



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Services Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Firearms Training –
January 1 to December 31, 2022

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board

Report Date: 2023-04-18

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Services Board receives this report for information.

Key Facts

- This purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the necessary and required information pursuant to the By-Law relating to procedures and processes on Firearms Training.
- By-Law 221-2000, A By-Law Respecting Firearms Training, was enacted as a result of Provincial Adequacy Standards LE-029, Preventing or Responding to Occurrences Involving Firearms.
- By-Law 221-2000 is a procedural directive that outlines the training of police officers in relation to firearms occurrences.
- By-Law 221-2000 contains provisions requiring the Chief of Police to report specific information in order to ensure compliance with the legislative guidelines.

Financial Considerations

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

Analysis

This By-Law details specific requirements that are to be reported as follows:

The Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect of preventing or responding to occurrences involving firearms. The report shall include:

- a) A summary of the written procedures concerning managing investigations and preventing offences/occurrences involving firearms;
- b) The status of Service compliance with the said procedures; and

- c) Confirmation that Members were trained in accordance with section 4.2 of this By-Law.

The following is a detailed response to each of the above noted requirements:

- a) A summary of the written procedures concerning managing investigations and preventing offences/occurrences involving firearms.

The Service's general orders identify all the requirements of officers involved with firearms related investigations. In particular, General Order 175.06 entitled Firearms – Investigations/Seizure/Property/Maintenance, includes direction on search and seizure; public safety search and seizure; prohibition orders; investigations; and the Firearms Interest to Police (FIP) category of CPIC. FIP is a file used to record data on a person who, in the last 5 years, has been involved in a violent or mental health incident. This general order also speaks to section 117.04 of the Criminal Code of Canada, which establishes non-evidentiary and preventative search and seizure powers. This order is available in an electronic form to all members. This general order complies with By-Law 221-2000.

Other general orders that pertain to firearms response and investigation are:

GO 053.24 - Use of Force
GO 089.07 - Emergency Task Unit
GO 095.10 - Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations
GO 114.13 - Domestic/Family Violence
GO 117.10 - Search and Seizure
GO 121.12 - Forensic Services Unit
GO 035.13 - Evidence and Property Management

- b) The status of Service compliance with the said procedures.

The Service is in compliance with the policies and procedures relating to occurrences involving firearms.

- c) Confirmation that members were trained in accordance with section 4.2 of this By-Law.

- 4.2.1 "The Chief shall ensure that Members are trained on all search and seizure powers available to officers under Part III and IV of the Criminal Code that may be relevant to search and seizure of firearms, ammunition or related licenses, certificates or permits as well as options for obtaining prohibition orders".
- 4.2.2 "The Chief shall ensure that Members involved in investigations into offences/occurrences involving firearms have the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities".

The Training Unit provides officers with courses and programs that address issues of both responding to and investigating firearms occurrences. The educational programming that is provided through the Training Unit ensures a consistent delivery of information to officers.

During this reporting period, the Training Unit offered an in-service training session that included "Firearms Academic". "Firearms Academic" is an educational session on relevant case law, firearms safety procedures, reporting procedures, provincial and federal firearms legislation, and departmental policy and procedure on the use of issued firearms.

The Training Unit also makes available foundational and specialized training with advanced firearms investigation components. These courses include:

- Basic Constable Training: all officers receive training in firearm classification and search and seizure of firearms during recruit training at the Ontario Police College (OPC).
- Domestic Violence Investigator: the presence of firearms is of special concern in incidents of domestic violence even if the firearm is not involved in the incident. Officers are trained to consider seizing firearms in these instances.
- Forensic Shooting Scene Examination: this course is made available through OPC to our Forensics Unit with the focus on ballistics.
- Gang Investigators: available through OPC, this course focuses on the investigation of street gangs, and includes specific training on firearms law, search and seizure and characteristics of an armed person.
- Firearms Analyst: available through OPC, this course provides knowledge and skills to conduct non-forensic examination of firearms, and covers firearms related topics including criminal offences, regulatory issues, crime gun trends, Firearm Analysis and Trace Enforcement Program, and other relevant issues.

The Service requires that certain investigative positions have a combination of the above noted courses to be qualified for that position. A "Request for Training" form is submitted through the chain of command with comments and subsequent approval granted for those who will require specific courses for investigative positions. The OPC allocates to the Service a number of seats per course and members attend the training as available. The Service has been diligent in ensuring that members involved in investigations into offences/occurrences involving firearms have the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to be qualified for the investigative positions during the period covered by this Board report.

The Service is a member of the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit (PWEU), with a seconded member in the unit. This unit is a joint force operation responsible for large-scale firearm investigations. As a member, the Service has PWEU available for investigative support.

The Video Unit has produced several training programs that are a blend of video, instructional narrative, and question/answer modules specific to the topic of firearm related investigations. Titles include Characteristics of an Armed Person (Nov 2005); Seized Firearms Safety (Dec 2006); Firearm Seizures (Aug 2010); Containment for Patrol (2017); Prohibited Weapons (2020); Exposure to Lead Awareness (2021); and Range Safety & Soft Body Armour (2021). All of these training programs are available to all members of the Service through an internet portal or upon demand at the Video Unit. The Training Unit also posts bulletins relevant to recent legislative/ case law/ training updates to the Service's intranet portal - IRIS.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

To comply with the Board By-Law 221-2000.

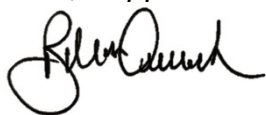
Relevant Policy Considerations

- Police Services Board By-Law 221-2000.
- Police Services Act of Ontario Regulation 926.
- Provincial Adequacy Standard LE-029.

Other Pertinent Reports

8.7.2022.06.23 – Annual Report – Firearms Training – January 1 to December 31, 2021.

This report was prepared by Chris Sirie, Staff Sergeant, Training Unit and reviewed by Luigi Greco, Superintendent, Executive Services. Recommended by Bill Fordy, Deputy Chief, Support Services.



Submitted by:

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Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable