

**Information Note**  
**Department of Justice and Public Safety**


**Title: Bell Subsea Fibre-Optic Cable Damage**

**Issue:** Bell subsea fibre-optic cable between Nova Scotia and western Newfoundland and Labrador, including potential impacts to Bell services on the island portion of the province

**Background and Current Status:**

- Telecommunications provider, Bell, has placed a fibre-optic cable that stretches the Cabot Strait, between Dingwall, Nova Scotia and Codroy, Newfoundland and Labrador. The cable serves as a primary network path for internet, television and long-distance communication services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.
- The cable is embedded roughly 30 metres below the surface and runs 140 kilometres in length. It consists of a fibre-optic cable wrapped in thick, steel wire for protection.
- On February 19, 2025, David Joice, Network Director at Bell, announced that the subsea cable was severed on December 24, 2024.
- Bell reports that the cable was intentionally cut by humans using a tool or cutting instrument.
- This is the second time the subsea cable was intentionally severed, having previously been cut on January 4, 2024.
- A vessel, the IT Intrepid, was sent from Halifax in early February to repair the cable. There were no disruptions in services because of the damage.
- Bell has engaged the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to investigate the most recent damage to the subsea cable.

**Analysis:**

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- Bell reports that it does not suspect the cable was damaged maliciously, noting that it is possible the cable became ensnared in a ship's anchor or fishing gear, then brought to the surface with the gear and subsequently cut.
- Bell reconfigured its network to ensure there were no impacts to customers in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador because of the damaged cable.
- The IT Intrepid uses a rover to locate the cable and bring it to the surface for repair. Few ships globally can repair this specialized cable.
- Following the repair, a deeper trench was cut into the seabed, and the cable was buried within to prevent similar situations in the future.
- On December 25, 2024, a similar underwater power cable and four internet cables in the Baltic Sea near the Gulf of Finland were severed. It is suspected that ships connected to Russia may be responsible for the damage. Estonia, Finland and NATO boosted patrols in the region.

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- RCMP states it did not have enough evidence to proceed with the investigation into the first incident, but the investigation into the second incident continues. The RCMP does not believe these incidents are national security threats.

**Action Being Taken:**

- No action required. For informational purposes only.

**Prepared/Approved by:** N. Porter/ K. Martin/ M. Noseworthy

February 24, 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Stone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and 'S'.