



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Stolen or Smuggled Firearms
January 1 to December 31, 2024

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2025-03-12

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 459-2024 – Stolen or Smuggled Firearms.
- By-Law 459-2024 contains provisions requiring the Chief of Police to report specific information in order to ensure compliance with the legislative guidelines.
- This report is submitted to the Board for review and consideration of information relating to Stolen or Smuggled Firearms by the Service.

Financial Considerations

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

Analysis

In accordance with By-Law 459-2024, the Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect of the investigation of stolen or smuggled firearms. This report will contain:

- a) A summary of the written procedures concerning investigations into stolen or smuggled firearms; and
- b) The status of Service compliance with the said procedures.

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

- a) *“...a summary of the written procedures concerning investigations into stolen or smuggled firearms...”*

Written procedures regarding stolen and smuggled firearms are found in General Order (GO) 175.06 Firearms – Investigations/Seizure/Property/Maintenance. This GO gives officers specific instructions on firearm investigational procedures in the various circumstances they may encounter.

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

The procedures, duties, and responsibilities set out in GO 175.06 ensure that the Service is compliant with the Adequate and Effective Policing Regulation LE-019 Stolen and Smuggled Firearms.

The Service has assigned a member of the Service to the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit on a full-time basis, and is therefore able to effectively satisfy the provisions of the GO. The assigned member deals with local firearms issues as well as being involved in investigative projects across Ontario and into the United States.

Training initiatives instituted by the province and by the Service have ensured a regular review of the above-noted requirements by Service members. The recruit training process and the coach officer training processes ensure that new Service members, upon being appointed, obtain knowledge of and comply with the requirements of the GO and the policies associated to it.

The following is a brief overview and yearly comparison illustrating the number of firearms seized, reported lost or stolen, and firearms sent for disposal through the Service:

	2022	2023	2024
Seized Firearms	696	822	879
Reported Lost/Stolen	36	50	26
Sent for Disposal	448	836	616

Seized firearms include seizures resulting from criminal investigations, found firearms, firearms voluntarily submitted to police for disposal, firearms seized because of a Judicial Order, and firearms seized by members of the Canada Border Services Agency.

Not all firearms are subject to disposal upon seizure. A firearm that is deemed as evidence and forms the basis of a criminal charge must be retained until the court process has been completed. Upon conviction, the courts can order the item be sent for destruction. In the absence of any such order, the item must be returned to the owner and/or depending on the circumstances, the owner could consent to the item being sent for destruction. In 2024, 120 firearms were returned to the lawful owner.

When a firearm is seized, in the interests of public safety and in accordance with Section 117.04 of the Criminal Code, the item seized must be retained pending the outcome of a mandatory disposition hearing. Again, the item could be the subject of a forfeiture/destruction order or ordered to be returned to the owner.

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 the Adequate and Effective Policing requirements.

Relevant Policy Considerations

- Board By-Law 459-2024 – Stolen or Smuggled Firearms
- GO 175.06 – Firearms - Investigations/Seizure/Property/Maintenance
- Adequate and Effective Policing Regulation, LE-019 – Stolen or Smuggled Firearms

Other Pertinent Reports

8.9 - 2024.04.25 Annual Report – Stolen or Smuggled Firearms - January 1 to December 31, 2023

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



Submitted by:

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Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable.