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**REPORT**  
Police Services Board

For Information

File Class: 1-01-02-03

Cross-Reference File Class: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: September 7, 2016

SUBJECT: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REPORT**

FROM: Brian Adams, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Services

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL POLICE SERVICES BOARD  
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SEP 13 2016  
Registration No.: 122  
File Class: PO1

**RECOMMENDATION**

- It is recommended that the 2015 Domestic Violence Report be received as an information item by the Police Services Board, as part of the annual reporting requirements.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- A modest increase in both intimate-partner verbal domestic reports and family dispute reports. A very slight decrease in the number of intimate partner criminal charges laid.
- The program to replace DVERS and SupportLink, namely PROJECT GUARDIAN, is ready to be implemented in September 2016.

**DISCUSSION**

**1. Introduction**

The 2015 Domestic Violence Report has been compiled to inform the Police Services Board about the functions, mandate, and overview of the duties of the Family Violence Unit in adherence to Ontario Police Standards LE-024 as well as PRP Directive 1-B-713 and related directives dealing with Family Violence issues.

The Family Violence Unit is the policy centre for the following directives:

Domestic Violence	1-B-713(f) – (main directive)
Elder Abuse	1-B-701(f)
Criminal Harassment	1-A-602(f)
Victims Assistance	1-B-710(f)
Domestic Violence Emergency Response System (DVERS)	1-B-718(f) (to be replaced with Project GUARDIAN)

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## 2. Background

The Peel Regional Police (PRP) Family Violence Unit continues to play an important role in ensuring compliance with both internal and external legislation governing this service's response to matters involving domestic/family violence. The Family Violence Unit ensures members are routinely trained and updated in this area to maintain compliance with standards and best practices. The Family Violence Unit is not an investigative unit, and most domestic violence calls are investigated by front line uniform personnel. While many of these calls may be minor and non-criminal (verbal) in nature, others are more complicated and life threatening. In the more complex cases, Divisional Criminal Investigators may be called upon to take carriage of the investigation.

Commencing January 2001, all police services in Ontario were required by Adequacy Standard LE-024 to train Domestic Violence Investigators (DVI's) and to select a police response model for the investigation of domestic cases. The four models of service delivery offered were:

1. Ensuring that an adequate number of patrol officers are designated as DVI's, or
2. Establishing a specialized unit of DVI's responsible for undertaking, managing, or reviewing all domestic violence investigations, or
3. Designating a domestic violence occurrence as a threshold occurrence, thereby requiring that the investigation be undertaken or managed by a criminal investigator, or
4. Designate patrol supervisors as DVI's, who will be responsible for undertaking, managing, or reviewing all domestic violence investigations.

Some police services, including PRP, chose Model #4 to meet organizational needs. This model allowed for a limited number of officers (patrol supervisors) to receive the Ministry of Solicitor General accredited training. The requirements of LE-024 continue to be met by PRP by having patrol supervisors review domestic violence investigations. A decision was made in 2013 to move the DVI course from a classroom to the auditorium at 180 Derry Road, which allowed a larger number of officers to receive this extensive four (4) day training. The switch to a larger classroom has resulted in more officers taking the DVI course and obtaining the DVI designation. Currently we have 750 officers with the designation of DVI.

In the absence of this expertise by the attending officers, some of the more subtle nuances and details of domestic violence can be overlooked. This is particularly significant when dealing with potential dual charge situations, where making the right decision in terms of "dominant aggressor" is critical. If charges are arbitrarily laid against both individuals, this can have a devastating impact by re-victimizing a person who is truly a victim of domestic violence. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services recognizes the negative impact of dual charging and has created an investigative aid to guide officers in these situations. The Domestic Violence directive (1-B-713) reinforces this investigative aid by having supervisors, with DVI designation, involved in any decision to charge both parties, before charges are laid. This pamphlet continues to be distributed to officers as part of their ongoing training.

All domestic dispute calls received by PRP are considered the highest priority (Priority E), and responded to by a minimum of two (2) officers when in progress. The mandatory charging guidelines, as directed by the Province, are strictly adhered to. Where reasonable

grounds exist to believe that an offence has occurred, within an *intimate partner relationship*, officers shall lay charges.

This service's adherence to Provincial Adequacy Standards has resulted in an increase in the time required to thoroughly investigate domestic dispute matters. An example of this is the expectation by the courts that victim statements should be videotaped whenever possible. PRP continues to meet the Adequacy Standards. Amendments have also been made to directive 1-B-713 to encourage video recording of accused statements, which also has an impact on the time required for a thorough domestic violence investigation.

### 3. Public Awareness and Safety Issues

The requirement to give victims of domestic violence an opportunity to create a safety plan is addressed by the Adequacy Standards LE-024 and the Victims Bill of Rights (2015). Access to safety planning tips and suggestions are provided via the PRP – Domestic Abuse & Violence web page. In addition, the "*Intimate Relationship Domestic Violence/Abuse*" pamphlet promotes victim awareness and provides a list of safety tips. This pamphlet has been updated to reflect additional resources for victims such as agency web site contact information. This pamphlet is available in English, French, Punjabi, Chinese, Polish, and Urdu. Victims are routinely referred to Victim Services of Peel, where detailed and individualized safety planning is conducted with the victim.

This service takes a precautionary approach by reporting matters to the Peel Children's Aid Society (CAS) where a child is, or is likely to be, exposed to domestic violence. In making these referrals with regards to children deemed "at risk", this service exceeds the requirements of the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Previously, a victim of Domestic Violence would have been eligible to receive a Domestic Violence Emergency Response System (DVERS) alarm if in the opinion of the police or Victims Services of Peel (VSOP), the victim was at significant risk, and they met the eligibility criteria. These alarms were provided free of charge by ADT Alarms, with the program being administered by VSOP. The SupportLink initiative involved the issuance of pre-programmed "9-1-1" cellular phones to clients to allow them added safety when away from the home (out of range of DVERS). As of November 2014, there are no longer DVERS alarms in the field. As of early 2015, SupportLink phones were phased out. To address this gap in service, until such time as a replacement program is operational, an interim practice has been developed to allow for more reliance on "premise warnings". A premise warning can be initiated by police or requested by VSOP, using similar criteria as was used by previous DVERS clients, which captures similar information as was recorded on a DVERS alarm, for the benefit of officers responding to a residence. This interim practice was communicated to all members through a Corporate Communication.

To fill this void, VSOP, along with members of the PRP Family Violence Unit in an advisory capacity, conducted research for a GPS technology which will enhance victim safety, in that the alarm is no longer restricted to a client's residence. VSOP selected the GPS technology model "Safe Tracks GPS Canada" system. VSOP successfully applied for a grant to the Region of Peel in order to fund the purchase of a number of alarm units. VSOP continues to explore funding sources for the ongoing monitoring costs. In our Region, the pilot has been named, "Project GUARDIAN". A procedure manual has been drafted by VSOP, as they are the program administrators, coordinators, and operations. PRP's obligation would be a

support role in terms of Premise Warnings and response in emergent situations or criminal investigations. VSOP is prepared to launch Project GUARDIAN in September 2016.

Additional services available to victims of Domestic Violence include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), which assists the victim through all stages of the court process, once the matter has proceeded beyond the Bail Hearing stage. (VSOP deals with victims through the Bail Hearing phase)
- Affordable alternative housing support
- Community-based support systems for victims, and children exposed to Domestic Violence (also available to offenders)
- Counseling services for victims and families (also available to offenders)
- First and second stage shelters
- Language/culturally specific counseling services
- Free language interpreter services for Domestic Violence investigations through Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS)

High priorities for the Family Violence Unit are public education, promoting awareness, and facilitating access to appropriate resources, both within the service and the community in general. Presentations by PRP in public forums often focus on "Understanding the Police Response to Domestic Violence". Both the PRP Domestic Violence webpage and the *'Intimate Relationship Domestic Violence/Abuse'* pamphlet provide the public with information regarding domestic violence, and identifies community agencies that provide assistance and support to victims and their families. A listing of support agencies in the community continues to be updated on the internal Family Violence Unit departmental page. This information not only assists officers in providing resources to victims, but also alerts PRP personnel of services that may be of benefit to a member or his/her family.

