



# NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

## Police Services Board Report

**PUBLIC AGENDA**

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**Subject:** Annual Report – Underwater Search and Recovery Unit – 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 273-2005 as it relates to the Underwater Search and Recovery Unit (USRU).
- The Chief is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to the USRU.
- This report will set out the particulars with respect to the procedures required, compliance with the procedures, confirmation of the development and maintenance of the reference file on all diving hazards, and confirmation of training.
- This report will provide a summary of the circumstances in which the USRU has been deployed.

### **Financial Considerations**

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

### **Analysis**

In accordance with By-Law 273-2005, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect of the services of Underwater Search and Recovery. The report shall include:

- a) a summary of the procedures as required as required by this By-Law;
- b) the status of Service compliance with the said procedures;
- c) confirmation of the development and maintenance of the reference file on all diving hazards;
- d) confirmation of training in accordance with section 5.3; and
- e) a summary of the circumstances in which the Underwater Search and Recovery services have been deployed.

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

a) *“...a summary of the procedures as required by this By-Law...”*

The Niagara Regional Police Service is required to provide 24/7 USRU services to support police operations within the jurisdiction of the Niagara Regional Police Service and their contracted partners (Waterloo Regional Police Service).

Deployment and response is designed to ensure that a fully trained and equipped police diving service is available in a timely manner and in compliance with Provincial Adequacy Standard ER-009 Underwater Search and Recovery Units. The written procedures for deployment are clearly set out in General Order – 088.07 Underwater Search and Recovery Unit. These written procedures include the circumstances in which the USRU will be deployed, including the process for obtaining the services and reporting relationships.

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

The Niagara Regional Police Service is in full compliance with this By-Law. The Police Service has a total of eight trained and competent officers who serve as police divers. The procedures for deployment, selection and training are clearly set out in General Order – 088.07 and Provincial Adequacy Standard ER-009. One diver is a qualified Police Explosives Technician (PET). The Service's USRU has provided search and recovery services to the Waterloo Regional Police Service on a contract basis since 1998.

c) *“...confirmation of the development and maintenance of the reference file on all diving hazards...”*

A reference file identifying diving hazards throughout the Region has been developed in cooperation with USRU partners, including the Niagara Region Public Works, St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation and Ontario Power Generation. The file is maintained on an ongoing basis and is available to members of the Dive Unit by accessing the USRU network drive on the Service's computer system or by paper copies located in USRU vehicles.

Members of USRU routinely take part in a tour of the canal and lock systems of the Welland Canal to identify any changes/updates to hazard files.

d) *“...confirmation of training in accordance with section 5.3...”*

The Niagara Regional Police Service ensures that In-Service Training of NRPS Police Operations Divers meets or exceeds competency requirements determined by:

- i. General Order 088.07 Underwater Search and Recovery Unit.
- ii. Provincial Adequacy Standard ER-009 Underwater Search and Recovery Units.
- iii. Canadian Standards Association (CSA) - a Competency Standard for Diving Operations CAN/CSA Z275.4.
- iv. Occupational Health and Safety Act and Diving Regulation 629/94 (including Section 21 Police Health and Safety Committee).

Proof of competency of Service diving supervisors and divers is dependent upon successful completion of mandated training and evaluation by a recognized agency. Qualified members must present proof of competency upon the request of a Ministry of Labour Diving Inspector in Occupational SCUBA and Restricted Surface-Supplied Air categories while engaged in Service training or operational dives.

The members conducted 174 training dives in 2022 with 85 using SCUBA apparatus and 89 using Surface Supplied Air apparatus, an average of 22 training dives per member.

- e) *“...a summary of the circumstances in which the Underwater Search and Recovery services have been deployed...”*

The USRU was operationally deployed 17 times in 2022. This includes one incident which required multiple days of searches being conducted by members in Port Dalhousie.

The following is a summary of the circumstances in which the USRU was deployed from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022:

Underwater Search and Recovery Unit Deployments	2022
Search for Missing Persons	2
Body Recoveries	9
Investigations Involving Vehicle/Vessel Investigations	1
Evidence and Property Recovery	3
Public Relations Events	2

The following is a 3-year comparison of USRU deployments:

	2022	2021	2020
USRU Deployments	17	33	38

### **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**

By-Law 273 – 2005 Underwater Search and Recovery Units  
General Order 088.07 – Underwater Search and Recovery Unit

## **Other Pertinent Reports**

8.9.2022.04.21 Annual Report – Underwater Search and Recovery Unit – January 1 to December 31, 2021

*This report was prepared by Joe Shatkosky, Coordinator, Underwater Search and Recovery Unit, reviewed by Jon Pilkington, Sergeant, Marine Unit, Darrin Forbes, Inspector, Emergency Services Unit and by Todd Waselovich, Superintendent, Emergency & Investigative Services. Recommended by Brian Ash, Acting Deputy Chief, Operational Services.*



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**Submitted by:**  
Bryan MacCulloch, M.O.M. #5835  
Chief of Police

## **Appendices**

Not applicable.