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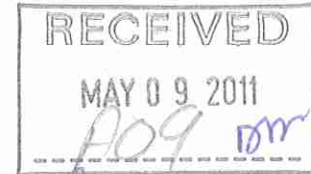
# Niagara Regional Police Service

Chief of Police Wendy E. Southall

## REPORT OF THE POLICE SERVICE

TO

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA POLICE SERVICES BOARD  
(By-Law 169-97)



Public Agenda

Board Report Number: 87/2011

Date of Report: May 02, 2011

Date of Board Meeting: May 26, 2011

Chairperson Mal Woodhouse  
and Members of the  
Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board

**Reference:** Reporting Requirements of Police Services Board  
By-Law 222 – 2000 *Property Offences*

**Recommendation:** Receive for Information

### **Background:**

On 2000.11.30 and 2000.12.4, a number of Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board by-laws were enacted in response to the *Provincial Adequacy Standards regulation* (O. Reg. 3/99). These by-laws contain



Fort Erie • Grimsby • Lincoln • Niagara Falls • Niagara-on-the-Lake • Pelham  
Port Colborne • St. Catharines • Thorold • Wainfleet • Welland • West Lincoln



provisions requiring the Chief of Police to report specific information in order to ensure compliance with the legislative guidelines.

This report is submitted to provide the Board with the necessary and required information, pursuant to certain by-laws related to investigations of property offences by members of the Niagara Regional Police Service. Subsequent reports will follow annually to continue with this reporting process.

### **By-Law 222 – 2000, Property Offences**

*5.1 The Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year. The report shall include:*

***a) a summary of written procedures concerning property offence investigations;***

Written procedures regarding Property Offences are found in the following Niagara Regional Police Service General Orders:

- 1. GO-095.06 – Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations*
- 2. GO-121.07 – Forensic Services Unit*
- 3. GO-035.08 – Found, Seized or Received Property*
- 4. GO-037.06 – Fire Calls and Arson Investigations*

These orders detail the responsibilities of officers when investigating property offences. They were prepared and approved to comply with *Provincial Adequacy Standards Regulations LE-006, LE-020, LE-030, LE-042 and ER-004.*

*General Order 095.06 – Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations* is intended to familiarize police officers with the duties and responsibilities necessary to conduct routine criminal investigations. It also outlines the process to be followed when involved in incidents considered to be of a major nature. The order outlines the obligations placed upon those officers who initially respond to the scene of a crime and those for officers who will continue to follow-up the investigation, including members of the Detective Offices. The provisions contained in the order effectively address Section 5.1a of By-Law 222 –2000, *a summary of the written procedures concerning property offence investigations.*

*General Order 121.07 – Forensic Services Unit* was written to assist with the investigation of most types of occurrences where the collection and preservation of physical evidence is beneficial. It reinforces the responsibility of the first officer at the scene of an occurrence to ensure the proper protection of the scene to guard against contamination. It also reinforces that the officer determines whether there is a need for a Scenes of Crime Officer or Forensic Services Officer to attend in order to conduct an expert examination. It provides a sequential list of issues to be considered by officers at the scene of an investigation. These include criteria for examining stolen vehicles, preliminary

examination at break and enter crime scenes, seizing exhibits, factors affecting the retrieval of crime scene fingerprints and footwear comparison and use of mug shots and lineups.

*General Order 035.08 – Found, Seized or Received Property* expands on the obligations of officers investigating property offences by establishing procedures for the control of property that comes into the possession of members of the Service pursuant to the Police Services Act and the Regulations. The order obliges members to properly document and enter without delay into the existing Service property system, all property that is acquired, either directly or indirectly by reason of their duties unless otherwise permitted by this general order. This includes all exhibits that may be seized during an investigation with the exception of licit and illicit drugs and motor vehicles, which is dealt with in other general orders.

*General Order 037.06 – Fire Calls and Arson Investigations* is intended to familiarize police officers with the structure, operation and responsibilities of the Detectives in each of the Districts conducting Arson Investigations. This order obliges the members assigned to investigate fires throughout the Niagara Region that are identified as arsons or fires of suspicious origin. They are also to liaise and work in partnership with the Fire Departments and the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office, as well as other police services and agencies involved in the investigation and prevention of arson; provide functional expertise and support to members of the Service; monitor fire related occurrences and arson reports identifying similarities, patterns and suspects; coordinate, as required, any program or project to combat serial arsons; maintain files on all arson suspects; and monitor any identified high-risk individuals. At present this Order and the overall structure of Arson Investigations is under review by Detective Support and currently a downloading of these responsibilities has been delegated from the Arson Unit to the local Detective Units.

*Regional Municipality of Niagara, Police Services Board Licensing By-Law No. 300–2010* was developed to license, regulate and govern various trades, callings, businesses and occupations located within the Niagara Region including second hand goods stores. A second hand goods store means any premises used either wholly or in part for the purpose of buying and/or selling second-hand used goods and includes those stores known as "pawn shops".

The by-law requires dealers in second-hand goods to record all transactions, with the exception of certain items, in a register, and make that register available for inspection by police or by-law officers. This by-law requires Dealers to make all reasonable efforts to identify persons offering to them, any goods or articles which they believe may have been stolen, or otherwise unlawfully obtained, and report all known facts concerning such person to the nearest police station or police officer forthwith.

The owners of second hand stores are also required to report any apparent removal or defacement of a serial number or model number of any goods or articles offered to him or received by him.

Copies of the second hand store registers are received at the Detective Offices of each of the Niagara Regional Police Districts where those stores exist. The registers are scrutinized by investigators who have been specifically assigned that responsibility and investigations are conducted into any transaction that appears suspicious.

