



Provincial Auditor's 2025 Report – Volume 2

Chapter 9: Corrections, Policing and Public Safety—Supporting the Mental Health of Correctional Workers

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety provides support for the mental health of correctional workers employed at its five adult secure-custody facilities. Correctional facility work-environments are stressful by nature and can lead to anxiety and depression. As of February 2025, the Ministry employed about 1,400 correctional workers at these facilities, including correctional officers and managers who work shifts to operate the facilities 24/7.

The audit found the Ministry should provide clear guidance on when to deploy its Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) teams following critical incidents and consistently track, analyze, and report on CISM usage to evaluate its effectiveness. Without proper analysis and clear deployment criteria, some correctional workers may not receive the necessary assistance to address mental health challenges after traumatic events.

In addition, the Ministry needs to establish clear expectations and agreed-upon plans for contacting correctional workers on mental health-related leaves of absence to better support recovery and facilitate return to work. It should also set, track, and analyze specific performance measures and mental health injury data—such as workers' compensation claims and sick leave trends—to assess the effectiveness of its mental health supports and take corrective action when needed. Finally, improving its staff survey such as obtaining written feedback from correctional workers would provide more comprehensive insights into the adequacy of current mental health supports.

- Five CISM teams across the five correctional facilities ranging from 5–14 team members
- In 2024–25, CISM support offered in 84 instances and provided in 50 of those instances
- Our testing found three incident (injury) reports related to violence where CISM was not offered
- Average of 114 sick leave hours per correctional officer in 2024–25 compared to 104 hours in 2023–24
- According to 2024 staff survey, 35% of correctional worker respondents agreed there is adequate awareness and knowledge of psychological health issues

Chapter 12: Parks, Culture and Sport—Protecting Provincial Park Ecosystems

- Saskatchewan has 36 provincial parks covering 1.2 million hectares of parkland; 27 parks require ecosystem management by the Ministry
- Ministry last assessed park ecosystem health in 2022; five of 27 parks were less healthy than its expectations (e.g., unhealthy vegetation)
- Ministry did not plan to create ecosystem management plans for two of six high-risk parks we identified (e.g., parks with critical habitat or ecosystems less healthy than Ministry target)
- In 2024–25, the Ministry spent \$1.8 million for provincial park conservation management

Protecting park ecosystems mean managing unique ecosystems to sustain habitat for wildlife, plants, and people, while also supporting recreation and economic opportunities. It also means preserving provincial parks for future generations.

The Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport needs to prioritize creating ecosystem-based management plans aligned with good practice for all high-risk provincial parks (e.g., parks below the Ministry's health index target). We tested seven management plans and found they were lacking certain components required by good practice (e.g., public consultation). None of the plans tested included topics such as anticipated fire behaviour or human-use levels to inform management activities; the Ministry does not have a process to monitor the impact of visitation on park ecosystems.

The Ministry also did not have fuel management plans for 13 of its 18 forested parks; therefore, it may not carry out sufficient actions to reduce wildfire risk in those forested parks. Areas with active fuel management could experience lower fire intensity, slower spread, and reduced damage to infrastructure and ecosystems. Without sufficient fuel management plans for all forested parks, forested parks may be at higher risk for wildfires.

We also recommended the Ministry complete, and centrally monitor, ecosystem management activities (e.g., grazing, prescribed burns) consistent with planned actions and deadlines, as well as enter its park ecosystem data in its database timely. The Ministry also needs to formalize factors considered when determining which Indigenous communities to consult with when planning ecosystem management activities in parks and retain sufficient evidence of those consultations.



Chapter 13: Saskatchewan Municipal Board—Providing Timely and Supported Municipal Appeal Decisions

The Saskatchewan Municipal Board is responsible for hearing appeals regarding disputes arising between Saskatchewan municipalities and other parties (e.g., property owners). Our audit focused on appeals relating to property assessments (e.g., assessed value) and planning and development (e.g., proposed subdivision rejection). In 2024, the Board received 334 property assessment appeals and 22 planning and development appeals.

- Seven staff who manage appeals and eight board members who hear appeals
- 115 assessment appeals waiting to be heard at June 2025, some dating back to 2021
- 60-day target for issuing a hearing decision being met over 90% of the time
- In 2023–24, the Municipal Board spent \$1.3 million handling appeals and collected \$218,000 in revenue

The audit found the Municipal Board needs to strengthen its processes to improve timeliness and transparency. Specifically, it needs to periodically analyze key stages of its appeal process to identify where delays occur and take action. We found three of nine appeals we tested took 288, 320, and 337 days respectively to get to the hearing date. The Municipal Board's target is approximately 200 days from the time an appeal is filed with the Board to the delivery of a decision.

The Municipal Board should also monitor appeals in case management close to or exceeding its 20-day case management target. Four appeals tested found case managers did not document reasons for delays (case management took 32–74 days). For two of these appeals, Board management determined case management was not needed, and the appeals could move straight to scheduling without unnecessary delays.

In addition, the Municipal Board needs to enhance its public reporting on the status of property assessment appeals, including those waiting to be heard, and require board members to annually confirm they have read and agreed to its code of conduct.

Our Office, along with appointed auditors (if in place), also completed annual integrated audits of about 160 different agencies with fiscal year-ends between January and July 2025. These include integrated audits of 17 ministries, 28 Crown corporations and agencies, 21 pension and employee benefit plans, and 34 healthcare affiliates. This Report includes concerns at seven of those agencies, such as the **Global Transportation Hub Authority (Chapter 2)** not having well-defined collaboration procedures for major land developments and **Northlands College (Chapter 5)** not restricting access to its cheque-signing system to properly segregate duties related to making payments, increasing the risk of fraud.

The **full 2025 Report – Volume 2** (at auditor.sk.ca) covers other performance audits and follow-up audits such as:

Performance Audits:

- Education—Achieving accessible child care (Chapter 10)
- Health—Inspecting special-care homes (Chapter 11)
- SaskBuilds and Procurement—Monitoring the implementation of IT projects (Chapter 14)

Follow-up Audits:

- Social Services' hotel pilot projects for child and family programs' clients (Chapter 7)
- Assisting students in completing online learning at the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (Chapter 21)
- Several healthcare follow-up audits such as filling hard-to-recruit healthcare positions (Chapter 24); minimizing employee absenteeism in Kindersley and area (Chapter 25); overseeing contracted special-care homes in Saskatoon and area (Chapter 26); and providing timely access to mental health and addictions services in Prince Albert and area (Chapter 27)
- Supporting success of Indigenous students at Saskatchewan Polytechnic (Chapter 28)

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