

Decision Regarding Findings Report INV-24-16 Concerning Policing Provided by the Ottawa 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 concerning the Ottawa Police Service (“OPS”), alleging that the OPS failed to respond to a call for service involving a theft in a residential building. An inspector with Ontario’s Inspectorate of Policing (“IoP”) investigated the complaint to determine whether the OPS failed to provide adequate and effective policing in accordance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, SO 2019, c 1, Sch 1 (the “Act”) or its regulations.
- [2] Following a review of the inspector’s Findings Report,¹ which is attached to this Decision as Appendix A, and for the reasons that follow, I conclude that the OPS provided adequate and effective policing as defined by the Act and its regulations.

II. BACKGROUND

- [3] For the purposes of this decision, I adopt the facts as outlined by the inspector in the Findings Report.
- [4] On April 14, 2024 at 12:02 AM, the complainant contacted the OPS via 911 to report the theft of their mother’s purse and phone from a residential building. The complainant and the OPS’s Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) records both indicate that the call was made approximately 30 minutes after the theft was said to have occurred.
- [5] The call-taker classified the call as a “priority 3 call for service” and initially noted it as a theft “in progress.” Under the OPS’s Call Response Protocol that is part of OPS Communications/Dispatch Policy No: 2:01, a call is to be assigned a priority 3 when there is an incident in which there is a reasonable belief that an extended delay in response may place persons, property or evidence at risk (with a goal response time of 30 minutes, 90% of the time).
- [6] At 12:07 AM, the complainant informed the OPS call-taker that they did not know the whereabouts of the suspect. They mentioned that they did not see the suspect leave the building and that there were cameras on each floor of the building.

¹ Section 123 of the Act requires an IoP inspector who completes an investigation of a complaint to report their findings to the Inspector General. This report is redacted to comply with the *Publication of Findings Reports and Directions under Sections 123 and 125 of the Act* Regulation, O. Reg. 317/24.

[7] At 12:24 AM, the OPS communications supervisor added a remark to the CAD records indicating that due to the elapsed time from the incident, the complainant could now complete an online report regarding the matter. At 12:27 AM, a voicemail was left for the complaint informing them that the police would not attend and that they could file a report about the matter online on the OPS's website.

[8] At 12:37 AM, the call was cleared. No officers were dispatched to attend the scene.

[9] Due to the elapsed time and the option provided to the complainant to report the matter online, the call was effectively reclassified as a "priority 6" call. The OPS's Call Response Protocol notes that classifying a call as priority 6 requires, among other criteria, no requirement to protect the scene, no physical evidence to gather and no injury or potential for injury (with the goal of efficiently responding within 24 hours of call entry by utilizing call centre personnel or conventional means of response).

[10] It is noted in the Findings Report that at the time of the complainant's call, higher-priority incidents were reported to the OPS, including an impaired driving call which prompted officers to respond to this call and other higher priority calls.

[11] An online report of the theft was made by a family member of the complainant. On April 23, 2024, the OPS assigned the matter to an officer in the Alternative Response Unit for investigation. The officer reviewed a limited number of videos from the residential building in an attempt to identify the parties involved. On April 25, 2024, after reviewing the occurrence, the officer completed an investigative report concluding that there was insufficient evidence to proceed further with the investigation.

III. ISSUES

[12] The sole issue for consideration is whether the OPS provided adequate and effective policing in response to the complainant's call and report about the theft.

IV. ANALYSIS

a) The requirement to deliver adequate and effective policing

[13] I have concluded that the OPS adequately discharged its call-taking and dispatching functions. The OPS also provided an emergency response based on a prioritization that was objectively reasonable and in accordance with established OPS policy. The OPS engaged in an appropriate response relative to the risk that

was assessed, the information known at the time, the resources that were available, and the need to provide a more urgent response to other higher priority calls at the time. I provide my reasons for these conclusions, below.

[14] Section 10 of Act requires that police service boards ensure adequate and effective policing in the area for which they have policing responsibility.

