



2023

False Alarm Annual Report

Prepared by Karen Derry, Alarm Program Coordinator



FIELD SUPPORT DIVISION

**HAMILTON
POLICE SERVICE**
Together. Stronger. Safer.

Appendix “A”

The HPS responds to reports of alarms in accordance with the Service’s Priority Response System (PRS). A significant majority of all alarms reported to police are false. A change to a HPSB By-Law in 2014 (PSB #14-050a) resulted in a considerable decrease to the volume of calls received. Invoicing was redirected to the alarm monitoring company rather than the alarm owner. The rate of this decrease was accelerated on September 1, 2019 with the implementation of the HPS False Alarm Verified Response protocol. This protocol improved the verification of a call prior to dedicating police resources to it.

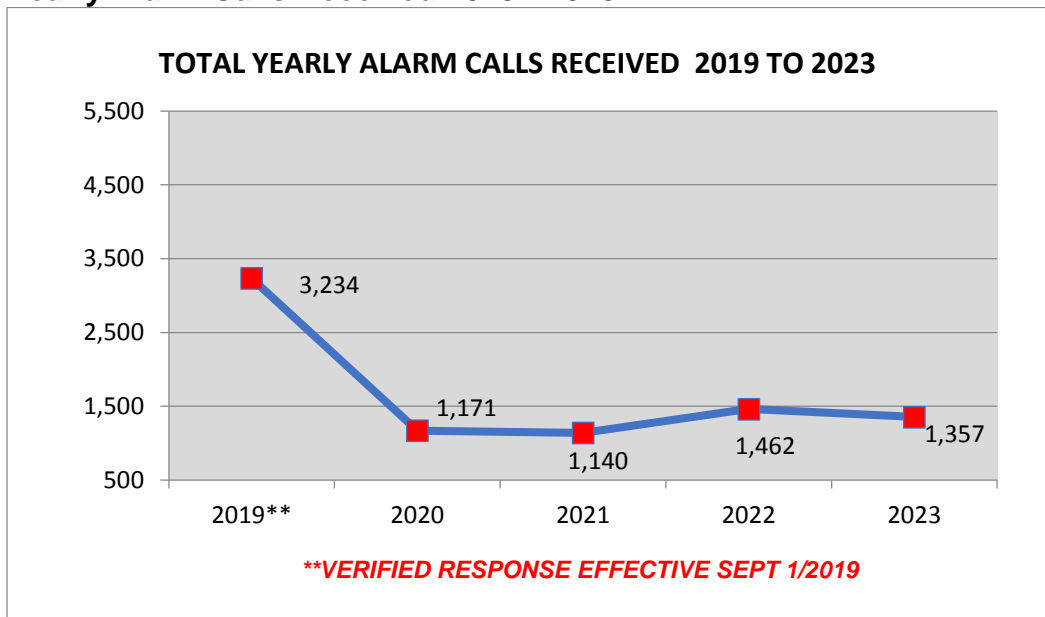
Since the inception of the Verified Response protocol in September 1, 2019 a reduction in alarm calls has been achieved. The reduction in alarm calls requiring police attendance in turn allows officers to be effectively deployed to other calls for service.

The False Alarm Response trend chart and graph below displays alarm statistics for the past 5 years. The decreasing total alarms are attributable to the initiatives mentioned above, together with the diligence of the False Alarm Coordinator, working closely with alarm holders to reduce false calls.

HPS False Alarm Responses 2019 – 2023

Year	Total Alarm Calls	Alarm Calls Attended	Alarm Calls Skipped	Cancelled En Route	Cancelled Before Dispatch	Total Cancelled Calls	Valid Alarm Calls	% of False Alarms
2019	3,234	2,147	242	139	568	707	138	95%
2020	1,171	679	182	59	144	203	107	91%
2021	1,140	769	88	52	124	176	107	91%
2022	1,462	1,011	89	56	155	211	151	90%
2023	1,357	981	32	68	131	199	145	89%

Yearly Alarm Calls Received 2019 - 2023



Fee Structure

All fees for service are invoiced directly to the monitoring station representing the alarm owners at a cost recovery rate of \$169.50 (\$150.00 + HST) per false alarm.

A partial fee of \$84.75 (\$75.00 plus HST) is charged for a cancelled en-route dispatch. (Officers have acknowledged the call for service and are actively travelling to the call)

There is no fee if the alarm is cancelled prior to an officer dispatch.

There is no fee if the alarm is valid (e.g. Break & Enter, Property Damage etc.).

In the event a homeowner or agent acting on behalf of the homeowner calls in an alarm, the homeowner will be invoiced at the same cost recovery rate directly.

False Alarms Invoiced

In 2023, \$171,873.75 was invoiced for false alarms.

Write Off Totals

There was \$450.00 written off in 2023.

Cost Recovery Summary

HPSB By-Laws allow for the collection of false alarm fees to recover the costs of false alarms to the Service. The chart below is a summary of cost recovery generated by the False Alarm Reduction Unit, over the past five years. The reduction in total false alarms attended, directly impacts cost recovery. This reduction should be interpreted in the context of the fewer calls for service, allowing for police resources to be diverted to other public safety needs.

HPS False Alarm Cost Recovery 2019 – 2023

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cost Recovery	\$409,691.88	\$124,726.50	\$133,715.23	\$163,990.75	\$172,964.50

Conclusion

The growth of electronic and video monitoring technologies improve efficiencies and reliability in the pursuit of public safety. Many of these new and emerging technologies are being applied to personal safety by way of panic and personal safety alarms. The False Alarm Coordinator is closely monitoring these market trends to understand and respond to the impact they may have on police resources. The work done to reduce false alarm calls positions the service to better dedicate valuable resources to confirmed emergencies within our community.

The Hamilton Police Service will continue to respond to alarms that require police response in order to ensure public safety.

FB/T. MacSween

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