

HALTON SEES 30.5 PER CENT CRIME JUMP IN FIRST HALF OF YEAR

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Many things in Halton are returning to normal following the height of the pandemic. Unfortunately, that includes crime.

This is the explanation Halton Police Chief Stephen Tanner provided following a significant increase in criminal activity within the region during the first six months of 2022.

The concerning statistics were discussed during a recent meeting of the Halton Police Board.

A report presented to the board noted that between January and June there were 7,081 criminal offences reported in Halton.

This is 1,769 more incidents than were reported during the same period in 2021, and represents a crime rate increase of 30.5

per cent when regional population growth is taken into account.

Violent crime offences (e.g., robberies, assaults, etc.) increased by 38.7 per cent from 968 incidents between January and June 2021 to 1,343 incidents during the same period in 2022.

Property crime (e.g., thefts, break-ins, mischief, fraud, etc.) increased 40.2 per cent from 3,373 incidents in 2021 to 4,728 incidents in 2022.

Police also reported a lower case clearance rate — of 43.1 per cent — for the first six months of 2022, compared to 45.7 per cent during the same period in 2021.

The report noted motor vehicle collisions are also on the rise, with 4,052 reported in 2022 compared to 2,373 during the same period in 2021.

This represents an in-

crease of 70.8 per cent.

Collisions involving property damage are also up 73.8 per cent while collisions resulting in injuries are up 49.3 per cent.

Fatal collisions declined from four in 2021 to three in 2022.

Impaired driving apprehensions are also down from 232 in 2021 to 203 in 2022.

Tanner pointed out that crime took a dive in Halton as a result of COVID-19.

People staying in their homes meant fewer residential break-ins and fewer reported assaults, while less people driving to work meant fewer vehicle collisions, he said.

With life starting to return to normal, Tanner argued it should not be a surprise crime is going back up.

He also said the clearance rate has stayed consistent, but its percentage



Graham Paine/Metroland

Halton Police Chief Stephen Tanner discussed the rise in crime during the recent police board meeting.

changed as the crime rate changed.

Deputy Chief Roger Wilkie noted Halton's population has also grown over the pandemic years, which also means more crime.

Tanner said he expects to see the same trends in all other jurisdictions.

"We're certainly satis-

fied with the numbers," said Tanner. "We are still the safest large municipality in Canada year after year. We expect to stay there."

The chief said context is important and noted that recently released data from Statistics Canada indicates the Halton 2021 crime rate was lower than

every major police service in Ontario.

Tanner acknowledged that vehicle theft has gone up significantly in Halton.

He said that while his officers have made multiple arrests in connection with these incidents and will continue to investigate them, he argued vehicle manufacturers also need to play a role by making their vehicles less vulnerable to theft, in particular reprogramming theft.

The chief also pointed out the federal government has a role to play in stopping firearms from illegally crossing the border and into the waiting hands of criminals.

Halton Police Board Chair Jeff Knoll called for a more detailed breakdown of what crimes are on the increase.

That data will be presented at a future meeting.

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