Don't Drink and Drive

- ✓ Plan a safe ride before you go out (designated driver, family member, or alternative transport).
- ✓ Never operate a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Impaired driving can take a life and leads to criminal charges and license suspension.
- ✓ If you see suspected impaired driving, call 911 immediately.



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Working Together for Community Safety

Community safety in Wiikwemkoong is built through relationships, trust, and shared responsibility. Over the winter months, WTPS officers continued to be visible and engaged throughout the community — not only responding to calls for service, but connecting with residents, supporting local events, and working alongside partners to promote wellbeing and safety.

From holiday initiatives and school visits to roadside safety efforts and community outreach, officers were present where it mattered most. These interactions are an important part of policing in Wiikwemkoong. They help build familiarity, strengthen trust, and ensure that community members — especially youth and Elders — feel supported and comfortable reaching out when they need help.

WTPS officers also continued proactive enforcement and safety initiatives throughout the winter season, including impaired driving prevention, trail and ATV safety, and combined-forces operations. This balance of enforcement, engagement, and prevention reflects the police service's commitment to protecting the community while remaining approachable and connected.

As we move into spring, WTPS remains focused on working together with families, leadership, schools, service providers, and community partners to support a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment for everyone who lives, works, and visits Wiikwemkoong.



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Body Camera Program Nearing Implementation

The Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service is in the final stages of implementing its body-worn camera program, with full deployment expected by October 2026. The program has successfully completed its pilot phase, and procurement of the equipment is now nearing completion.

Once operational, all uniformed sworn officers will be equipped with body-worn cameras, enhancing transparency, accountability, and the accuracy of police interactions.

The body camera program is the final step in a series of technological upgrades implemented by WTPS. These advancements include in-car camera systems, automated licence plate recognition, mobile data terminals in every frontline patrol vehicle, and upgrades to police station technologies.

Together with intelligence-led systems such as the Provincial Bail Compliance Dashboard, the Offender Management Apprehension Program, and the online reporting system, these technologies allow officers to access real-time information that was not available prior to 2025. By investing in these modern tools, WTPS is strengthening its ability to protect the public, support officers in the field, and continue building a safer future for Wiikwemkoong.

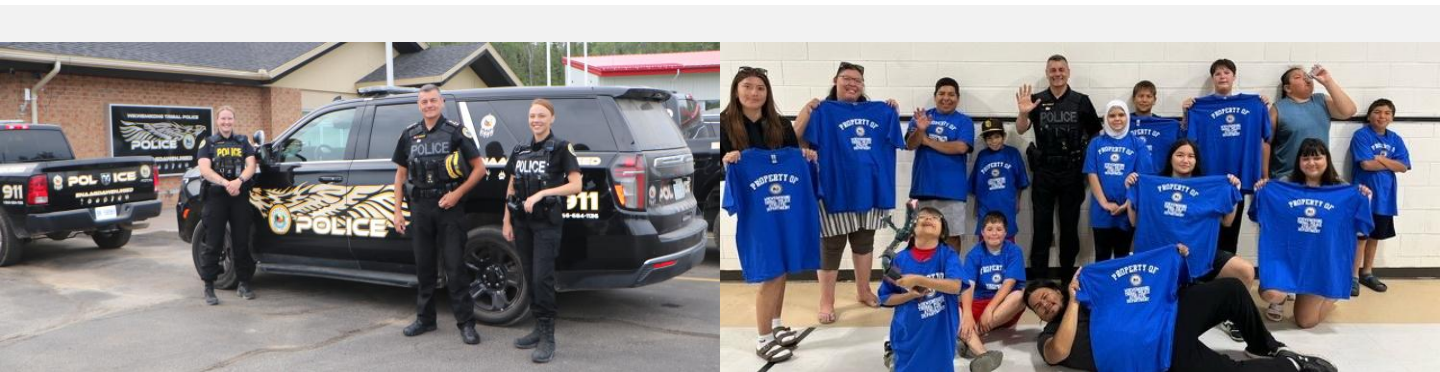
School Liaison Program

WTPS continues to strengthen its School Liaison Program across Wiikwemkoong's three schools. Officers regularly engage with students, educators, and families to promote safety, build positive relationships, and provide guidance on issues affecting youth today.

Through classroom visits, presentations, and informal engagement, officers work to ensure that young people feel comfortable approaching police when they need support or information.

In March, students at the high school participated in a powerful presentation from a university professor who spoke about human trafficking based on her personal experience of being trafficked as a teenager. The discussion provided students with important awareness about the risks of exploitation and the importance of recognizing warning signs and seeking help.

Programs like these are part of WTPS's broader effort to ensure youth are informed, supported, and equipped with the knowledge they need to stay safe.



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New Cultural Orientation Program for WTPS Staff

Beginning in Spring 2026, the Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service will launch a new **Cultural Orientation Program** designed to strengthen cultural understanding and ensure that all officers and staff are well prepared to serve the Wikwemkoong Unceded Territory.

Developed with community input and aligned with the themes outlined in the WTPS Strategic Plan, the program will provide employees with a deeper understanding of local history, governance, traditions, and cultural protocols. For WTPS leadership, cultural awareness is an essential part of modern policing and helps build respectful relationships and stronger trust between officers and the community they serve.

Building Understanding Through Cultural Learning

The Cultural Orientation Program will introduce new officers and staff to the social, cultural, and historical context of Wikwemkoong. Participants will learn about the Territory's history, the role of leadership and governance, and the cultural teachings that shape community life today.

The program will also highlight the importance of understanding the experiences and perspectives of the people officers serve, helping ensure interactions are grounded in respect, awareness, and cultural understanding.

Program Highlights

The program includes several interactive learning opportunities, including:

- Workshops with local knowledge keepers and cultural educators
- Storytelling sessions with community members and Elders
- Guided community tours of culturally and historically significant locations
- Scenario-based cultural learning exercises
- Ongoing mentorship and support for new employees

These experiences are designed to strengthen understanding while creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue between WTPS members and the community.

A Long-Term Commitment

The Cultural Orientation Program reflects WTPS's long-term commitment to cultural learning and professional development. Feedback from participants and community members will help guide future improvements, and cultural learning will continue through refresher sessions and ongoing training.

By investing in cultural education, WTPS is helping ensure that every officer and staff member begins their service with a strong understanding of the values, history, and traditions that shape life in the Wikwemkoong Unceded Territory.

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WTPS remains committed to making the Wikwemkoong Unceded Territory one of the safest communities in Ontario. Officers continue to work tirelessly toward this goal, and the police service is grateful for the ongoing support of community members, leadership, and partner agencies.

Chief Gignac would like to thank Ogimaa Tim Ominika, Band Council, the Police Services Board, Band Administration, and the citizens of Wikwemkoong for their continued partnership and trust.

Stay Connected

 <https://wtps.ca/>  **Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477**  recruitment@wtps.ca



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