

County of Brant O.P.P. Detachment Board Report

To: Chair and Members of the Brant O.P.P. Detachment Board
From: Cindy Stevenson, General Manager, Emergency & Protective Services
Date: March 25, 2025
Report #: RPT-0124-25
Subject: False Alarm Statistics – January 2025
Purpose: For Approval

Recommendation

That Staff Report RPT-0124-25 “False Alarm Statistics – January 2025” be received as information.

Report

Background

At the County of Brant O.P.P. Detachment Board’s request, staff compile statistics on O.P.P. response to false alarms on an ongoing basis. This report includes statistics from January 2024 to January 2025.

In 2019, following a review and recommendations from the former Police Services Board, County of Brant Council approved an escalating fee scale for at-fault false alarms. The escalating fee schedule was implemented at that time as a strategy to reduce the unnecessary use of police resources in response to false alarms.

The County’s Fees and Charges were further updated on April 1, 2024, to the following:

That the County’s fees and charges by-law be updated, effective April 1, 2024, as follows:

Number of Responses to At Fault False Alarms. Fee schedule to reset per new property owner, or following two (2) years since the last at fault false alarm for a property owner:

	<u>Fee:</u>
1 st	Warning letter only
2 nd	\$150
3 rd	\$250
4 th	\$350
5 th +	\$500

The fee schedule will reset when an address has a new property owner, or following two (2) years since the last at fault false alarm for a property owner.

The Board approved a Progressive Communications Plan to Address Repeat False Alarms at the meeting on January 28, 2025.

Analysis

False Alarm Statistics

The January, 2024 to January, 2025 False Alarm Statistics are outlined below:

Month	Responses	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total Invoiced
January, 2024	17	17	0	0	0	0	\$0
February, 2024	22	22	0	0	0	0	\$0
March, 2024	20	13	6	1	0	0	\$1,150
April, 2024	14	12	0	2	0	0	\$0
May, 2024	20	16	1	0	1	2	\$1,500
June, 2024	25	18	4	2	1	0	\$1,450
July, 2024	36	17	5	2	1	11	\$7,100
August, 2024	12	7	3	1	0	1	\$1,200
September, 2024	19	15	3	1	0	0	\$700
October, 2024	20	10	7	1	1	0	\$1,650
November, 2024	5	3	0	1	0	1	\$750
December, 2024	13	8	3	2	0	0	\$950
January, 2025	12	8	3	0	0	1	\$950

In January 2025 the number of responses to false alarms is lower than the experience of January 2024, with a decrease of 42%; however, there are more repeat visits, resulting in fines of \$950.

Of the repeat visits, one property accounts for 6 responses during the month of January. Staff intend to follow up with this property owner.

Further to the questions asked at the previous Board meeting in February, the top repeat properties in 2024 have paid all invoices for false alarm fees charged, with the exception of one invoice outstanding for \$500. Total fines issued for 2024 is \$17,150.00, current outstanding balance is \$1,600.00. The invoices are sent to the property owners.

The County has not had issues with property owners not paying invoices but does have the ability to add unpaid invoices to taxes if it becomes an issue in the future.

Progressive Communications Plan to Address Repeat False Alarms

As presented at the January 2025 Detachment Board meeting, a two-pronged communications strategy was approved for implementation, that includes the following elements:

1. Public Education: objective is to reduce the frequency of false alarms and response through targeted outreach, education, and policy enforcement. Tactics include direct communication (newsletters, web page), social media campaigns, media release, connect with Economic Development and Planning Divisions of the County. Potential costs are approximately \$1,200.
2. Individual Repeat Properties: in addition to current escalating fines and warning letters, provide property owners with educational resources (tip sheet), an on-site visit for the 3rd response and 5th response.

The County and OPP staff team working on this initiative are working on plans to initiate the strategy.

Summary and Recommendations

There is an overall decrease in the number of false alarm responses in January 2025 compared to January 2024; however, there is a significant increase in responses to repeat properties, largely attributed to one property owner in the County. The new communications plan targets individual

repeat properties. The effectiveness of this strategy will be monitored throughout the year and reported to the Board at future meetings.

Attachments

N/A

Reviewed By

N/A

Copied To

Heather Boyd, General Manager, Corporate Services
Alison Newton, CAO