

Decision Regarding Findings Report INV-24-35 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 against the Ottawa Police Service (“OPS”), alleging that the police failed to respond to a call for service regarding a male asleep in a tent on an elementary school property. An inspector with Ontario’s Inspectorate of Policing (“IoP”) investigated the complaint to determine whether the OPS failed to comply 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 has failed to comply with the Act and the regulations.

II. BACKGROUND

- [3] I adopt the facts as summarized in the Findings Report.
- [4] On May 3, 2024, the school custodian of an elementary school found a man ensconced in a tent set up 60 metres from the side entrance of the school. He called 911 at 6:50 a.m. seeking police assistance to remove the man prior to the arrival of the school students. Despite several more calls to 911, police failed to respond despite the proximity of the man and his tent to the school. The callers were told that the OPS’ limited resources and the call’s low priority were delaying a response.
- [5] Eventually, the school principal approached the tent, pulled the tarp off, and yelled at the apparently unconscious man inside until he awoke and finally departed. The principal observed drug paraphernalia inside the tent.
- [6] Some four hours after the first 911 call, with no police response and no callback from the police with an explanation, the school principal called 911 to tell the OPS that he had confronted the individual, demanded that he leave, and the individual had complied. At that point, the OPS cleared the call for service.

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.

III. ISSUES

- [7] Did the OPS' failure to respond to the school's 911 calls constitute a failure to provide adequate and effective policing?

IV. ANALYSIS

The categorization of this call as a Priority 4

- [8] I understand from the Findings Report that call volumes and calls-in-progress at the time of this incident were significant. For example, when the first 911 call was received, there were nine calls pending in the Central Division call queue (where this call for service was located). Of note, eight of the nine calls were assigned as Priority 4 – the same priority level assigned by the original call-taker to the call for service by the school.

- [9] An hour after the first 911 call by the school, there were still four Priority 4 calls in the queue. Two hours later, there remained one Priority 3 call and two Priority 4 calls in the queue ahead of the school's call. Three and a half hours after the first 911 call by the school, the OPS dispatch noted that there were still no police officers available to respond.

The OPS' prioritization of the 911 calls in this case was not reasonable

- [10] The investigation did not reveal at what point, if any, the OPS dispatch became aware of the existence of drug paraphernalia in the individual's tent. Nonetheless, in all of the circumstances, including the proximity of an individual with an unknown history to an elementary school and the resulting risk to children's safety, I do not believe that the OPS' approach to the prioritization of the several 911 calls was reasonable.
- [11] This is not the first time that I have considered this issue in respect of OPS dispatch practices. In my decision of December 30, 2025,² I reviewed the issue of a call for service regarding an erratic individual trying to gain entry to a daycare center. There, I observed:

² Inspector General of Policing, *Decision Regarding Findings Report INV-24-10 Concerning Policing Provided by the Ottawa Police Service*, 30 December 2025: <https://www.iopontario.ca/en/decisions/ig-decisions/ig-decisions-concerning-2024-findings-reports/ottawa-police-service-0>.

I realize that the priority level assigned to a call is based on the facts known at the time, the application of internal procedure, and judgment. I also empathize with the very difficult job that 911 call takers and dispatchers do. Their vital work is often unseen, can often be traumatic, and it is only because of them that people across this province can access the emergency help they need. They must make split-second decisions, often on the basis of incomplete information. Nevertheless, I am of the view that given the facts that were presented during the initial 911 call and the risks present, the priority level should have been higher than that assigned. Assigning a higher priority level would have been appropriate, and also would have provided for a more immediate policing response.³

[12] Here, I am concerned that important factors such as the vulnerable nature of the affected population (*i.e.* children) and the surrounding context (*i.e.* proximity to an elementary school) were not adequately considered in relation to the priority assigned to the call for service. If the OPS call-taker was aware of the presence of the drug paraphernalia, this would exacerbate the prioritization decision made.

[13] Ultimately, school staff were forced to take matters into their own hands by approaching the tent and the unknown individual inside. While it addressed the situation at the time, given the inherent safety concerns and vulnerable population nearby, this is precisely when the OPS or similar service-provider with the appropriate expertise and resources should be responding.

