



# NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

## Police Service Board Report

**PUBLIC AGENDA**

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**Subject:** Annual Report – Marine Unit – January 1 to December 31, 2024

**Report To:** Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

**Report Date:** 2025-02-26

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### **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 483-2024 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**

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

### **Analysis**

In accordance with By-Law 483-2024, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect to the Marine Unit. The report shall include:

- a) a summary of the procedures 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 for the Marine Unit...”*

Under Section 10 (6) of the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, the Service shall provide policing in respect of all navigable bodies and courses of water within the Region of Niagara. General Order (GO) 144.07 sets out the procedures and policies of the Marine Unit. The 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 Marine Unit is fully compliant with the policies and regulations as prescribed by the GO, Criminal Code of Canada, and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001. During 2024, the Marine Unit was staffed with 1 sergeant and 6 constables. A current list of Marine Unit personnel is maintained by the Inspector of Emergency/Tactical Services.

With one member accredited by Transport Canada as course provider (Small Domestic Vessel Basic Safety and Small Vessel Operator Proficiency), all members meet monthly emergency drills and annual 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.

c) *“...whether or not the Marine Unit has been utilized by other services and the extent of such utilization...”*

Members of the Marine Unit provided support to Niagara Parks Police (NPP) and Niagara Falls Fire Department through the use of equipment and personnel for swift water rescues and recoveries in the Niagara Gorge.

Further, members of the Marine Unit provided training to the Fort Erie Fire Service, Canada Border Services Agency, NPP, and the Service's Auxiliary Unit. This training provided the agencies with Transport Canada certifications in Small Domestic Vessel Basic Safety and Small Vessel Operator Proficiency.

During the Canada Day weekend, members of the Marine Unit partnered with members of the Traffic Enforcement Unit to conduct water-based RIDE patrols. During this project, patrols were conducted on Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and Niagara River with enforcement directed toward impaired-related offences on the water. As a result of the

targeted social media campaign and high visibility patrols, no alcohol-related offences were observed.

During 2024, 1 member of the Marine Unit was qualified to provide support to border security through the ShipRider Program. This program is a joint operation between the Federal governments of Canada and the United States of America (US). The program is coordinated through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the US Coast Guard. The member was utilized for 1 ShipRider patrol during the 2024 Season.

The 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 2024 season, the Marine Unit responded to 52 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 Service’s Hostage Rescue Team and are referred to as the Tactical Support Group. In 2024, the members of the Marine Unit responded to 30 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 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. Frontline calls for service include police response to incidents while Marine Unit officers are redeployed or conducting general patrol during the “off-season” supporting uniform patrol.

Marine Unit Activities	2024	2023	2022
Calls for Service – Water-related	52	76	105
Calls for Service – Frontline	430	570	352
Provincial Offence Notices – Water-related	57	259	185
Arrests	7	9	4
Community Public Safety Events	10	8	6
Search and Rescue Calls	23	28	47
Tactical Support Group Calls for Service	30	35	25
Explosives Disposal Calls	4	2	1

### **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 Adequate and Effective Policing requirements.

## **Relevant Policy Considerations**

Board By-Law 483-2024 – Marine Unit  
GO 144.07 – Marine Unit

## **Other Pertinent Reports**

8.11 – 2024.03.28 Annual Report – Marine Unit – January 1 to December 31, 2023.

*This report was prepared by Jon Pilkington, Sergeant, Marine Unit, reviewed by Matt Whiteley, Staff Sergeant, Emergency/Tactical Services, Matt Hodges, Inspector, Emergency/Tactical Services, and Darrin Forbes, Superintendent, Emergency Services. Recommended by Todd Waselovich, Deputy Chief, Operational Services.*



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### **Submitted by:**

Bill Fordy, O.O.M. #9615  
Chief of Police

## **Appendices**

Not applicable.