



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes and Hate Propaganda Offences - January 1 to December 31, 2024

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2025-02-04

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 447-2024 Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes and Hate Propaganda Offences.
- The Chief of Police is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes and Hate Propaganda Offences.
- This report provides information to the Board for review and consideration of information relating to the Service's response to Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes and Hate Propaganda.

Financial Considerations

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

Analysis

In accordance with By-Law 447-2024, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect of the investigation of Hate Propaganda Offences and Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes. The report shall include:

- a) A summary of the written procedures concerning the investigation of Hate Propaganda Offences and Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes, including changes since the date of the last report;
- b) The status of Service compliance with the said procedures;

- c) Confirmation that members dealing with Hate Propaganda Offences and Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes, have been trained in accordance with Section 4.5; and
- d) A report on the Service's involvement in community organizations to prevent the repetition of Hate Propaganda Offences and Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes.

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

- a) *"...a summary of the written procedures concerning the investigation of Hate Propaganda Offences and Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes, including changes since the date of the last report ..."*

General Order (GO) 027.09 with respect to Hate Crime, outlines the procedure to be followed when members are called upon to investigate hate propaganda offences or public complaints of hate or bias motivated crimes.

Hate/bias motivated crimes and hate propaganda offences have an impact beyond the physical and emotional trauma to the victim. The victim's cultural, ethnic, religious or lifestyle group, and the community, can also be affected. If left unchecked, these crimes can result in the escalation in varying degrees of tension between the different community groups.

The Service takes a lead role in coordinating the response to hate/bias motivated crimes and hate propaganda offences. A strong Service and community response to this type of crime will show the perpetrators their actions will not be tolerated.

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

When the Service receives a report(s) of hate/bias motivated crime, the officer in charge of the District Detective Office where the incident occurred shall cause a full investigation to be conducted.

The Hate Crime Coordinator is a member of the Criminal Intelligence Unit within Special Investigative Services. The Coordinator shall be notified and kept apprised of the investigation's status and will become involved, as necessary. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Unit shall also be notified to aid with proactive and reactive community engagement to ensure the proper information and concerns are being addressed with Service members and within the Community. The Service, in partnership with Victim Services Niagara, provides assistance to victims of crime, trauma, and tragic circumstances in such instances.

Where prosecutions of hate/bias motivated crime result, the Ministry of the Attorney General provides further assistance to victims of crime through their Victim/Witness Assistance Coordinator. The Victim/Witness Coordinator liaises with the Crown Attorney, police, victims, and witnesses during the pre-prosecution and post-prosecution stages and acts as a support service.

In 2024, there were 33 reported occurrences that had a hate and/or bias related element. Of those 33 occurrences, 27 were designated a hate incident and 6 were designated a hate crime. These designations are police classifications at the time of this report. They can be subject to change as the matter proceeds through the court system.

The EDI Unit continues to work extensively on personal outreach with marginalized communities. They also utilize social media to raise awareness with respect to reporting incidents of hate and bias. The Service's #StopHateNiagara campaign introduced and provided pamphlets to further connect with community groups to encourage reporting and ensure these types of incidents are captured. The Service continued its commitment in educating the community and public regarding hate/bias related incidents.

The occurrences in 2024 can be further illustrated in the chart below to show which identifiable groups within the Niagara Region were subjected to hate or bias-related occurrences. There were no reported incidents based on age or disability.

Offence	Age	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Race/Ethnicity	Nationality	Religion	Total
Aggravated Assault					1			1
Assault			1					1
Assault with a weapon					1			1
Break and Enter					1			1
Harassment (Calls/online)			1			3	1	5
Mischief/ Graffiti			5	1	7	2	7	22
Theft under \$5000.00			1		1			2
Sexual Assault			1					1
Uttering Threats						2	1	3
Willful promotion of hatred							1	1
TOTAL			9	1	11	7	10	38

The victimization of the 33 incidents can be further broken down into sub-categories. Data could be duplicated if the occurrence incorporated 1 or more hate/bias elements (i.e., national origin and religion would be categorized as 2 separate occurrences even

though it was part of a single report), which is reflected in the total number of incidents as 38 in the above chart.

Based on race, the Black community was the most frequent group to be subject to hate/biased occurrences, primarily through graffiti. Within the religion category, the Jewish community was the most victimized, primarily through graffiti. The sexual orientation category also represented a majority of targeted occurrences.

As it relates to criminal offences, mischief/graffiti remains the predominant offence reported accounting for nearly 67% of the total occurrences. Harassment and threats represent the second most common offence, which typically involves harassing behaviour with offensive or racial slurs being used.

Of the 33 occurrences, the Service laid 29 criminal charges that are still before the courts; however, none met the *Criminal Code* threshold of a hate/bias crime. In the incidents where charges were laid but did not constitute as a hate/bias crime, the motivation for the accused individual to commit the offence was not or could not be proven to be because of hatred or bias toward the identifiable group. It should be noted as well that these charges could also be the result of a single individual being charged with more than 1 offence for the same incident.

The following is an annual comparison of hate/bias reported incidents for the past three years:

Year	Hate/Bias Reported Incidents	Criminal Charges
2022	41	7
2023	30	3
2024	31	29

- c) *"...Confirmation that members dealing with Hate Propaganda Offences and Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes have been trained in accordance with Section 4.5 ..."*

The Service is dedicated to serving and protecting all residents and visitors within the Regional Municipality of Niagara. In recognition of that commitment, the Service provides its members with current and relative training. In addition, all new recruits attending the Ontario Police College (OPC) receive mandated training on hate/bias crime and Race Relations Modules.

Officers involved in the investigation of hate/bias motivated crimes and hate propaganda offences are part of a network of over 15 police services responsible for intelligence gathering and specialized support on investigations into hate/bias motivated crimes. The Service remains an active partner of the Provincial Hate Crime Extremism Investigative Team and a separate national committee with the Ontario Provincial Police regarding hate crime and criminal extremism.

- d) *"...a report on the Service's involvement in community organizations to prevent the repetition of Hate Propaganda Offences and Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes ..."*

The Service strives to embrace the cultural diversity that reflects the ethnic backgrounds of the communities in the Niagara Region. Officers voluntarily participate in cultural events in the community, which benefits the Service and the organizations by promoting partnerships and understanding. In addition, through the Chief of Police Community Inclusion Council, cross table education and dialogue allows the Service to engage with and hear concerns directly from members of our community.

Uniform members continue to receive Diversity and Hate Crime training while at OPC as part of their basic constable training. Once they have graduated, they return to the Training Unit and receive further training from the EDI Unit and from the Hate Crime Coordinator.

In 2024, the Service continued mandatory Equity and Diversity training for its membership. This framework for training was developed through the Internal Inclusion Committee. It involves two 30-minute learning modules covering Diversity, Inclusion, and Unconscious Biases. The Service remains committed to community input to deliver better tailored training for police and/or community messaging.

In 2024, a localized training program for uniform personnel regarding hate-motivated investigations was implemented. This included a new training video developed and prepared by the Ontario Police Training Video Alliance, training guides available to members, and an interservice hate crime email address. The benefits of this training program prepare officers to effectively incorporate EDI into frontline patrol and investigations.

The EDI Unit continues to work toward their goal of promoting inclusivity and decreasing hate/bias incidents within the Niagara Region. This is accomplished through both mandatory and volunteer training opportunities for Service members, as well as various community outreach and information sessions for members of the public and community partners.

In 2024, the EDI Unit focused largely on training and development, attending several post-secondary educational institutions, and meeting with staff and students to educate them on the role of policing in Canada, as well as the various cultures and religions that exist throughout the Niagara Region. Additionally, the EDI Unit attended newcomer organizations such as the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre and the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre to provide insight to immigrants and refugees on the #StopHateNiagara campaign, discussing how to recognize and report hate crimes/incidents, as well as helping them to understanding their rights and responsibilities as residents of Niagara.

For our members, the EDI Unit utilized the "Lunch and Learn" initiative as a teaching opportunity, bringing in subject matter experts to engage with both sworn and civilian

members, furthering their knowledge on the various cultures in Niagara, as well as how to respectfully communicate and work alongside those in diverse deserving groups.

For the reasons stated above, the Service remains in compliance with By-Law 447-2024 Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes and Hate Propaganda Offences.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

The training of Service members on current subject matter is continuous. It is through Community Policing, EDI, Crime Stoppers, Corporate Communications, community engagement, and public contact that trust is gained.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Board By-Law 447-2024 Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes and Hate Propaganda Offences
GO 027.09 – Hate Crime

Adequacy and Effective Policing Guideline LE-007 – Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes

Adequacy and Effective Policing Guideline LE-008 – Hate Propaganda

Other Pertinent Reports

8.11 - 2024.02.22 – Annual Report – Hate/Bias Motivated Crimes and Hate Propaganda Offences – January 1 to December 31, 2023.

This report was prepared by David Santo, Staff Sergeant, Special Investigative Services, in consultation with Mike Tripp, Inspector, Major Crime. Reviewed by Dave Masotti, Superintendent, Investigative Services. Recommended by Mario Lagrotteria, Acting Deputy Chief, Community Services.



Submitted by:

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Appendices

Not applicable.