



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Acoustic Hailing Devices
January 1 to December 31, 2024

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2025-05-05

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 Board By-Law 464-2024 – Acoustic Hailing Devices.
- The Chief is required to make an annual written report to the Board concerning use of Acoustic Hailing Devices.
- In 2024, the Service's Emergency Task Unit (ETU) used an acoustic hailing device during high-risk incidents.
- In 2024, the Service's Public Order Unit (POU) acquired an acoustic hailing device to assist with crowd management incidents.

Financial Considerations

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

Analysis

As per its mandate, the ETU provides a response to a variety of high-risk incidents, including but not limited to hostage takings, barricaded persons, execution of high-risk search warrants, high-risk escorts, building and area searches, high-risk canine tracks, missing or lost vulnerable persons, high-risk vehicle stops, and incidents involving emotionally disturbed persons.

The POU responds to a variety of incidents from demonstrations, protests, civic celebrations, evidence searches, and missing person searches.

During high-risk incidents, communication with the subject (from a safe distance) is of critical importance in the effort to bring the matter to a successful resolution. Current

equipment available to enhance safety during police communication with a subject includes the LRAD-100x. LRAD stands for Long-Range Acoustic Device. Introduced to the ETU inventory in 2012 for appropriate use in operational settings, this equipment provided an effective alternative to the traditional commercial loud hailer that was prone to poor performance. Since being acquired, this device has become an invaluable tool for tactical operations throughout the Niagara Region.

The device is a self-contained portable loud hailer that can penetrate small structures and be heard over the background noise of vehicles, vessels, sirens, and boisterous crowds, ensuring that messages and commands are heard and clearly understood. It has a focused directional sound pattern that operates at 137 decibels at 1 metre maximum continuous output and can transmit highly intelligible speech transmissions over 600 metres. The device comes standard with MP3 capabilities, which allows a pre-recorded message to be played, a useful option for trained crisis negotiators and POU members under the direction of Incident Command.

In accordance with By-Law 464-2024, the Chief of Police shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year with respect to acoustic hailing devices. The report shall contain:

- a) a summary of the written procedures relating to acoustic hailing devices;
- b) the status of Service compliance with the said procedures;
- c) confirmation that Members have been trained in accordance with Section 4.2;
- d) a summary of the circumstances in which acoustic hailing devices have been deployed; and
- e) the results of the testing and recommendations relied on by the Service in relation to Sections 3 of O. Reg 405/23.

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

- a) *“...a summary of the written procedures relating to acoustic hailing devices...”*

This acoustic hailing device remains in the inventory of the ETU and the POU. Use of this device is subject to the conditions of established written procedures contained within General Order (GO) 227.03 – Acoustic Hailing Devices. As required, those procedures include:

- i. Provisions that govern the use and function of acoustic hailing devices; and
- ii. Direction that ensures that recorded voice announcements are recorded using good engineering practices, and that existing and future recordings are reviewed to ensure messages are clear and do not result in higher than anticipated sound pressure levels.

Further, the Standard Operating Procedures Manual of the ETU and POU have been updated to address the maintenance, training, and deployment of acoustic hailing devices.

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

The Service is in compliance with the provisions of this By-Law and the procedures as described within GO 227.03 - Acoustic Hailing Devices.

- c) *“...confirmation that members have been trained in accordance with Section 4.2...”*

Members of the ETU who may be required to operate the acoustical hailing device have received the appropriate level of training during their spring and fall training in 2024. This training addressed Service procedures, proper use of the device, and training regarding product information, warnings, and practical applications.

Members of the POU received training on the operation of the acoustic hailing device during their spring training on April 22 and 23, 2025.

Training for Incident Commanders was also conducted in the spring and fall of 2024. Service policy dictates that the LRAD-100x may only be authorized for use by a qualified Incident Commander, who has also received training on the equipment.

- d) *“...a summary of the circumstances in which acoustic hailing devices have been deployed...”*

Operationally, the acoustic hailing device was used 15 times during the resolution of critical incidents in 2024, 3 times in 2023, and 8 times in 2022. In some cases, the use of the device resulted in subjects exiting premises and surrendering to police. In other cases, the device was utilized during major incidents with the subjects surrendering or being arrested due to other police tactics. The acoustic hailing device was not used by the POU during 2024.

- e) *“...the results of the testing and recommendations relied on by the Service in relation to Sections 3 of O.Reg. 405/23...”*

By way of All Chiefs Memorandum 13-011, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services provided police services with a report that satisfies the requirement listed above. The report, entitled “Acoustic Testing and Assessment of the Long-Range Acoustic Device,” was prepared for the Ministry by HGC Engineering (Howe Gastmeier Chapnik Limited) of Mississauga, Ontario.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

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

Relevant Policy Considerations

Board By-Law 464-2024 – Acoustic Hailing Devices
GO 227.03 – Acoustic Hailing Devices

Other Pertinent Reports

8.6 - 2024.05.23 Annual Report – Acoustic Hailing Devices – January 1 to December 31, 2023.

This report was prepared by Blair Palmer, Sergeant, Emergency Task Unit; reviewed by Matt Whiteley, Staff Sergeant, Emergency Services, Matt Hodges Inspector, Emergency Operations, and Darrin Forbes, Superintendent, Emergency Services. Recommended by Todd Waselovich, Deputy Chief, Operational Services.



Submitted by:

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

Appendices

Not applicable.