Reasonableness requires ongoing evaluation of 911 call prioritization, not simply a 'first in, first out' approach

[14] In my view, there is a need to place more emphasis on the constant and on-going re-evaluation of the prioritization of calls for service. It seems from the information analyzed by the inspector that once a call is assigned a Priority 4 categorization, there is little, if any, further evaluation to determine whether, among calls of the same prioritization, there is a need for additional differentiation. Presently, it seems that calls of the same Priority 4 status are simply answered in a "first in, first out" manner.

³ INV-24-10, para 12.

[15] Moreover, the resources available and assigned to the zone during that shift is relevant to my assessment of this complaint. The analysis leads me to conclude that the OPS would benefit from a more nuanced prioritization procedure, especially within the Priority 4 call category – one that better distinguishes among the various risks each call presents, the length of time that the risk has presented itself, and the environment from which the call for service has originated.

[16] In conclusion, I am satisfied that the OPS did not provide adequate and effective policing in these circumstances.

V. DIRECTION IMPOSED

[17] Pursuant to section 125(1) of the Act, I am permitted to issue a direction to remedy or prevent an act or omission that will likely result in non-compliance with the Act and its regulations.

[18] Having found non-compliance in these circumstances, I hereby direct the following occur:

- i. The OPS Board will provide additional policy direction to address the initial prioritization of calls, as well as the ongoing evaluation of calls of the same priority. The additional direction will also address circumstances where calls for service of the same priority are queued, so as to provide a more nuanced and ongoing assessment that includes the nature and variety of public safety risks, especially insofar as vulnerable populations are concerned;
- ii. The Chief of Police create a procedure operationally implementing that Board policy; and
- iii. The new or amended Board policy and corresponding Chief's procedure be provided to my office within 90 days from the date of this decision.

Date: August 27, 2026

Original Signed By

Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing

FINDINGS REPORT

Ottawa Police Service

**Section 107(1)(a) Policing
Complaint Investigation**
(INV-24-35)

Submitted to:
Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing of
Ontario

July 7, 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.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 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 of Policing under the provisions of section 108 of the CSPA. It was alleged that on May 30, 2024, Ottawa Police Service (OPS) officers did not attend or respond to a call made by staff from an elementary school where a tent was set-up with an unconscious individual inside. The tent was approximately 60 meters from where young students and parents enter for daycare and school services.

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 (as of June 25, 2025)
Authorized: 1,570
- **Number of civilian members:**
Actual: 706 (as of June 25, 2025)
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

Follow-up with the complainant was attempted via email, with no response. With the lack of response, it was determined that given the detailed original submission no further information was required to proceed.

The complainant indicated in their submission that on May 30, 2024, an elementary school custodian called the OPS at 6:50 a.m. to report that there was a tent set up about 60 meters from the side entrance of the school where parents and young students enter for daycare and school services.

The complainant indicated that at 7:37 a.m. the school principal made a second call to 911 to request police assistance prior to students beginning to arrive.

The complainant noted that at 7:50 a.m. the school principal removed the tarp from the tent and discovered an unconscious individual inside the tent. The principal yelled three times at the individual before they eventually woke up. The principal reportedly directed the individual to vacate the premises immediately.

The complainant indicated that the school principal followed up with the OPS at 11:00 a.m. During the span of 4 hours, there was no contact with any police officer and no call to either the custodian or the school principal. The complainant stated that they were informed the lack of service was due to OPS having limited resources and the call not being a priority.

The complainant stated there was no explanation provided as to why there was no call back from the OPS to the staff members asking for assistance. The complainant highlighted in submission that the individual on site had objects inside of the tent for drug use and the children's safety could have been at risk if the individual had been violent.

Ottawa Police Service Records Review

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

On May 30, 2024, at 6:56 a.m., a call was made to 911. The call was regarding an unwanted person with a tent set up on school property, about 60 meters from the school side entrance where parents and young students enter for daycare and school services.

A review of the Computer Aid Dispatch (CAD) revealed that at 6:58 a.m. the caller requested assistance from an officer to have the person and tent removed from the school premises. The call was deemed a priority 4 by the call taker. The call taker gathered information from the caller including if a mobile response was required, to which the caller answered "yes". The call for service was located within the OPS Central Division.

A second call was made to 911 by the same caller at 7:39 a.m. The caller requested the estimated time of arrival for police, and was informed by the call taker that officers would arrive when possible.

