

RCMP “H” Division Pipes & Drums



Photo by Dave & Diane Krochko, October 19, 2009

Information for Applicants And Band Members

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Introduction

This document is intended to provide both new applicants and current band members with information about the band, its history, mandate, rules, regulations, etc. so you can be aware of what some of the expectations are when deciding if this band is the one for you.

The RCMP Pipes & Drums may be the most unique band you will ever play with. We represent the **ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**, the national police force of Canada, and when we are on parade we are under the same scrutiny from the public as is an actual serving member, regardless of the fact that we are volunteers. In fact, most observers of the band will not even be aware you are not a member of the Force. A higher standard is expected of the RCMP and by extension a higher standard will be expected of the pipe band. The band must project **QUALITY**.

We have been accorded a great honour and rare privilege in being allowed, as civilians, the right to wear the world famous red serge tunic and badges of the Force. Normally, this is a right granted only to those who have attended and graduated from the RCMP Training Depot in Regina and been sworn in as members of the Force. The importance of this cannot be understated, particularly when you consider that Auxiliary Constables, who work side-by-side with Regular Members on a daily basis, are not accorded this privilege, so do not take it lightly.

For these reasons, and for reasons of personal pride, a high standard of appearance, behaviour and musicianship is expected of band members. The following document will hopefully provide you with an idea of what that expectation entails.

1. Background

The first RCMP pipe band was formed to perform in the Nova Scotia Tattoo in 1998 as part of the Force's 125th anniversary celebrations. In the years following, RCMP bands began to form across the country, generally by individuals who had been in the 1998 Tattoo band.

The "H" Division Pipes & Drums were formed in April 2004 with the first practice held in May of that year. With a number of experienced players coming out of 'retirement' the fledging band was ready for public performances by mid-summer. However, the lack of uniforms did not see the band make a public appearance until 2005. Since then the band has proven to be a 'crowd pleaser' and has been in increasing demand to participate in various activities throughout the region. As the band gains in ability and popularity, these requests are increasing. Opportunities have also arisen for band members to participate in activities in other regions of the country by acting as a guest player with the 'local' RCMP band.

RCMP pipe bands, which now exist in Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Ottawa, Montreal, Moncton and Halifax, have a common 'look and feel'. All wear the same uniform and are subject to the same standards, rules and regulations. The Pipes Major have agreed on a basic common repertoire with the intent that, when the opportunity presents itself, players from one band can easily supplement another band for special events.

Band members are volunteers from all backgrounds including serving members of the RCMP.

2. Mandate

The mandate of the RCMP "H" Division band is to act as a public relations vehicle for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and to '*Benefit the Community through Music.*'

This will be accomplished by:

1. Acting as a 'garrison band' for our (Nova Scotia) Division.
2. Performing at RCMP and public events throughout the province and beyond.
3. Building and maintaining a quality organization in both appearance and music.
4. Providing a forum for members to 'share and showcase their musical talent.'
5. Providing a social and educational environment for members.

3. Band Management

The band operates as a not-for-profit society known as the '*H' Division Mounted Police Pipes & Drums Society*, and is governed by an elected Board of Directors and Officers.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Pipe Major, Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, RCMP Liaison/Media Officer, Secretary and the 'H' Division Commanding Officer (or designate). Also, a minimum of five (5) to a maximum of fifteen (15) Directors may be elected to oversee the activities of the Officers.

As required, non-elected positions such as the Event/Logistics Coordinator and Quartermaster, meet with the Officers and Directors as part the Management Team in order to more efficiently conduct the operational business of the band.

Individual members may be asked to work on short-term projects (e.g. trips, fund-raising) as required.

4. Membership

Anyone is eligible to make application to join the band and applicants must:

- a) Agree to a Criminal Record Information check.
- b) Agree to adhere to a strict code of conduct, dress and demeanour when in uniform.
- c) Meet the minimum acceptable musical standard.
- d) Be of good character.
- e) Be physically fit and able to participate in the normal range of band activities (e.g. parades, concerts, Tattoos, etc).

Membership in the band must be earned and individuals may be asked to withdraw if minimum standards are not met or maintained.