A significant development in addressing the ongoing safety needs of victims of domestic violence has been the introduction of a Domestic Violence High Risk Committee. In Peel this Committee is known as ReVAMP (Risk Evaluation and Management in Peel). This review committee is co-chaired by PRP and is comprised of justice partners, including Police, Peel Crown Attorney's Office, Brampton Probation and Parole, Mississauga Probation and Parole, Victim Witness Assistance Program, and Peel CAS (when children are involved). A representative from the PRP Offender Management Unit has also been added to the committee. Non-justice partners (shelters, VSOP etc.) can make referrals to the REVAMP committee. Twenty Eight (28) cases were reviewed by ReVAMP in 2015.

#### **4. Training Issues (Appendix I)**

The Family Violence Unit continues to provide ongoing classroom training to police personnel as well as delivering presentations to various service providers and community organizations. 320 police personnel received training in Domestic Violence and/or Victims' Issues in 2015. Approximately 409 members of the public and service providers received presentations from the Family Violence Unit in 2015.

Outreach and training to various community organizations/agencies in 2015, included: International Women's Day event, Heartland Creditview Community & Health Services, Police Week, Fire Department-new call takers, and Chantel's Place-new nurses.

The Family Violence Unit delivers classroom training on Domestic Violence and Victim's Issues on the following courses:

- Domestic Violence Investigators (4 day course)
- Advanced Patrol Training
- Auxiliary Police Officer Training
- Communications Personnel-new call takers
- Post OPC Recruit classes
- Victim Services of Peel-counselors, new volunteers, and relief staff
- Ontario Police College-Domestic Violence Coordinators conference

In January 2007, full time Divisional Domestic Violence Coordinators were assigned to 11, 12, 21 and 22. The coordinators in this position continue to augment the training needs of front line officers through platoon/parade training. This serves not only as a refresher, but also addresses arising policy changes or other concerns identified by the Family Violence Unit. By identifying incidents of non-compliance with departmental policy, the Divisional Domestic Violence Coordinators are in a position to offer one-on-one direction and training to front line staff to improve this service delivery. A tenet of this position continues to be the focus on the needs/safety concerns of the victim, which may include liaison with ReVAMP. The officers filling these positions frequently take advantage of additional training, both internally and through the Ontario Police College (OPC), including an annual OPC conference, when such training is available.

The number of Divisional officers who currently have the DVI accreditation is as follows:

11 Division	-	100 officers
12 Division	-	81 officers
21 Division	-	95 officers
22 Division	-	97 officers
Airport Division	-	39 officers

Note: **750 officers** currently have the DVI designation service wide, including officers in specialty bureaux. Due to attrition, the number of officers trained in DVI does not reflect the current numbers of designated.

2012 - 547	2013 - 644	2014 - 733	2015 - 750
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## 5. Community Partnerships / Committees (see Appendix II)

The PRP continues to maintain long standing working relationships with several community/social services, focused primarily on the needs of victims, and the families of victims impacted by Domestic Violence. The Family Violence Unit continues to be an active participant on various committees, either on a permanent or ad-hoc basis. An example of being involved in ad-hoc committees included the Domestic Violence Risk Management (DVRM) committee, tasked with improving and replacing the Domestic Violence Supplementary Report Form (DVSRF).

Partnerships and participation on numerous committees/conferences has a positive impact on the quality of service provided to victims of Domestic Violence within the Region of Peel.

## 6. Statistical Information (see Appendix III)

As listed in the appendix, Domestic Violence statistics have shown a slight decrease in the number of Intimate Partner criminal charges laid when compared to 2014, but an increase in the number of Intimate Partner Verbal and Non-Intimate Partner calls. This fluctuation would be considered within a normal range of variance. A contributing factor in this relative stability is the "zero tolerance / mandatory charge" approach towards Domestic Violence, legislated by the Province, and complied with by PRP. Further, the Ministry of the Attorney General has created a Partner Assault Response Service (PARS) program which provides compulsory counseling for persons convicted of first time and lower-level domestic related offences. Both of these approaches are designed to break the cycle of violence, and decrease recidivism.

## CONCLUSION

The response of PRP to matters of Domestic Violence continues to be consistent with, and in some cases, exceeding the minimum requirements of various Adequacy Standards. An example of exceeding Provincial standards is the reporting of all domestic disputes to Peel CAS when a child has been exposed to domestic violence.

