

Decision Regarding Findings Report INV-24-18 Concerning Policing Provided by the Hamilton Police Service

Decision By:

Ryan Teschner, Inspector General of Policing

I. INTRODUCTION

- [1] This decision addresses a complaint received by the Inspector General of Policing, by way of a referral from the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (“LECA”), alleging that the Hamilton Police Service (“HPS”) received information on or about April 17, 2024, about assaults and threats directed at the complainant occurring at a shelter and failed to take enforcement action. Despite making efforts, the inspector assigned to investigate the complaint was unable to successfully contact the complainant for further information and, other than the initial complaint forwarded from LECA, the only substantive information available to the inspector was contained in records provided by the HPS.
- [2] The HPS performed multiple searches of their records and located no record of a call for service from the complainant in April 2024. However, the HPS located five calls for service from the complainant made between June 28 and September 14, 2024. Two of these calls involved alleged theft of property, and three related to the complainant being denied access to his unit at the shelter. Notably, none of the five calls involved a complaint of remarks, taunts, insults, aggressive gestures, swearing or unwelcome behaviour.

II. BACKGROUND

- [3] Section 10 of the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, SO 2019, c 1, Sch 1 requires that police service boards ensure adequate and effective policing in the area for which they have policing responsibility. Specific standards for the adequate and effective delivery of policing functions, including those related to emergency response and dispatching — the two functions relevant here — are set out in the Act’s regulations:

9. (1) The following standards for adequate and effective policing, relating primarily to emergency response, are prescribed:

1. Response to emergency calls for service shall be provided, 24 hours a day.

....

15. (2) The following standards for adequate and effective policing, relating to the dispatching of members of a police service, are prescribed:

1. A communications centre that operates 24 hours a day with one or more communications operators or dispatchers to answer

emergency calls for service and that maintains constant two-way voice communication capability with police officers who are on patrol or responding to emergency calls must be used for the purposes of dispatching members of a police service.

All policing functions in Ontario – regardless of whether there are specific standards for its delivery, or not – must also be delivered “to an extent and in a manner that is reasonable” (*Adequate and Effective Policing (General) Regulation*, O Reg 392/23, s. 2).

....

IV. ANALYSIS

[4] Based on a review of the Findings Report and the facts as summarized by the inspector, which I adopt, I conclude that the HPS and Hamilton Police Service Board complied with the above-noted requirements and provided reasonable police service delivery.¹ The HPS had no record of a call for service from the complainant in April 2024 and, due to a lack of further information from the complainant and the existence of HPS records that were contemporaneous with the complainant’s calls for service, I conclude this call did not occur and there were no calls for service related to the initial complaint to LECA. In addition, I have reviewed the policing response to each of the five calls the complainant made to the HPS that were recorded and, in each case, the HPS received the call through its communications centre, and provided either a dispatched police response, an alternative reporting option (the Telephone Reporting Centre), or an alternative response (dispatching of an Alternative Response Officer). In no instance of the five did the HPS fail to reasonably respond to the complainant’s call for service.

Date: July 30, 2026

Original Signed By

Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing

¹ Section 123 of the Act requires an Inspectorate of Policing inspector who completes an investigation of a complaint to report their findings to the Inspector General. This report is attached as Appendix A to this decision and has been redacted to comply with the *Publication of Findings Reports and Directions under Sections 123 and 125 of the Act Regulation*, O Reg 317/24.

FINDINGS REPORT

Hamilton Police Service

**Section 107(1)(a) Policing
Complaint Investigation**
(INV-24-18)

Submitted to:
Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing of
Ontario

July 7, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICING AND THE INSPECTORATE OF POLICING	3
INTRODUCTION.....	3
OVERVIEW OF INVESTIGATION	4
The Complaint	4
The Subject Police Service.....	4
Applicable Legislative and Regulatory Provisions	4
SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED	5
Complainant Information	5
Hamilton Police Service Records.....	5
Hamilton Police Service Procedures	6
INVESTIGATION FINDINGS	7

ABOUT THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICING AND THE INSPECTORATE OF POLICING

The Inspector General of Policing drives improved performance and accountability in policing and police governance by overseeing the delivery of adequate and effective policing across Ontario. The Inspector General ensures compliance with the province's policing legislation and standards, and has the authority to issue progressive, risk-based and binding directions and measures to protect public safety. Ontario's Community Safety and Policing Act embeds protections to ensure the Inspector General's statutory duty is delivered independently from government.

The Inspector General of Policing leads the Inspectorate of Policing (IoP). The IoP provides operational support to inspect, investigate, monitor, and advise Ontario's police services, boards and special constable employers. By leveraging independent research and data intelligence, the IoP promotes leading practices and identifies areas for improvement, ensuring that high-quality policing and police governance is delivered to make everyone in Ontario safer.

In March 2023, Ryan Teschner was appointed as Ontario's first Inspector General of Policing with duties and authorities under the Community Safety and Policing Act. Mr. Teschner is a recognized expert in public administration, policing and police governance.

For more information about the Inspector General of Policing or the IoP, please visit www.iopontario.ca.

INTRODUCTION

This is a report to the Inspector General of Policing by an inspector appointed by the Inspector General, who has completed an investigation under Part VII of the [Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019](#) (CSPA).