The band must be able to rely on the availability of its members, so the RCMP Pipes & Drums must be your 1st priority band. See section 7: Commitment

Guest players may be invited to perform with the band at the discretion of the Pipe Major.

5. Musical Standards

- a) The band intends to maintain a high musical standard in its performance.
- b) Applicants should be capable of playing at a grade 4 competitive level or higher.
- c) An applicant's prior band experience and/or potential will be considered.
- d) All applicants will be judged on individual merit.

The music is selected in a tiered fashion:

- a) Parade: Parades are the basic 'bread and butter' of the band and all members are expected to participate. One must be able to play the parade music at an acceptable standard in order to participate as a uniformed member of the band.
- b) Concert: Much of the concert music is within the capabilities of anyone who can meet the parade standards. Members will be expected to learn most of this material with only the dance music being optional (i.e. strathspeys, reels, jigs).
- c) Advanced: This music is optional but members are encouraged to expand their musical limits. Some of the music will be at a difficulty level suitable for competition.

All members are encouraged to challenge themselves musically.

Members are expected to spend the time at home learning the music so when they come to practice time can be spent on polishing the music. Regular attendance at practice creates a better band musically as playing together regularly helps minimize ensemble issues.

6. Performance Standards

- Members must maintain a musical competency and Drill, Dress & Deportment level that will not adversely affect the sound or appearance of the band.
- The Pipe Major, Drum Major, Drum Sergeant, P/S and RCMP liaison will monitor each member's performance on an ongoing basis and provide direction to applicants and members as required.

- Applicants/members will be advised of deficiencies in their playing / performance by the P/M or D/S.
- Practicing with the band does not automatically ensure being dressed and performing with the band; skill levels must be attained and maintained!
- By necessity, some events may require that the Pipe Major and Lead Drum select specific personnel for that event.

7. Commitment

While it is understood and accepted that everyone cannot make every practice and every parade, it is expected that applicants and members will make a serious commitment to the band and endeavor to attend a majority of practices and performances.

- Uniforms hanging in closets add no value to the band.
- Members are expected to take part in as many practices / parades / performances as possible.
- If a member will be inactive from practices and performances a month or more – their uniform will be recalled until they can return to full participation.
- It is your responsibility to advise the P/M or L/D of your absence from practices.
- Attendance at practice and parades is recorded – volunteer hours are reported to the RCMP.
- It is reasonable to expect that a member's commitment (like musical proficiency) to the band and past participation in events will be considered when 'special' events, particularly those involving travel, come up.
- Members should acquire a passport in the event out of country opportunities present themselves
- 'Grunt' work leads to 'jammy' jobs. No 'grunt' work, no 'jammy' jobs.

8. Dress and Deportment

The uniforms belong to the band but the 'image' belongs to the RCMP and it is only with the Force's permission that we are entitled to utilize the red serge tunic (No. 1 dress) and the grey uniform shirt (No. 2 dress) of the RCMP. When, where and how members wear the band uniform will be strictly controlled.



"H" Division RCMP piper, Roy Logan, with Member of RCMP Musical Ride, Halifax, 2005

By wearing the red serge and RCMP badges and insignia, the band represents the Force and will be subject to the critical eye of the public. Whenever a Band member is in the public eye, that member is deemed to be "on parade".

1. All members will maintain and wear their uniform and equipment in accordance with the high standards of the RCMP.
2. Uniforms will be cleaned and pressed as required and worn according to regulation (RCMP Uniform and Dress Manual and band policy).
3. When the serge is put on, the rest of the uniform is put on (belt, Glengarry, etc.). The exception to this would be inside legions / military messes or at other special functions where it would be appropriate to remove headdress.
4. Individual behaviour must suit the environment in which the band is working at any time.
5. Sunglasses, ball-caps and other non-issue accoutrements are not to be worn with the uniform. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the expressed permission of the P/M or D/M, may this requirement be relaxed
6. Hair length and style must be in accordance with Force regulation, e.g. no beards.

Physical Appearance – Females

- Long hair is to be tie/pinned in place so that it does not extend below the earlobe.
- Short hair is not to extend below the top edge of the tunic collar.
- A single pair of spherical stud earrings may be worn.
- Piercings are not to be worn and/or visible while in uniform.

