



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Investigations into Homicides - January 1 to December 31, 2023

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2024-06-21

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board (Board) receive this report for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to advise the Board that the Niagara Regional Police Service (Service) is in compliance with By-Law 481-2024 – Investigations into Homicides.
- The Chief is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to homicide investigations.
- This report is submitted to the Board for review and consideration of information relating to the Service's response to homicide investigations.

Financial Considerations

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

Analysis

In accordance with By-Law 481-2024, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year respecting investigations into homicides. The report shall include:

- a) A summary of the written procedures concerning homicide and attempted homicide investigations;
- b) Confirmation that the procedures are in compliance with the Ministry's designated Ontario Major Case Management (OMCM) Manual and O. Reg. 394/23: Major Case Management (MCM) and Approved Software Requirements;
- c) The status of Service compliance with the procedures; and
- d) A summary of training given to members regarding homicide and attempted homicide investigations.

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 homicide and attempted homicide investigations...”*

General Order (GO) – 026.09 – Homicide Unit, was prepared and approved to comply with both the Adequacy and Effective Policing, Law Enforcement 039 – Homicide, and the OMCM Manual. This GO directs that the Homicide Unit must undertake investigative responsibility for all homicides and states, in part: “all homicides within the Region of Niagara; the direction, management, administration, and investigation of all assaults where death is imminent; sudden deaths of persons in police custody; missing persons (suspicious circumstances); or any criminal offence designated by the Chief of Police or designee.”

Responsibilities for attempted murder investigations are detailed in GO– 095.10 – Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations. This order directs personnel of the District Detective Office shall be responsible for conducting investigations including attempted murders.

- b) *“...confirmation that the procedures are in compliance with the Ministry’s designated Ontario Major Case Management Manual and O. Reg. 394/23: Major Case Management and Approved Software Requirements...”*

O. Reg. 394/23 pursuant to the Community Safety and Policing Act makes it mandatory for officers to manage and investigate designated major cases in accordance with the OMCM Manual. Homicide and attempted homicide investigations are designated major cases.

GO 202.06 – Major Case Management directs members to adhere to MCM Standards. These standards, along with the PowerCase software, were developed to ensure effective management of defined major cases.

Training to ensure compliance with the manual is also extensive and mandatory for homicide investigators and other investigators likely to be involved in homicide cases or incidents that require investigation using the MCM System.

- c) *“...the status of Service compliance with the procedures...”*

Policies and procedures continue to comply with the standards set out by the OMCM Manual. On April 1, 2024, a revised version of the OMCM Manual was issued and a review of the GOs confirmed compliance with the changes to the manual.

- d) *“...a summary of training given to members regarding homicide and attempted homicide investigations ...”*

An extensive range of specialized training is required and has been provided to investigators engaged in homicide investigations. Investigators assigned to the Homicide Unit are given priority consideration for the OMCM training. This two-week course provides specialized training to ensure compliance with the OMCM manual and to standardize investigative procedures across the province. Components of this course include fundamentals of MCM, crime scene management, search and seizure, judicial authorization to intercept private communications, strategic approach to investigative interviewing, statement admissibility, behavioural sciences, dangerous offenders, incident command, role of the coroner, media/public appeals, and victim issues.

The Service ensures that all members in primary investigator roles receive the Ontario Police College (OPC) accredited MCM course. Positions for members are allotted in each class to provide training each year. As part of the continued professional development of members of the Homicide Unit, designated investigators have been delegated responsibility to assist in the facilitation of the MCM course and deliver key lectures to students during Service-delivered classes. This practice has also allowed other members to benefit from the knowledge and expertise of members of the Homicide Unit.

General investigative training has also been provided to members engaged in conducting criminal investigations. This training is delivered through the OPC accredited Criminal Investigators Training (CIT) course. The course curriculum includes components in homicide and sudden death investigation. Positions for Service members are allotted in CIT classes offered at OPC, and at satellite locations when the training is facilitated by other police services. When the CIT course is facilitated by the Service, investigators from the Homicide Unit play a significant role during the preparation and delivery of the course presentations.

Specific specialized training in homicide and major crime investigations is also provided to members fulfilling investigative roles. These courses include the Homicide Investigators course, the Major Investigation courses, and Investigative and Forensic Interviewing courses. These courses are held at the Canadian Police College and OPC. Service members assigned to investigative roles have also attended Homicide Investigators conferences in Ontario and elsewhere in North America. In addition, two members of the Homicide Unit usually attend the International Homicide Investigators Association training in the United States each year. This training ensures that investigators continue to receive the training that will enable them to continue to perform at the level expected of an investigator in a homicide environment.

In 2023, 3 members of the Homicide Unit attended the OPC Homicide Course. All Homicide Unit members have had the MCM and CIT training courses.

For the reasons stated above, the Service remains in compliance with By-Law 481-2024, as it relates to investigations into homicides.

Status of Homicide Investigations:

Year	Homicides	Concluded	Before the Courts	Unsolved
2021	6	1	10	0
2022	10	1	14	1
2023	12	2	15	4
Total	28	4	n/a	5

The Opioid Education and Enforcement Unit (OEEU) is funded by the Province’s Community Safety and Policing Grant. The OEEU was established in 2017 with the objective to provide enforcement and education to reduce the availability and usage of opioids in the Niagara Region. In 2022, the OEEU began to address the rapidly increasing number of opioid-related deaths with the intention of holding those criminally responsible for such deaths accountable. The focus remains on the enforcement and education of opioid use and trafficking; however, when the evidence dictates, other offences such as manslaughter charges will be laid accordingly. Despite numerous unrelated charges laid by the OEEU, no charges for the offence of manslaughter were laid in relation to any 2023 investigations. There were however 2 manslaughter cases still before the courts in 2023, which are reflected in the ‘Before the Courts’ category.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

To comply with the provisions of Board By-Laws and to maintain compliance with Adequacy and Effective Policing.

Relevant Policy Considerations

- Board By-Law 481-2024 – Investigations into Homicides
- GO 026.09 – Homicide Unit
- GO 095.10 – Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations
- GO 202.06 – Major Case Management

Other Pertinent Reports

8.7 - 2023.07.27 - Annual Report – Homicide and Attempted Homicide Investigations – January 1 to December 31, 2022.

This report was prepared by Andrew Knevel, Staff Sergeant, Major Crime Unit, in consultation with Mike Tripp, Acting Inspector, Investigative Support Services. Recommended by David Masotti, Acting Deputy Chief, Operational Services.

T. WASELOVICH

Submitted by:

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Appendices

Not applicable.