At 7:54 a.m. the principal of the school called 911 for an estimate time of arrival and was advised by the call taker that officers would arrive when possible.

The CAD transcript revealed that at 10:36 a.m. the call taker noted that no units were available to respond. An additional call was made to 911 at 10:58 a.m., and the caller updated communication staff that the individual had been asked to leave and did leave the school property. At 11:11 a.m. a supervisor cleared the call.

Ottawa Police Service Procedures

The OPS Communications/Dispatch Policy No: 2:01 was reviewed, which outlines the criteria to determine the priority of a call, definitions of types of calls, goals and objectives for each priority. A summary table comparing priority 1 to 4 classifications is provided below for reference.

Priority	Criteria	Definition	Goal
Priority 1	Involving a known imminent danger to life	The known use of weapons, apparent life-threatening injuries, and officer needs assistance calls	15 minutes, 95% of the time
Priority 2	Where there is potential for serious bodily harm to occur	The known presence of weapons, apparent serious injuries, and serious criminal offences in progress against a person	15 minutes, 90% of the time
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 4	All other incidents that require a mobile response	Offences not in progress with witnesses or evidence on scene, and non-emergency calls requiring police presence.	120 minutes, 90% of the time

This call for service was categorized a priority 4. The definition for a priority 4 includes offences not in progress where witnesses are on scene, offences not in progress or where evidence can be collected at the scene, and all calls of a non-emergency nature where police presence at the scene is necessitated.

The goal is a response time of 120 minutes, 90% of the time. The objective is to ensure appropriate and timely response to all priority 4 calls. Should the 120-minute response goal not be obtained; the shift manager or supervisor will ensure that the complainant is contacted. The complainant will be advised of the delay, and that the divisional staff sergeant (or designate) or the field supervisor has been notified in order to address the matter expediently.

The call response protocol also indicates that for a priority 4 call, priority shall be given to the sector (zone) or floater units. If a sector car is not available, any divisional unit may be used. The Dispatch Matrix in the Call Response Protocol provides a quick reference for each priority call and describes the criteria for each priority, the response time for each priority and the backup location for each priority call. The back up location for a priority 4 call is from the zone of the incident only.

On May 30, 2024, at 6:56 a.m., the OPS queued calls revealed that at the time of the call from the school, there were 9 calls pending for Central Division, with one assigned a priority 3 and the remaining eight being priority 4 calls. At 8:00 a.m. the queued calls for Central Division still had four priority 4 calls pending before the complainant's matter. At 10:00 a.m. the queued calls for Central Division included one priority 3 call received at 9:51 a.m. and two priority 4 calls ahead of the complainant's matter.

OPS Patrol Directorate Standard Operating Procedures Policy #3.17-1 was reviewed. This procedure is currently under review due to the CSPA coming into force in April 2024. The purpose of the procedure is to provide expectations on a number of factors impacting effective resource management for Frontline Platoon and Fixed Shift Operations. The procedure outlines general staffing levels, unit complements, sector and city-wide staffing, time off and deployment to name a few. Within this policy, the Recommended Sector Staffing – Minimum Cars per Shift Table (2019) was reviewed. The table indicates that Central Division should have a minimum of [redacted – s 1(1)1 – O Reg 317/24].

The Duty Roster for May 30, 2024, was reviewed. During the Day Shift Roster (6:45 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.), there were [redacted – s 1(1)1 – O Reg 317/24].

Ottawa Police Service Call-taker / Dispatcher Training

When an individual is hired within the Communications Centre at the OPS, they are placed in-class for the start of their training for five weeks. Within the in-class portion, new members are exposed to the roles and responsibilities of a call taker and dispatcher, as well as the provincial adequacy standards, as directed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. A sample of other topics covered include: 911 Tiered Response, Liabilities & Ethics, Wellness and Ergonomics, OPS Boundaries, Call Response Protocols, Dispatch Matrix, Policies and Procedures, Call Paths, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) training, Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) training, Suspect Apprehension Pursuit (SAP) training, Frontline Ride-Along, as well as various online courses through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN).

Once the in-class portion has been completed, the member is paired with a trainer for on the phone training. New members are trained on answering 911 calls as well as the non-emergency line for the OPS. After approximately 350-400 hours of training, the member is "released" and works independently from their trainer. After a couple of months, the member gets paired with a trainer to begin dispatch training. The dispatch training is hands on and not done in a classroom style. Typically, a member trains on dispatch for another 2-3 months before being fully released.

