

The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board

Public Board Meeting
September 22, 2021

Report of the Chief of Police

2021 Semi-Annual Statistics Report

1. Recommendation

1. That the Board receive this report for information.

2. Summary

York Region crime statistics are presented to the Board every six months. This report summarizes crime data for a six-month period, reported between January 1 and June 30, 2021. A detailed report with 2021 crime data and a five-year trend analysis will be prepared and presented to the Board in early 2022.

A summary of select crime statistics with the number of actual incidents and crime rates per 100,000, population are presented in this report. The crime rates are estimated using the population estimates received from the Long Range Planning Department of the Regional Municipality of York. The January-June 2021 crime statistics are compared with the January-June 2020 figures and the data is expressed in percentage terms.

The data presented in this report demonstrates how the COVID-19 Pandemic has influenced crime patterns and trends. Provincial Emergency Orders required people to stay at home and businesses and schools to close during different phases of the pandemic. This caused an increase in specific crime types and a decrease in others, as indicated in this report.

3. Background

Police services in Canada are required to respond to crime incidents, investigate and capture crime data using an incident based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) methodology, implemented by Statistics Canada. York Regional Police uses this methodology to send crime data to Statistics Canada, which is then used to estimate national crime rates, as well as used for comparisons with other municipalities.

COVID-19 CONTEXT AND CRIME TREND

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and on March 17, 2020, Canada and the Province of Ontario declared a state of emergency.

During different phases of the pandemic people were required to stay home, and businesses and schools to close, resulting in a change to crime patterns. To understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the various phases of lockdowns, the January-June 2021 crime statistics were compared to the July-December 2020 period (Appendix-F).

It was observed that in the first two and a half months of 2020, the number of criminal violations in York Region increased by 11.0 percent compared to the same period in 2019. However, in April of 2020 when the Provincial state of emergency was in effect, the volume of criminal violations dropped by 21.3 per cent compared to April 2019. As restrictions lifted in the summer months, the number of violations then gradually increased to a peak in July-August 2020. The volume then dropped again in the fall 2020 and winter 2021 months. In January-February 2021, the volume was lower than the pre-pandemic level of 2020 but there has been a gradual increase from March 2021 (Appendix-F).

4. Analysis

The following data table summarizes *Criminal Code* violations reported to York Regional Police during the January-June 2021 period compared to the corresponding period of 2020.

CRIME RATES

Overall crime rates (total criminal and federal violations excluding traffic) increased marginally by 0.4 percent. The rates of Crimes Against Persons increased 7.1 per cent, Crimes Against Property decreased 3.2 percent, Other Criminal Code violations decreased 1.1 per cent, Weapons violations decreased 19.0 percent, Drug violations increased 25.3 percent and Traffic violations decreased 3.5 percent. Further details on the crime rates, clearance rates, fatal motor vehicle collisions, youth crimes and changes from last year can be seen in Appendices B-E.

Table-1**2020-21 Criminal Code Violation Statistics Summary**

Indicator	2021 Actual	2021 Rate per 100,000 population	2020 Actual	2020 Rate per 100,000 population	Variance Actual (%)	Variance Rate (%)
Total Crime (excluding Traffic)	18,345	1,501.90	18,096	1,495.84	1.4	0.4
Crimes Against Persons	4,485	367.19	4,148	342.88	8.1	7.1
Crimes Against Property	10,299	843.18	10,534	870.76	-2.2	-3.2
Other Criminal Code	2,373	194.28	2,376	196.40	-0.1	-1.1
Weapons Violations	215	17.60	263	21.74	-18.3	-19.0
Drug Violations	922	75.48	729	60.26	26.5	25.3
Other Federal Violations	37	3.03	44	3.64	-15.9	-16.7
Criminal Code Traffic	1,924	157.52	1,974	163.17	-2.5	-3.5
Total Clearance	N.A.	49.5	N.A.	51.8	N.A.	-2.3

During the January-June 2021 period, increases were observed for rates of Sexual violations (22.3 percent), Extortion (66.0 percent), Criminal Harassment (16.6 percent), Harassing Communications (57.5 percent), Uttering Threats to Persons (2.8 percent), Theft Over \$5,000 (14.4 percent), Mischief (1.2 percent), Bail Violations (9.0 percent), Fail To Appear (10.3 Percent), Breach of Probation (10.6 Percent), Drug Possession (30.2 percent), Drug Trafficking (21.4 percent), Dangerous Operation (38.4 percent) and Impaired Operation (7.2 percent). However, decreases were seen for the rates of Assault violations (1.5 percent), Break and Enter (28.8 percent), Have Stolen Goods (8.0 percent), Fraud (6.8 percent) and Fail to Remain violations (24.5 percent) (Appendix – B).

Crime rates have been gradually increasing in York Region for many years; however, the trend has changed temporarily due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. As pandemic restrictions eased, crime rates have been gradually increasing to the pre-pandemic level.

CLEARANCE RATES

In the January-June 2021 period, the overall clearance rate for Total Criminal and Federal violations (excluding Traffic) decreased 2.3 percentage points to 49.5 percent in 2021 from 51.8 percent in 2020. It was observed that the total clearance rate has been decreasing in York Region for years. In the last 5 years, the clearance rate for Total Criminal Violations (excluding Traffic) has decreased 12.5 percentage points from 62.0 percent in 2017, and in the last 10 years the clearance rate has decreased 13.8 percentage points from 63.3 percent in 2012 (Appendix-C).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

York Regional Police is required to prepare the Semi-Annual Statistics Report pursuant to Board Policy No. 02/00-5.

5. Financial

There are no financial implications.

6. Conclusion

This Semi-Annual Statistics Report provides a preliminary snapshot of crime types over a six-month period. This year, data was included to demonstrate the changes in crime patterns and trends due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As identified, some crime rates have significantly increased, while others dramatically decreased; however, as restrictions eased and schools and businesses opened, crime rates have gradually returned to the pre-pandemic level. York Regional Police will continue to monitor crime rates, trends and patterns and collaborate with our community partners to promote safe and secure communities.

We appreciate the continued support of our Police Services Board, regional and local councils, community leaders, community partners and the citizens of York Region. We strongly believe that, together we can keep York Region one of the safest communities in Ontario and Canada to live, to visit and to conduct business.

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Jim MacSween, B.A.A.
Chief of Police

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Attachments: - Changes in Crime Statistics (Appendix-A)
- Crime Statistics (Appendix-B)
- Clearance Rates (Appendix-C)
- Fatal Motor Vehicle Collisions (Appendix-D)
- Youth Crime (Appendix-E)
- Trends in Crime Statistics (Appendix – F)