

Police officer must use his own judgment walking into unknown

Cops trying to make citizens more aware of their jobs

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

When Constable Jeff Dunham responds to an urgent call, experience has taught him to keep his options open.

"I found it's best to keep an open mind when you're going to a call - without any preconceived ideas about how you're going to handle it."

Every situation is different, said the Halton Regional Police veteran, and making decisions early may limit your thinking later.

Improper information received from callers can also put a slant on the situation, he said, whether it be a domestic assault or break and enter in progress.

Police are aiming to make citizens more aware how law enforcement officers do their jobs during this National Police Week.

"Sometimes the only dealings people have with police are when they're being pulled over for a ticket," the constable said.

Constable Dunham spends a good portion of an average 12-hour day shift in Milton responding to about four or five calls.

He receives information about requests for police from a dispatcher stationed at headquarters on a computer (mobile data terminal) installed in his cruiser.

"Quite often they (routine calls) don't get answered right away, depending on if we have any emergency situations," he said.

The most calls on a day shift come in from 3 to 7 p.m., as people come home from work, said the constable, who has battled crime throughout the region over his 12-year career.

Many local requests for police are now handled by a resource officer, who works out of the Georgetown station taking crime-related information over the phone.

When Constable Dunham isn't responding to calls, he's patrolling the streets, appearing in court, writing reports, making follow-up phone calls or doing public speaking.

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Halton Regional Police Constable Jeff Dunham rarely draws his gun, however he never knows what to expect when he responds to a call.

Four nurses laid off

Brady says he has no other budget options

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

Four Milton District Hospital nurses have received layoff notices following provincial government funding cutbacks announced earlier this year.

The fulltime registered nurses in the surgical and medical units will lose their jobs in mid-August, said hospital administrator Brian Brady.

The cutbacks have also caused the closure of four beds, reducing the number of spaces for surgical and medical patients to 34.

The second-floor surgical and medical units are merging to accommodate the majority of a \$511,800 provincial government funding cut in the 1996-97 fiscal year, Mr. Brady said.

The administrator said the layoffs were unavoidable. "We've been unable to introduce an operating budget that would keep us

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