In addition, there are mandatory courses required throughout communications staff members' careers. A sample of ongoing training includes, Cultural Awareness and Humility, Accessible Customer Service in a Policing Environment, Bill 168 Occupational Health and Safety, Active Bystander in Law Enforcement (ABLE), Anti-Black racism, and many more. Generally, the Chief of Police will issue orders on mandatory training that OPS members are required to complete.

During the in-class portion of training, approximately three days are dedicated to reviewing, learning, and understanding all policies and procedures, including the Sectional Operating Procedure (SOP) for "Trespass/Remove". For dispatching, dispatchers must adhere to the Call Response Protocol. This protocol is introduced during in-class training as part of the training curriculum and is subsequently reviewed again during dispatch training phase.

Involved Call-taker / Dispatcher Training Status

The primary call taker for this incident has 19.5 years of service and experience. Because the complainant called back requesting an estimated time of arrival for officers, a second call taker became involved. This individual was a recruit in training at the time and was paired with a trainer. The dispatcher for this incident has 37 years of service with the OPS. Due to the call remaining in the queue for approximately 4 hours, a second dispatcher did take over. This dispatcher has 7.5 years of experience. All individuals involved are current with their mandatory training and have completed all required ongoing training updates.

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

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

1. The Ottawa Police Service received a call regarding an unwanted person and tent set up near the entry of an elementary school on May 30, 2024.

- a. On May 30, 2024, at 6:56 a.m., a call was made to 911 by an employee from the elementary school. The call was made to request police assistance with removing an unwanted person and tent from school property.
- b. The CAD transcript shows that at 7:39 a.m. a second call was made to 911. The caller requested the estimated time of arrival of an officer. The caller was advised that police would attend when possible.

- c. The CAD transcript reveals that at 7:54 a.m. the principal of the school called 911 for an estimated time of arrival and was advised by the call taker it would be when an officer was available.
 - d. The school principal subsequently removed the tarp from the tent, discovered an unconscious individual inside, woke them and directed them to leave the property.
 - e. The CAD transcript indicates that an additional call was made to OPS at 10:58 a.m. An update was provided to advise that the individual was asked to leave the school property and did leave the school property.
 - f. At 11:11 a.m. a supervisor cleared the call, indicating that the unwanted person left.
- 2. The initial call for service to the OPS came in at 6:56 a.m. and was deemed a Priority 4. The time between the original call to 911 and the call being cleared by a dispatch supervisor was approximately four hours. No units were available to respond to the call for service, and police did not attend the school.**
- a. The initial call for service came into the OPS at 6:56 a.m.
 - b. At the time of the call, there were already nine calls pending for Central Division—one classified as Priority 3 and the remaining eight as Priority 4.
 - c. The CAD indicates the complainant's call was classified as Priority 4.
 - d. Priority 4 calls refer to offences that are not in progress but have witnesses on scene, situations where evidence can be collected at the scene, and non-emergency incidents that still require police presence.
 - e. The day shift roster starting at 6:45 a.m. listed [redacted – s 1(1)1 – O Reg 317/24].
 - f. Additional calls to OPS requesting an estimated time of arrival were made at 7:39 a.m. and 7:54 a.m.
 - g. At 8:00 a.m., four Priority 4 calls remained queued ahead of the complainants.
 - h. At 10:36 a.m., the call taker noted that no units were available for the call.

- i. For a Priority 4 call, priority should be given to sector (zone) or floater units. If a sector car is unavailable, any divisional unit may be dispatched. However, the backup unit should be dispatched from the zone where the incident occurred.
- j. At 10:00 a.m., the queued call list included one Priority 3 call received at 9:51 a.m. and two Priority 4 calls ahead of the complainants.
- k. There was no follow-up with the school by OPS after 7:54 a.m.
- l. At 10:58 a.m., the school principal contacted OPS again to report that the unwanted person had left.
- m. According to OPS call response protocol, the goal for a Priority 4 call is a response time of 120 minutes, 90% of the time. If this goal is not met, the shift manager or supervisor is expected to contact the complainant.
- n. At 11:11 a.m. a supervisor cleared the call, indicating that the unwanted person left.

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