



# **NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE**

## **Police Services Board Report**

### **PUBLIC AGENDA**

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**Subject:** Annual Report – Marine Unit – January 1 to December 31, 2020  
**Report To:** Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board  
**Report Date:** 2021-03-29

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### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the Niagara Police Services Board receives 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 227-2000 as it relates to the Marine Unit.
- The Chief is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to the Marine Unit.
- This report will set out the particulars with respect to the procedures required, and compliance with the procedures.
- This report will identify areas the Marine Unit has been utilized by other services including the extent of such utilization.

### **Financial Considerations**

Not applicable.

### **Analysis**

In accordance with By-law 227-2000, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board each year in respect to the Marine Unit and that report must include the following:

- a) a summary of the procedures required for the Marine Unit;
- b) the status of Service compliance with the said procedures; and
- c) whether or not the Marine Unit has been utilized by other services and the extent of such utilization.

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

- a) a summary of the procedures required by this By-law;

Under section 19(1) of the Police Services Act the Niagara Regional Police Service must establish procedures and processes for the provision of police services with respect to all navigable bodies and courses of water within the Region of Niagara. General Order 144.07 sets out the procedures and policies of the Marine Unit. The Niagara Regional Police Service Marine Unit, unless otherwise provided by law, shall be responsible for effective waterways enforcement, general patrol and emergency response throughout the waters within the Region of Niagara.

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

The Niagara Regional Police Service Marine Unit is fully compliant with the policies and regulations as prescribed by the General Order, Criminal Code, and the Canada Shipping Act 2001. The 2020 Marine Unit is staffed with one Sergeant and six Constables. A current list of Marine Unit personnel is maintained by the Inspector of Emergency Services. An additional seven School Resource Officers are certified as coxswains to assist the Marine Unit with summer coverage in July and August.

With three members accredited by Transport Canada as course providers (Marine Emergency Duties A3 and Small Vessel Operator Proficiency), all members meet monthly emergency drills and annual theory and skills evaluations.

During the winter months (November to April) the members of the Marine Unit provide support to frontline patrol services. In addition to this support, the members conduct mandatory training in Surface Ice Rescue, Sub Ice Diving, and Swift Water Rescue to address the search, rescue and recovery of persons and vessels on the waterways within the jurisdiction of the municipality - Police Services Act Sec. 1(i).

- c) Whether or not the Marine Unit has been utilized by other services and the extent of such utilization;

In 2020, the Marine Unit participated in national marine security initiatives by providing support to the RCMP/U.S. Coast Guard Shiprider initiative through a Memorandum of Understanding between the NRPS and RCMP providing a senior member for projects and information sharing.

Members of the Marine Unit provided support to Niagara Parks Police and Niagara Falls Fire Department through the use of equipment and personnel for Swiftwater Rescues in the Niagara Gorge.

The Niagara Regional Police Service Marine Unit provides support to the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Center (JRCC) and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) with search and rescue incidents on Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Niagara River, and Welland River. During the 2020 season, the Marine Unit responded to 132 dispatched, JRCC and CCG requests including the search for missing persons as well as stranded, disabled, abandoned and overdue vessels.

The members of the Marine Unit are also part of the Services Hostage Rescue Team compliment and are referred to as the Tactical Support Group (TSG). In 2020 the members of the Marine Unit responded to 70 Emergency Task Unit operational requests that consisted primarily of ground searches, armed persons, and high risk warrant support.

The following operational chart has been included in order to show the activities of the Marine Unit over the past three years. Water-Related calls for service include search and rescue operations and missing persons investigations in proximity to water. Front line calls for service include police response to incidents while Marine Unit officer are redeployed to general patrol.

The increase in water related calls, water related enforcement and Search and Rescue calls in 2020 may be related to a significant increase in boating activity during the COVID restrictions of citizen's other recreational options.

The increase in front line redeployment calls for service since 2018 can be attributed to members of the Marine Unit being fully accredited, requiring less training resulting in more availability for redeployment.

The 2019 search and rescue calls were significantly lower than typical years due to high water levels making access to waterways by vessel difficult.

	2020	2019	2018
Calls for Service – Water-Related	132	90	72
Calls for Service – Front Line Redeployment	691	665	304
Provincial Offence Notices – Water Related	332	188	211
Arrests	3	9	13
Community Public Safety Events	3	12	12
Search & Rescue Calls	50	17	57
TSG calls for service	70	39	20
Explosives Disposal calls	5	5	4

### **Alternatives Reviewed**

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

### **Relevant Policy Considerations**

Police Services Board By-law 227-2000, Marine Unit  
General Order 144.07 – Marine Unit

### **Other Pertinent Reports**

85/2019 Annual Report – Marine Unit – January 1 to December 31, 2019.

*This report was prepared by Sergeant Jon Pilkington, Marine Unit, reviewed by Inspector Joe Garvey, Emergency Services Unit and Brian Ash, Superintendent, Emergency and Investigative Services and recommended by Brett Flynn, Deputy Chief of Police, Operational Services.*



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#### **Submitted by:**

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Chief of Police

### **Appendices**

Not applicable.