



**ABBOTSFORD
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

STRENGTH IN COMMUNITY

PRESS RELEASE

Abbotsford Police Department
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Moving Forward Together – Chief Constable Colin Watson provides the Abbotsford Community with an Update and issues a Call for Urgent Action regarding our Justice System and BC's Extortion Crisis

Abbotsford, BC – February 10th, 2026 — The Abbotsford Police Department (AbbyPD) is reaffirming its unwavering dedication to public safety and strong community connections and is calling for renewed commitment by governments to quickly facilitate key justice system reforms to strengthen our justice system.

“I want the Abbotsford community to know that we hear their concerns regarding extortions. We understand the fear this creates, and we are not standing still,” said Chief Constable Watson. “AbbyPD is fully committed to confronting this crisis—side by side with the people we serve.

Extortion thrives on fear and isolation. Our response is about more than enforcement; it’s about building trust, sharing information, and ensuring people know they are not alone. The challenges we face today have been years in the making. Resource pressures, outdated legislation, and systemic barriers within the justice system have made complex organized crime investigations increasingly difficult—not just in Abbotsford, but across the province and our Country.”

Police services, including AbbyPD, have consistently identified reforms that would significantly strengthen public safety, including modernization of the Criminal Code, changes to disclosure requirements, improved lawful access to communications information, and increased resourcing throughout the justice system. While some steps are underway, AbbyPD emphasizes that the urgency of the situation demands faster, coordinated action.

“Community engagement remains central to AbbyPD’s response. For example, in recent days we have met directly with local faith and business leaders to discuss our progress and next steps. We have also engaged the Abbotsford Extortion Community Advisory Group, which was established in December in partnership with local community leaders, to hear concerns and help guide and adapt our strategies. We have also met directly with victims of extortion and related violence to hear their concerns.



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I recognize that not everyone affected by extortion will feel that their expectations are met. While we obviously work to meet all expectations, we must always work within our mandate and focus on risk-based responses.

To the people of Abbotsford: Your safety matters, your voices matter, and you are not facing this challenge alone. And to our officers, staff and volunteers—thank you for your courage, professionalism, and unwavering dedication. I am profoundly proud to serve alongside you.”

Chief Constable Watson Issues a Call to Action to Elected Officials:

“We (you) have a unique opportunity to act. I ask you to speak with your local police leaders directly and maintain an open dialogue to ensure that you have a fulsome understanding of the challenges, and then work urgently, across party lines, to make the changes needed to keep our communities safe. Reforms and long-term, predictable, and sustained investment across the justice sector will make a difference and prevent us to having very similar conversations about critical public safety concerns that we have been having over the recent past. The time for partisanship has long passed. You can—and must—make the necessary changes to support police services and communities in combating serious crime in all its forms, including extortion.”

Mayor Ross Siemens:

“As the Mayor of Abbotsford and Chair of the Abbotsford Police Board, I have full confidence in our police department as they confront the complex challenges of the extortion crisis and work to strengthen public safety in our community,” said Ross Siemens, Chair of the Abbotsford Police Board. “The City of Abbotsford has consistently called for meaningful criminal justice reform as it relates to serious crime, and we fully support Abby PD’s call for the resources and systemic reforms needed to tackle the extortion crisis, get prolific criminals off the streets, and keep people safe.”

Press Conference Video Link: [Media Press Conference with Chief Colin Watson - February 10th, 2026](#)

Sergeant Paul Walker
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