[15] Subsection 11(1) of the Act defines “adequate and effective” policing as requiring policing functions, including law enforcement, to be delivered in accordance with standards set out in the Act’s regulations, among other requirements:

11. (1) 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. [emphasis added]

[16] Specific standards for the adequate and effective delivery of policing functions, including those related to emergency response and dispatching, are set out in the Act’s regulations. The following provisions of the *Adequate and Effective Policing (General)* regulation, [O. Reg. 392/23](#), are relevant to this decision, as they apply to what is required by a police service insofar as emergency response to calls for service and dispatching of those calls are concerned:

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. (1) For the purposes of paragraph 6 of subsection 11 (1) of the Act, adequate and effective policing includes dispatching members of a police service.

(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.

2. A member of a police service must be available 24 hours a day to supervise police communications and dispatch services.

3. Police officers on patrol must be provided with portable two-way voice communication capability that allows the police officers to be in contact with the communications centre when away from their vehicle or on foot patrol.

4. A member of a police service who supervises communications operators and dispatchers must have successfully completed the training prescribed by the Minister on that subject.

(3) Every chief of police shall establish written procedures on communications and dispatch services.

[17] In addition, as this matter required a criminal investigation, the standards in the Act's *Investigations* regulation ([O. Reg. 395/23](#)) are relevant. This includes provisions about investigators being assigned to matters:

5. Every investigation shall be undertaken by an investigator or senior investigator, as determined by a supervisor.

6. (1) If a member of a police service, in the course of their duties, becomes aware of a matter mentioned in subsection (2) and believes that a supervisor has not yet been notified of the matter, the member shall as soon as possible notify a supervisor of the matter in accordance with the investigation procedures.

(2) The matters referred to in subsection (1) are the following:

...

2. A matter in relation to which there is a reasonable suspicion that an offence under the *Criminal Code* (Canada), the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (Canada) or the *Cannabis Act* (Canada) has been or will be committed.

7. (1) On being notified of a matter under section 6, the supervisor shall determine whether the matter should be investigated.

(2) If the supervisor determines the matter should be investigated, the supervisor shall, based on the following factors, assign either an investigator or a senior investigator to undertake the investigation:

1. All information available at the time regarding the matter to be investigated.
2. The complexity of the investigation.
3. Public safety concerns and the impact on the community resulting from the matter to be investigated.
4. The resources required for the investigation and the anticipated length of the investigation.
5. Any applicable investigation procedures.

b) The OPS provided adequate and effective policing in relation to the call and report of theft

[18] There is no evidence in the Findings Report to suggest that the OPS did not comply with the applicable requirements related to call-taking, dispatch, or criminal investigations.

[19] Thirty (30) minutes had elapsed between the time of the alleged theft and the call to the OPS. While there was some information to indicate that the suspect may have still been in the residential building at the time of the call, there was no specific information about the suspect that the police could have relied on to identify the person at that moment, in any event. Further, at the time of the call, the OPS was responding to an impaired driving call that required more urgent attention and immediate response of the deployed officers on shift.

[20] In my view, it was entirely reasonable in the circumstances for the call to be re-classified from a “priority 3” to a “priority 6,” given the elapsed time between the time of the theft and the call for service, there being no information available that

would identify the suspect when responding, and the reality that the OPS was responding to more urgent calls at the same time. The complainant was informed that police would not attend in-person and was provided the option to file an online report regarding the matter for further review and action (and were provided with instructions on how to do so over voicemail).

[21] An online complaint was then filed. As required, the complaint was assigned to an officer who investigated the matter. Based on their review of the occurrence, including some video footage, the officer concluded that there was insufficient evidence to proceed further, and the investigation was closed.

[22] I find that the investigation process following the online report was complete and appropriate in the circumstances. It meets the requirements for reasonable law enforcement and police service delivery.