**b) the status of Service compliance with the said procedures**

There are numerous systems in place to ensure compliance and that officers are fulfilling their obligations. General Order 034.05, Report Submissions, requires officers to submit a report under certain circumstances including instances where a criminal offence has been committed or alleged, or incidents identified by the Service or any member as being worthy of documentation for future reference. The criteria for reporting include property offence investigations.

The General Order requires the supervisor to read all reports submitted, and before signing them, assure that each report is complete, legible, and meets the required standards as outlined in section 3.10 of the order.

*General Order – 095.06 – Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations* obliges the Divisional Staff Sergeant or Sergeant to review all occurrence reports submitted by members under their command and return the occurrence report to the officer for follow-up investigation, if required. The General Order also requires the District Detective Office, Officer in Charge, to review all occurrence reports pertaining to criminal investigations and return them to the original investigating officer or re-assign as necessary to a detective for follow-up investigation.

The General Order also identifies supervisor's guidelines for case management. Supervisors are required to review each incident and determine what, if any, further resources should be applied. Each incident is assigned a priority from one to three based on criteria identified in the order. Priority one investigations shall take precedence over Priority two occurrences and so on. The priority system ensures that all occurrence reports are reviewed and receive the required attention and follow-up.

**c) a summary of crime prevention initiatives for property crime.**

The following Crime Prevention Initiatives have been developed by the Niagara Regional Police's Community Services Unit in an attempt to minimize property related crimes within the Region:

- Neighbourhood Watch
- Vandalism
- Robbery Prevention
- Shoplifting Awareness
- Home Security
- Realty Watch
- Internal Theft
- Business Security
- Operation Identification and,

**CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)**

The National Crime Prevention Institute describes CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) as the proper design and effective use of the built environment which may lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement of the quality of life.<sup>1</sup>

Members of the Niagara Regional Police Service's Community Services Unit who have received specialized training in CPTED theory and application have been conducting what are called "CPTED Audits" at schools, nursing homes, public parks and other places or premises throughout the Niagara Region for several years. During these audits the officers' work with property owners and building operators to implement what is described as Natural Access Control.

Natural Access Control is described in CPTED terms as a design concept directed primarily at decreasing crime opportunity by denying access to crime targets and creating in offenders a perception of risk. This may be accomplished in a myriad of ways, including designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate public routes and discouraging access to private areas with structural elements.

Audits undertaken by Community Service officers are significant undertakings, and involve site visits, interviews with on-site employees and supervisory staff, geographical and topographical analysis, ingress and egress planning, and recommendations about the landscape design and purchases of alarm / surveillance equipment.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Louisville, Justice Administration Louisville, KY 40292

The challenge for Niagara's officers is echoed across the country, namely, what the police can do to get buy-in from architects and designers, who place a low value on CPTED concerns in relation to esthetic concerns. Upcoming construction projects in St. Catharines exemplify this problem. There has been no opportunity for a police CPTED consultation in the design and planning of either the Port Tower project or the new St. Catharines hospital.

Additionally, individual Districts throughout the Region run initiatives and projects that are specifically dedicated in the reduction of property crimes in their respective areas. The following are two examples:

### **Safe Summer Projects Welland**

In June 2008 and 2009 the Central Region developed a program in which #5 District Fort Erie and #6 District Port Colborne reintroduced a "Safe Summer" Project designed to investigate damage caused in local parks throughout the Lake Erie Shoreline, including the many trails along the waterways and areas of #3 District including Pelham and Welland. A number of complaints were received that caused concerns within the community in relation to damage caused in local parks. This program is designed to increase police presence in the local park areas and target known offenders.

### **Project "North Shore"(Cottage Check)**

In January 2004, #6 District started a project designed to provide a highly visible and specialized patrol (ATV) in the seasonal property areas of the City of Port Colborne and Township of Wainfleet. In 2008 that project continued to expand including #5 District Fort Erie and its seasonal residences. In conjunction the O.P.P., R.C.M.P., CN Police and the Niagara Regional Police Service this program has been very successful.

This project is dedicated to addressing both a community and police concern by providing a greater sense of security to the property owners in this area. At the same time, this mission will serve as a deterrent to the criminals who have previously taken advantage of the communities' vulnerability. Additionally, this project will develop contact information to assist in the long-term policing of these areas. To date this program has allowed members of the Niagara Regional Police Service to attend at and inspect over 500 seasonal residences this year.

### **Conclusion**

This report is submitted to the Board for review and consideration of information relating to investigations into property offences by members of the Niagara Regional Police Service.

**Relevant Policy Considerations:**

*By-law No. 222 – 2000, A By-Law respecting Property Offences (including Break & Enter)*

*GO-095.06 - Major Incidents and Routine Criminal Investigations*

*GO-121.07 - Forensic Services Unit*

*GO-035.08 - Found, Seized or Received Property*

*GO-037.06 – Fire Calls and Arson Investigations*

*Regional Municipality of Niagara, Police Services Board Licencing By-Law No. 300-2010*

**Cost of Recommendations:**

Nil

**Alternative Options:**

To request additional information or alternate method of reporting.

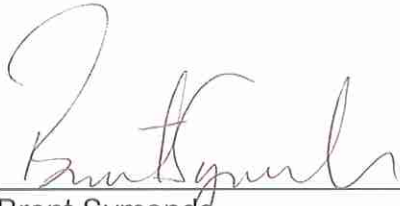
**Reasons for Recommendation:**

To comply with the provisions of Police Service Board by-laws and to maintain compliance with Provincial Adequacy Standards Regulations.

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