The Region of Peel's growing diverse population continues to be a significant challenge to PRP from a family violence perspective. With over 100 languages being spoken in the Region, front line police personnel face unique difficulties in assessing the needs of victims and their families. This service continues to partner with Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS) to provide free interpreter services for Domestic Violence investigations.

### Approved for Submission:



Brian Adams, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Services

*For further information regarding this report, please contact Inspector Rick Lamarre at extension 3400 or via e-mail at [richard.lamarre@peelpolice.ca](mailto:richard.lamarre@peelpolice.ca)*

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## APPENDIX I

### Presentations to Police Personnel (Jan 1-Dec 31, 2015)

▪ 4 x Advanced Patrol Training Courses	99	students
▪ 2 x Domestic Violence Investigators Course	128	students
▪ 1 x Auxiliary Officers Course	28	students
▪ 2 x Post OPC Recruits	59	students
▪ 1 x New Call Takers (Communications)	6	students

### Presentations to Public (Jan 1-Dec 31 2015)

▪ Fire Department - Communicators	9	attendees
▪ Chantel's Place – New Nurses	8	attendees
▪ Heartland Creditview Community Services	32	attendees
▪ Erin United Church	30	attendees
▪ International Women's Day event	130	attendees
▪ VSOP - new Volunteers	28	attendees
▪ Ontario Police College	150	attendees
▪ Elora Scouts	22	attendees

### Topics Covered include:

- Domestic related offences
- Mandatory policies - charging and reporting
- Cycle of Abuse
- Effects of abuse on Victim/Children
- May/Illes and Hadley inquest implications
- Aim of police investigation
- Enhanced investigations
- Post arrest support for victim/witness
- Victim's safety and other victim issues
- Criminal Harassment related domestics
- Firearms and Weapons in domestics
- Identifying the Primary Aggressor
- Risk Factors
- Police Perpetrated Domestic Violence
- Strangulation Investigations
- Cultural Issues
- Interpreter Services
- Court Orders and Child Custody
- Community based support
- Mental Health and Domestic Violence
- Review applicable legislation e.g. Family Law Act

## APPENDIX II

### Community Partnerships / Committees (2015)

The Family Violence Unit has a community partnership and/or committee membership with the following agencies:

- Armagh House
- Brampton Probation and Parole
- Catholic Cross- Cultural Services of Peel
- Catholic Family Services of Peel/Dufferin
- Domestic Violence Court Advisory Committee (DVCAC)
- Family Justice / Child Advocacy Centre (Safe Center of Peel) (SCoP)
- Family Services of Peel
- India Rainbow Community Centre
- Interim Place I / II
- Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
- Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (M.C.I.S.)
- Peel Children's Aid Society (CAS)
- Peel Committee Against Women Abuse (P.C.A.W.A.)
- Peel Crown Attorney's Office
- Mississauga Probation and Parole
- ReVAMP (Risk Evaluation and Management in Peel) *(Co-chair)*
- Family Life Resource Centre (FLRC) (Salvation Army Shelter)
- Ontario Domestic Violence Coordinators Network (ODVCN)
- Trillium Health Centre (Chantel's Place)
- Victim Services of Peel (VSOP)
- Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP)



### **APPENDIX III**

The information in this appendix relates to Family Violence statistics for the current year (2015) and the three previous years (2012 to 2014).

The Family Violence occurrence categories are defined as follows:

#### **(A) Intimate Relationship Occurrences** (Charges)

Statistics for this category relate to occurrences involving persons who are married, living common-law, same-sex couples and dating relationships, whether past or current. These figures identify only the number of persons charged. (Occurrence classification code 8999.0502).

<b>2012 - 2007</b>	<b>2013 - 2065</b>	<b>2014 - 2048</b>	<b>2015 - 2040</b>
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#### **(B) Domestic Occurrences** (Intimate Partner – Verbal)

These statistics involve intimate relationship disputes where no criminal offences have been committed. (Occurrence classification code 8999.0502).