[23] While not a compliance issue, I wish to briefly address a matter that could result in an improvement in how calls for service are consistently handled. Here, the call for service was reclassified as lower priority based, in part, on the time that had elapsed between when the alleged theft had occurred and when the call was made to the OPS. That is reasonable and a relevant consideration when prioritizing calls for the OPS to attend. Sometimes, a passage of time may result in a change in overall circumstances—such as a suspect leaving an area—that warrants a call for service being reclassified as there is a reduced risk to public safety and an immediate emergency response is not necessary in terms of the preservation of evidence or other reasons. To ensure that elapsed time is a criterion considered in prioritizing calls (amongst the other applicable criteria), I would encourage the OPS to specifically embed this consideration into its procedure on call classification. Making this part of the procedure will ensure that this consideration is consistently understood and taken into account by call-takers and supervisors.

V. CONCLUSION

[24] The OPS provided adequate and effective policing in response to the complainant's call and report of the theft.

Date: August 27, 2026

Originally Signed By

Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing

FINDINGS REPORT

Ottawa Police Service

**Section 107(1)(a) Policing
Complaint Investigation**
(INV-24-16)

Submitted to:
Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing of
Ontario

January 2, 2026

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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.ioontario.ca.

INTRODUCTION

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

OVERVIEW OF INVESTIGATION

The Complaint

A written complaint was forwarded by the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA) to the Inspector General under the provisions of section 108 of the CSPA. This complaint was in relation to the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) failing to respond to a call for service involving a theft. The complainant indicated that she called OPS to report the theft of her mother's purse and phone while inside the building. She explained that they had been in the lobby when the theft occurred approximately 30 minutes earlier and believed that the female suspect was still in the building. The complainant alleged she was told to remain in the lobby and that an officer would be dispatched. She advised that they waited in the lobby, but no officer arrived, nor was she notified that an officer would not be attending.

The Subject Police Service

Name of Police Service: Ottawa Police Service

Service Headquarters: 474 Elgin St, Ottawa, ON, K2P 2E6

Chief of Police: Eric Stubbs

Chief of Police since November 2022

Service Total Strength: (Actual & Authorized)

- **Number of sworn members:**
Actual: 1,584
Authorized: 1,570
- **Number of civilian members:**
Actual: 706
Authorized: 717

Geographic Service Area

- Total area covered: Approximately 2,778 square kilometres
- Population served: Approximately 1.11 million

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.

The following regulation was reviewed having regard to the allegations made in the complaint:

[Ontario Regulation 392/23: Adequate and Effective Policing \(General\)](#)

SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED

Police Service Data Collection and Analysis

After completing a thorough review of the documentation provided by the OPS, the following information was discovered.

The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) records indicate that the complainant called 911 on April 14, 2024, at 12:02 a.m. to report the theft of her mother's purse. The initial remarks indicate that the theft occurred approximately 30 minutes prior to the 911 call and the suspect was believed to still be somewhere in the building. The call was identified as a theft "in progress and categorized as a priority 3 call for service." At 12:07 a.m., the call taker made a notation in the CAD which stated, "Question: Will delayed response place persons or evidence at risk? Answer: Yes." At 12:07 a.m. the complainant informed the OPS call taker that she did not know the whereabouts of the female suspect but did mention that she had not seen her leave the building. Additionally, the complainant informed the OPS call taker that the building had cameras on each floor. At 12:24 a.m., the OPS communications supervisor added a remark to the CAD indicating that due to the elapsed time from the incident to present the complainant could now complete an online report. At 12:27 a.m., a voicemail was left for the complainant advising her to complete an online report. At 12:37 a.m., the call is cleared.

An audio recording of the 12:27 a.m. voicemail message from the OPS to the complainant was reviewed. The recording confirmed that the complainant was informed that police would not attend and that she could file a complaint via the OPS website.

The police occurrence report revealed that an online report was made by a family member of the complainant regarding a theft that occurred on April 14, 2024.

