



# NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

## Police Services Board Report

**PUBLIC AGENDA**

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**Subject:** Annual Report – Child Pornography (Internet Child Exploitation)  
Investigations – January 1 to December 31, 2022

**Report To:** Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board

**Report Date:** 2023-02-16

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### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the Niagara Police Services Board receive this report for information.**

### **Key Facts**

- The purpose of this report is to advise the Board that the Service is in compliance with By-Law 333-2013 – Child Pornography (Internet Child Exploitation).
- The Chief is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to investigations of child pornography (Internet Child Exploitation).
- This report is submitted to the Board for review and consideration of information relating to the Service's response to child pornography (Internet Child Exploitation).

### **Financial Considerations**

There are no financial implications relating to the recommendations contained within this report.

### **Analysis**

In accordance with By-Law 333-2013, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect of the investigations of child pornography (Internet child exploitation). The report shall include:

- a) A summary of the written procedures concerning child pornography (Internet child exploitation) investigations, including charges since the date of the last report;
- b) The status of Service compliance with the said procedures; and
- c) A summary of the steps taken by the Service to monitor and evaluate response to child pornography occurrences.

This Board report will outline each of the above and confirm our compliance with the By-Law:

- a) *"...a summary of the written procedures concerning child pornography (Internet child exploitation) investigations; including charges since the date of the last report..."*

General Order 169.08 - Internet Child Exploitation Investigations was updated in 2021 and is scheduled for re-evaluation in 2023. This Order addresses the requirements of Provincial Adequacy Standards Regulations LE-036 and Police Services Board By-Law 333-2013, Child Pornography (Internet Child Exploitation).

The Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) Unit has established a local police response to crimes against children perpetrated via the Internet. In addition to a reactive response to public complaints, investigators proactively initiate investigations of identified targets, authoring search warrants that are judicially authorized and executed locally. This leads to the identification and arrest of offenders possessing, distributing and making child pornography, and persons who utilize the Internet to lure children into sexual activity.

Since 2007, the ICE Unit has continued full-time membership in the Provincial Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation on the Internet. This initiative has led to a high level of interagency co-operation and successful joint investigations of Internet Child Exploitation throughout the province, nationally, and internationally. The NRPS ICE Unit conducted joint investigations with the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, Interpol, and local police agencies across Canada and throughout the United States.

In March 2019, the RCMP introduced a new tool called the Operational Child Exploitation Analysis Network (OCEAN). Major corporations such as, Microsoft, Google, and Meta (Facebook) monitor their networks for the presence of Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) and report their findings from Canada to the RCMP. RCMP analysts examine these images/videos to determine if they contain CSEM and then distribute these referrals to the responsible agency for further investigation.

The ICE Unit is mandated to categorize all images and videos of child pornography following an investigation. With continual technological improvements, cellular devices have become more popular due to the increased memory capabilities, which can be up to one terabyte of data. This amount of storage far exceeds an average personal computer. More storage means a significant increase in the number of hours spent by investigators categorizing images impacting the ICE Unit's ability to take on new investigations. Categorization is mandatory and imperative in satisfying the Provincial Strategy mandate, as well as populating the database of CSEM to assist in identifying victims.

In 2022, the ICE Unit received a total of 246 referrals from OCEAN and conducted 70 investigations of CSEM and Internet luring within the Niagara Region. The ICE Unit also received 50 Cybertips and 12 Crime Stoppers tips, which mostly relating to incidents of

“Sextortion”. In essence, “Sextortion” is a form of “blackmail”, which occurs when someone online threatens to distribute a person’s private and sensitive content if they fail to provide them money or personal images that are of a sexual nature. Such incidents tend to originate in overseas countries and involve international organized criminal networks, which causes many investigative and prosecutorial challenges.

The following is a summary of investigations conducted during the past three years:

Child Pornography and Internet Luring Investigations

Year	OCEAN Referrals	Referred + Proactive	Arrests	Criminal Charges
2020	149	106	19	95
2021	324	98	16	65
2022	246	70	16	61

b) *“...the status of Service compliance with the said procedures...”*

With the assignment of child pornography and luring investigations to three specially trained officers, the Service has ensured and maintained a consistently high-quality, specialized response to these types of incidents. Due to the consistent increase in call volume and complicated and time-consuming nature of such investigations, the Service has requested that the ICE Unit authorized strength be increased to four officers within the 2023 calendar year. All investigations are supervised by the officer-in-charge of the Electronic Crimes Unit and evaluated to confirm compliance with the Provincial Adequacy Standard Regulation and General Orders with respect to child pornography and related criminal investigations.

c) *“...a summary of the steps taken by the Service to monitor and evaluate response to child pornography occurrences...”*

ICE investigators participate in a structured training regimen consisting of relevant topical Ontario Police College and Canadian Police College courses, as well as Provincial Strategy mandated training and international conferences, which has led to high-quality, consistent training and best practices that are updated on an ongoing basis. In the current workload and training environment, it takes approximately two years to fully train an ICE investigator. Ongoing training is required to address the continually changing and emerging technologies of the Internet as well as the technical abilities of offenders.

While attending specialized training sessions, via Internet access and in the course of regular duties, investigators are in daily contact with ICE colleagues from other police services throughout Canada and internationally. This continued contact ensures that the Service’s response is consistent with, or exceeds, the current standards of practice elsewhere in Ontario and Canada.

The daily subject matter and nature of these investigations can be psychologically and emotionally demanding for even the most resilient of investigators. In addition to the

regular competitive processes utilized in the selection of ICE investigators, psychological testing is conducted prior to the confirmation of an applicant, and annual follow-up examinations are conducted to ensure the psychological health and well-being of investigators, in accordance with established recommendations and standards.

The Service remains in compliance with By-Law 333-2013 as it relates to child pornography.

### **Alternatives Reviewed**

Not applicable.

### **Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities**

To comply with the provisions of Police Services Board By-Laws and to maintain compliance with the Provincial Adequacy Standards Regulations.

### **Relevant Policy Considerations**

Police Services Board By-Law No. 333-2013 Child Pornography (Internet Child Exploitation)  
General Order 169.08 – Internet Child Exploitation Investigations

### **Other Pertinent Reports**

8.4.2022.04.21 – Annual Report – Child Pornography – January 1 to December 31, 2021

*This report was prepared by Jason Myers, Detective Sergeant, E-Crimes Unit, in consultation with Mike Casella, Staff Sergeant, Special Victims Unit; reviewed by David Masotti, Inspector, Investigative Support Services. Reviewed by Todd Waselovich, Superintendent, Emergency and Investigative Services. Recommended by Brian Ash, Acting Deputy Chief, Operational Services.*



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### **Submitted by:**

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Chief of Police

### **Appendices**

Not applicable.