<b>2012- 6492</b>	<b>2013- 6067</b>	<b>2014 - 6232</b>	<b>2015 - 6625</b>
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#### **(C) Family Dispute Occurrences** (Non-Intimate Partner)

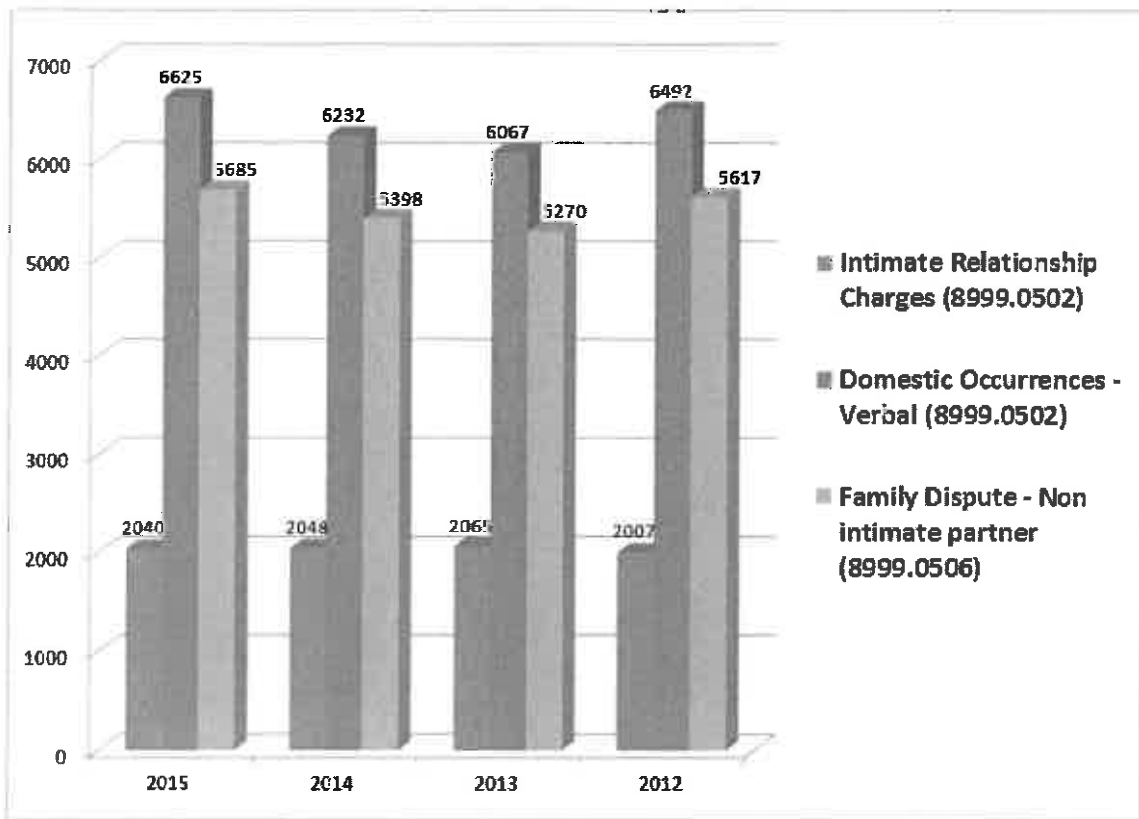
These statistics relate to disputes between any family members (excluding disputes between intimate partners as above). (Occurrence classification code 8999.0506).

<b>2012 - 5617</b>	<b>2013 – 5270</b>	<b>2014 - 5398</b>	<b>2015 - 5685</b>
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The total number of domestics calls for the years 2012 to 2015 are:

<b>2012 – 14,116</b>	<b>2013 – 13,402</b>	<b>2014 – 13,505</b>	<b>2015 – 14,350</b>
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Please see the graph below that illustrates the above numbers.



**Variation in statistical numbers:**

The 2015 Domestic Violence statistics have shown slight variance, with a small decrease in Intimate Partner charges laid, but with an upward trend in Intimate Partner Verbal and Non-Intimate Partner calls for service. The fluctuation in the statistics below is within the expected norms.

- Intimate Partner charge occurrences decreased by **.003%** from 2014.
- Verbal Domestic calls increased by **6.3%** from 2014.
- Non-Intimate Partner (Family Violence) calls increased **5.3%** from 2014.