



2024

False Alarm Annual Report



FIELD SUPPORT DIVISION

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

Appendix “A”

The Hamilton Police Service (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 Hamilton Police Service Board (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 further 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.

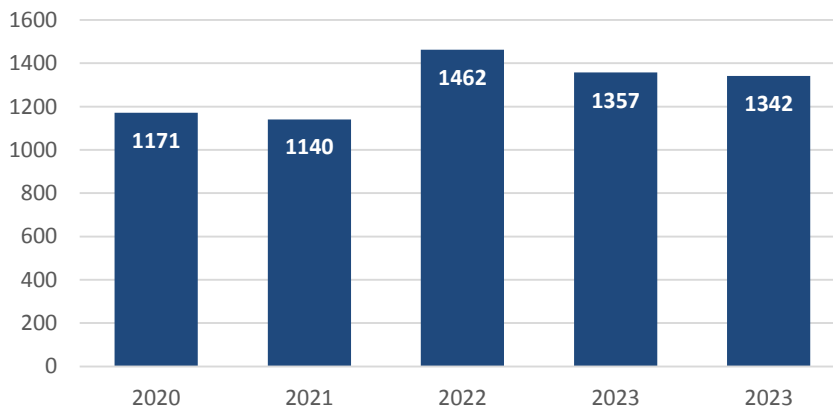
Since the inception of the Verified Response protocol a significant reduction in alarm calls has been achieved. The reduction in alarm calls requiring police attendance in turn allows officers to be effectively deployed to other calls for service.

The False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU) trend chart and graph below displays alarm statistics for the past 5 years. The decreasing percentage of false 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 2020 – 2024

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
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%
2024	1,342	949	35	60	144	204	154	89%

Total Yearly Alarm Calls Received
2020 - 2024



HPS 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 2024, \$164,245.50 (including HST) was invoiced for false alarms.

Successful False Alarm Appeals

In the event that a false alarm invoice is challenged, the FARU will complete a detailed review of the incident. At the conclusion of this process a determination is made to either cancel or uphold the invoice. In 2024, the value of false alarm invoices that were cancelled was \$150.00.

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 FARU between 2020 and 2024.

HPS False Alarm Cost Recovery 2020 – 2024

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cost Recovery	\$124,726.50	\$133,715.23	\$163,990.75	\$172,964.50	\$164,245.50

Strategic Goals for 2024

Community Safety – Focusing on what is essential by delivering core policing functions and ensuring appropriate role division with other service providers

- Track and monitor ‘Open signal’ alarms and ensure that they meet the mandate of the FARU. In 2023, we tracked a series of personal duress alarms that were being incorrectly labelled as false alarms. A fulsome review of these occurrences was conducted and it was determined that one specific provider (Telus) was the primary offender. The FARU worked with the service provider, and through education, an understanding was reached in the summer of 2023. This successfully eliminated these alarms from the FARU portfolio. In 2024, FARU continued to monitor personal duress alarms and have determined that this practice seems to have subsided. This can be credited with the work done in 2023, and the continued monitoring in 2024.

Culture and Capacity – Provide quality service by ensuring that our values and professionalism are consistently reflected in everything that we do: from decision-making, to community interaction to day-to-day activities

- Our FARU reviews each false alarm and contacts the individuals, usually private citizens, to determine if there was something in the response that could have been handled better by HPS. FARU takes time to engage community members as well as business and stakeholders in order to develop a relationship based on mutual respect and understanding.

Conclusion

The growth of electronic and video monitoring technologies continues to create improved 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 continues to position the HPS to better dedicate valuable resources to confirmed emergencies within our community.

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