Physical Appearance – Males

- Hair to be kept short, ensuring that it does not cover any part of the ears and it does not touch the collar of the tunic.
- Sideburns are not to extend below the bottom edge of the opening of the ear.
- Moustaches are to be kept neatly trimmed.
- Beards and facial hair are not to be worn unless by way of an exemption based on medical or religious grounds, commensurate with RCMP policy.
- Earrings and/or piercings are not to be worn and/or visible while in uniform.

Traveling To and Returning From Events.

When travelling by car, tunics and/or uniform shirts are not to be worn as the public may assume you are a Member of the RCMP and this might cause problems if you are seen passing an accident or other incident where a Member would be expected to stop and handle the situation.

Suitable attire for travelling would be:

- Civilian clothes.
- Partial uniform (i.e. removal of uniform shirt or tunic) while driving. On arrival at destination be prepared to get fully dressed.
- The tunic or shirt covered entirely by an outer garment, such as rain cape, buttoned at the neck to cover the collar dogs of the tunic.

Exemptions from these guidelines can only be made by the Pipe Major, Drum Major or RCMP Liaison. Such an instance might be a 'warm-up' or practice session where the uniform, less the Glengarry, tunic and dress belt might be worn. For this reason, appropriate apparel (i.e. navy blue T-shirt) will be worn under the tunic.

Non-Band Events

The use of the uniform for private occasions or other non-Band events provides additional public exposure for the Band and is permitted providing the member requests and receives permission from either the Pipe Major or RCMP Liaison Officer beforehand.

Individuals who do not receive prior permission to wear the uniform at a non-band event may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the band.

Prohibitions

Unless it is the actual performance venue, the wearing of the uniform, or any part thereof, in a drinking establishment, to purchase alcohol or in any location that could reflect poorly on the RCMP is prohibited.

Drinking in uniform is not permitted, unless in a military mess, legion or place designated as such and authorized by the P/M, D/M or RCMP Liaison.

Rule of Thumb - "If in doubt, do not wear the uniform."

9. Financial

- ◆ The band is self-funding.
- ◆ Revenue is primarily generated from performance fees and donations.
- ◆ We attempt to keep costs to members low but, of necessity, members may have to incur some expenses (e.g. meals when traveling).
- ◆ There are no dues / membership fees.

10. Administration

Logistics

Logistics involves the booking of performances, arranging transport & accommodation, scheduling, etc. To ensure that this can be done effectively all band members will be asked to provide particular information (e.g. availability) in a timely fashion. You are responsible for advising of changes to your availability.

Quartermaster

The Quartermaster has the difficult, and thankless, job of ensuring that all members are adequately dressed for performances. The QM must be advised in a timely fashion of deficiencies in your uniform so that replacement / repair can be effected in a timely fashion.

All uniform articles are issued to a specific person. However, in periods when membership outstrips existing uniform resources members are to assist the QM by making items available for others to use for a specific event. To ensure that the QM is able to properly keep track of where all articles are members are not to make 'loan' arrangements without first advising the QM.

Each member will be required to sign for articles issued to them and are responsible for them including the cost of replacement for lost or damaged items.

Resources

The following resources will be available to members:

- 'Information for Applicants and Band Members' (this) document
- Band constitution
- Dress regulations (see appendix 1)
- Band phone list (updated and distributed on a regular basis)
- Band music (updated and distributed on a regular basis)
- Conflict Resolution Guidelines
- Other policy and information documents as promulgated

12. Summary

The RCMP "H" Division Pipes & Drums is representing a Canadian icon, ***The Royal Canadian Mounted Police.***

To this end the band will be a **QUALITY** organization in music, appearance and behaviour.

Quality and **COMMITMENT** must be a priority for all members.

TEAMWORK is essential to accomplishing this and all members must 'pull their weight'.

A critical element to ensuring success is **RESPECT**, each member respecting the band itself and their fellow band members.

Remember what you do affects the band and each and every member of it.



*"H" Division Pipes, Drums and Dancers
Pictou Hector Festival, August 16, 2009*