On April 23, 2024, the matter was assigned to an officer in the Alternative Response Unit (ARU). The ARU handles online and telephone reports, provides initial response to priority “6” calls, conducts minor follow-up investigations and provides information to members of the public on federal, provincial, and municipal laws. Officers assess incoming reports, follow up as needed, and manage files from the ARU queue. ARU regularly manages a high volume of cases, including thefts, frauds, suspicious incidents, mischief, shoplifting, auto thefts, gas drive-offs, disputes, and harassment. Officers are station-based and coordinate with patrol officers, General Assignment Section investigators, and Special Constables for evidence collection and support.

The officer within ARU contacted Ottawa Community Housing and requested a review of the camera recordings. The officer received a limited number of videos from Ottawa Community Housing and distributed them to OPS officers in an attempt to identify involved parties.

On April 25, 2024, after completing a review of the occurrence, the officer completed an investigative conclusion report stating that there was insufficient evidence to proceed further with the investigation. Furthermore, the officer stated that “it was determined that a criminal offence did occur, however due to insufficient or conflicting evidence police cannot substantiate laying a charge.”

The OPS Communications/Dispatch Policy No: 2:01 was reviewed. This procedure includes a Call Response Protocol, which outlines the criteria to determine the priority of a call, definitions of types of calls, goals, and objectives for each priority.

As the call was categorized as a priority 3, the Call Response Protocol was reviewed. Priority 3 calls are defined as incidents in which there is a reasonable belief that an extended delay in response may place persons, property, or evidence at risk. The goal is a response time between 0-30 mins, 90% of the time. The objective is to ensure appropriate and timely response to all priority 3 calls. The protocol states that backup location is anyone close to the zone. Although the call was initially classified as priority 3, due to the elapsed time and the direction provided to the complainant to report the matter online, the call was effectively reclassified as priority 6. A summary table comparing priority 3 to priority 6 classifications is provided below for reference.

Priority	Criteria	Definition	Goal
Priority 3	Delay may place persons, property, or evidence at risk	Criminal Code offence in progress or apparent risk of injuries	≤ 30 min, 90% of the time
Priority 6	Police presence not required at scene; no injuries; no unidentified witnesses	Alternative/non-mobile response appropriate (e.g., PRU, phone, other agency)	Within 24 hours of call entry

OPS Patrol Directorate Standard Operating Procedures Policy was reviewed. It was highlighted that this policy is currently under review due to the CSPA.

The Standard Operating Procedures Policy outlines general staffing levels, unit complements, sector and city-wide staffing, time off and deployment to name a few.

Within this policy, the 2019 Recommended Sector Staffing Table was reviewed which outlines the minimum cars per shift. The duty roster for April 14, 2024 was reviewed, and it was confirmed that the required number of officers assigned to this zone was consistent with OPS Sector Staffing Table.

At the time of the complainant's call, higher-priority incidents were reported, including an impaired driving call which prompted officers to respond to the higher priority calls.

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

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

- 1. On April 14, 2024, the complainant contacted Ottawa Police Service 911 to report a theft. No officers were dispatched to attend the scene.**
 - a. The CAD confirms a call was made to 911 on April 14, 2024, at 12:02 a.m.
 - b. The call was classified as a priority 3 by the OPS call taker and the theft was initially noted as "in progress."
 - c. The CAD transcript notes a 30-minute delay from the time of the theft and the call to OPS.
 - d. The complainant noted in her complaint submission that the theft had occurred 30 minutes prior to her calling 911.

- e. At 12:27 a.m. a voicemail message was left by the OPS with instructions to file an online report and the call was closed.
- f. The direction provided to the complainant was to report the matter online and the call was reclassified as a priority 6.

2. A follow-up investigation into the theft was completed by the OPS.

- a. An online report was submitted by a family member of the complainant.
- b. On April 23, 2024, an ARU officer was assigned to investigate the theft complaint.
- c. On April 25, 2024, the Officer completed an investigative report indicating that there was insufficient evidence to proceed.

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