OVERVIEW OF INVESTIGATION

The Complaint

The Inspectorate of Policing received a complaint forwarded by the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA) under section 108 of the CSPA. The complaint alleges that the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) received information on or about April 17, 2024, regarding assaults and threats occurring at a shelter within its jurisdiction, and that no enforcement action was taken in response.

The Subject Police Service

Name of Police Service: Hamilton Police Service

Service Headquarters: 155 King William Street, Hamilton, ON L8R 1A7

Chief of Police: Frank Bergen

Chief of Police since May 2021

Service Total Strength: (Actual & Authorized)

- o Number of sworn members:

Actual: 940

Authorized: 922

- o Number of civilian members

Actual: 364

Authorized: 397

Geographic Service Area

- o 1118.31 Square Kilometers
- o Community Population of approximately 620,063

Applicable Legislative and Regulatory Provisions

[Section 11\(1\)](#) of the CSPA provides that adequate and effective policing means all of the following functions provided in accordance with the standards set out in the regulations, including the standards with respect to the avoidance of conflicts of interest, and with the requirements of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Human Rights Code*:

1. Crime prevention.
2. Law enforcement.
3. Maintaining the public peace.
4. Emergency response.
5. Assistance to victims of crime.
6. Any other prescribed policing functions.

Ontario Regulation 392/23: ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE POLICING (GENERAL)

was reviewed having regard to the allegations made in the complaint.

SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED

Complainant Information

In his LECA complaint submission, the complainant indicated that he was residing at a shelter[Redacted – s 1(1)2 – O Reg 317/24]. The complainant noted that there were issues at the shelter involving remarks, taunts, insults, aggressive gestures, swearing, and unwelcome behaviour. The complainant indicated that his concerns had been ignored by HPS officers, “as the conditions of the complaint do not involve the Hamilton Medical Emergency Service.”

Attempts made to contact the complainant were unsuccessful.

Hamilton Police Service Records

The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) initially conducted a search of its internal records management system and found no documented calls for service associated with the complainant. A follow-up request was made for a more targeted search covering the period from January 1 to April 17, 2024, which confirmed that no calls for service were received from the complainant during that timeframe for matters indicated in the original complaint.

However, a subsequent query identified five instances in which the complainant contacted HPS: on June 28, July 25, August 1, September 9, and September 14, 2024. In each case, police were dispatched and responded.

- **June 28, 2024:** The complainant initially reported a break and enter. The call was placed on hold for dispatch, but later cancelled by the complainant after he located his property.
- **July 25, 2024:** Officers responded to a call where the complainant expressed frustration that residents were being denied access to their rooms following a fire. Attending officers advised that the location was private property and referred the complainant to landlord-tenant resources for further clarification.

- **August 1, 2024:** The complainant reported the theft of a pair of grey Nike shorts from the YMCA front counter. There were no suspects, witnesses, or video evidence. A report was completed via the Telephone Reporting Centre.
- **September 9, 2024:** The complainant reported being denied access to his unit due to fire-related restrictions. The call was handled by an alternative response officer. YMCA staff advised that access would be granted following a safety inspection scheduled for September 14, 2024. The complainant was encouraged to call back if access was not provided on that date.
- **September 14, 2024:** The complainant again reported being denied access to his unit. Police attended and, with YMCA permission, facilitated access. It was noted that property had been removed due to fire damage. Police determined there was no criminality, as access restrictions applied to all residents.

At no point did the complainant report concerns involving violence or threats. In several interactions, the complainant was described as argumentative and frequently declined to respond to officers' questions.

Hamilton Police Service Procedures

A review of the HPS's procedures related to priority dispatch revealed that the call taker plays a critical role as the first point of contact. They are responsible for collecting key information—what occurred, when and where it happened, who was involved, whether weapons were present, and a brief explanation of the situation—to determine the appropriate response level. For high-priority events (Priority 0, 1, or 2), the call taker initiates a computer entry and continues to update it in real time, facilitating prompt dispatch and response. They are also tasked with adjusting the priority level if new information warrants a change. Priority 4 events are classified as non-urgent, low-risk incidents that require police attendance but do not pose an immediate threat to safety. These include non-emergency or incidental complaints where a delayed response—up to three hours—is acceptable. To qualify as Priority 4, the incident must not be ongoing, recently occurred, time-sensitive, or meet the criteria for a higher priority, and it must require a mobile response rather than alternative reporting. If dispatch cannot occur within three hours, the communications supervisor must be notified, and the complainant informed of the delay. Follow-up calls involving issues such as assault, harassment, landlord-tenant disputes, and threats are typically assigned Priority 4. A review of incident reports confirmed that all five occurrences involving the complainant were categorized as landlord-tenant matters and appropriately classified as Priority 4. The incidents were handled in accordance with the Service's established procedures for Priority 4 calls.

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

I make the following findings, relying on the information collected during the investigation and now contained in this report:

- 1. The complainant contacted the HPS on five separate occasions: June 28, July 25, August 1, September 9, and September 14, 2024.**
- 2. On each occasion, police were dispatched and responded to the calls for service.**
- 3. The calls related to landlord-tenant issues at a local shelter and were classified as lower-priority incidents, in accordance with the HPS's procedures.**
- 4. At no time did the complainant report any assaults or threats. In several instances, he was described as argumentative and declined to answer questions posed by responding officers.**

777 Bay Street, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2C8
Tel: +1-416-873-5930 or 1-888-333-5078
www.iopontario.ca

Improving policing performance to make
everyone in Ontario safer.

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français