




HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Hamilton Police Services Board
BOARD MEETING DATE:	April 23, 2021
SUBJECT:	Year End Report – Communications - 2020
REPORT NUMBER:	21-039
SUBMITTED BY:	Ryan Diodati, Acting Chief of Police
SIGNATURE:	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Hamilton Police Service (HPS) Communications Section is the Primary Public Safety Answer Point (PSAP) for all 911 calls placed within the City of Hamilton
- This report contains telephone calls handled and CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) calls created from 2011 to 2020. There was a 4.1% decrease in total CAD events from 2019-2020
- This report further contains 911 call volume statistics created from 2011 to 2020. There was a 1.4% decrease in total 911 calls from 2019-2020
- Staffing and training were adapted to comply with COVID issues and restrictions that occurred within 2020
- In 2020 the HPS moved forward with the development of an NG911 Steering Committee and Working Group. These committees are a collaborative composed of representatives from the City of Hamilton, Hamilton Fire Department and the Hamilton Police Service

INFORMATION

BACKGROUND:

The Hamilton Police Service Communications Section consists of the Communications Centre and switchboard. It is the Primary Public Safety Answer Point (PSAP) for all 911 calls placed by the residents of the City of Hamilton, and non-residents and motorists passing through the City on the

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Queen Elizabeth Way, The Lincoln Alexander and Red Hill Valley Parkways, and Highways 403 and 401.

REPORT STATISTICS:

This Annual Report provides both narrative and statistical summaries of significant activities of this Section during 2020. The below table outlines telephone call volumes from 2020. A comparison with the three preceding years is also provided. 911 calls 'abandoned' and called back refers to 911 callers who hang up prior to reaching our call taker stations. These calls are always called back by the operator to determine if there is an emergency. The number of abandoned calls increased in 2020 which could be due to the increasing trend of cell phone usage and the complications that arise as a result such as misdials. Approximately 87% of all 911 calls within the City of Hamilton were placed via cell phone in 2020. The trend of using cell phones is increasing nationwide.

TELEPHONE CALLS HANDLED	2017	2018	2019	2020
911 calls answered	193,565	194,828	204,166	201,226
911 calls abandoned and called back	*	*	777	935
911 calls received via cell phone (tracking initiated 2020)				176,479
Administrative calls answered	169,659	173,916	173,592	169,182
Total Calls Answered in Communications	367,725	373,350	378,535	371,343

*numbers for 911 abandoned and called back for 2017 and 2018 are not captured due to a tracking error with Bell

The table below outlines the calls accepted into our Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system during 2020. Call takers field telephone calls and determine if a call for service is required. They enter all calls for service on the CAD terminal. A comparison with the three preceding years is also provided. Total CAD events decreased 4.1% from 2019-2020.

CAD	2017	2018	2019	2020
Events created by Call Takers	228,477	242,377	258,661	237,724
Events created by Dispatchers	25,589	24,710	21,796	*32,360
Events generated by Mobile Officers	29,926	28,159	29,334	24,423
CAD events to Telephone Reporting Unit (TRU)	8,942	9,769	10,422	10,402
CAD Events created by Station Duty and Specialty Units	15,035	12,709	10,365	11,982
Total CAD Events Created by HPS	307,969	317,724	330,578	316,891

*Please note that in 2020 due to the pandemic, we utilized two spare 'dual' workstations. Therefore, the calls created by dispatcher statistic rose significantly. This is because we had call takers sitting at dispatch consoles in order to physically distance staff appropriately.

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The next chart of this report captures how many events are created to reflect calls we transfer to our partners at Hamilton Fire Department, Hamilton Paramedic Service and OPP. This includes how many events are '911-ADV' (Advised Events) which includes misdials and hang up calls. This was a notable increase in misdial and hang-up 911 calls in 2020.

ADVISED EVENTS:	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ambulance Advised Events	46,927	48,434	49,843	48,210
Fire Advised Events	3,225	3,505	3,416	3,204
911 Advised Events	51,019	61,766	74,686	81,730
OPP Advised Events	5,091	5,408	5,808	4,709
Total Advised Events	106,262	119,120	133,753	137,853

In Summary, Communications received 371,343 telephone calls in 2020, resulting in 316,891 CAD events being created. Furthermore, when comparing 2020 to the previous year:

- The total telephone calls answered by Communications decreased by 1.9%
- The number of answered 911 calls decreased by 1.4%
- The number of abandoned 911 calls increased by 20.3%
- Administrative calls answered by Communications decreased by 2.5% possibly due to Switchboard operators disseminating calls elsewhere. (i.e. HPS_Traffic Twitter account has reduced incoming calls from media regarding traffic hazards and road conditions)
- The total CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) events created by Communications decreased by 4.1%
- The number of calls processed by Telephone Reporting Unit decreased by 0.2%
- Calls transferred or tiered by Communications to other agencies include Fire (3,204), Ambulance (48,210), OPP (4,709), and a number were dealt with through our Telephone Reporting Unit (TRU) (10,402)

The following two charts display the number of 911 calls and the number of CAD events HPS received over the past 10 years. The number of CAD events is higher than the number of 911 calls, as not all CAD events are created by a 911 call. CAD events are also generated by administrative calls, self-initiated proactive stops by officers, station duty and specialty units' self-generated events, which account for the difference.

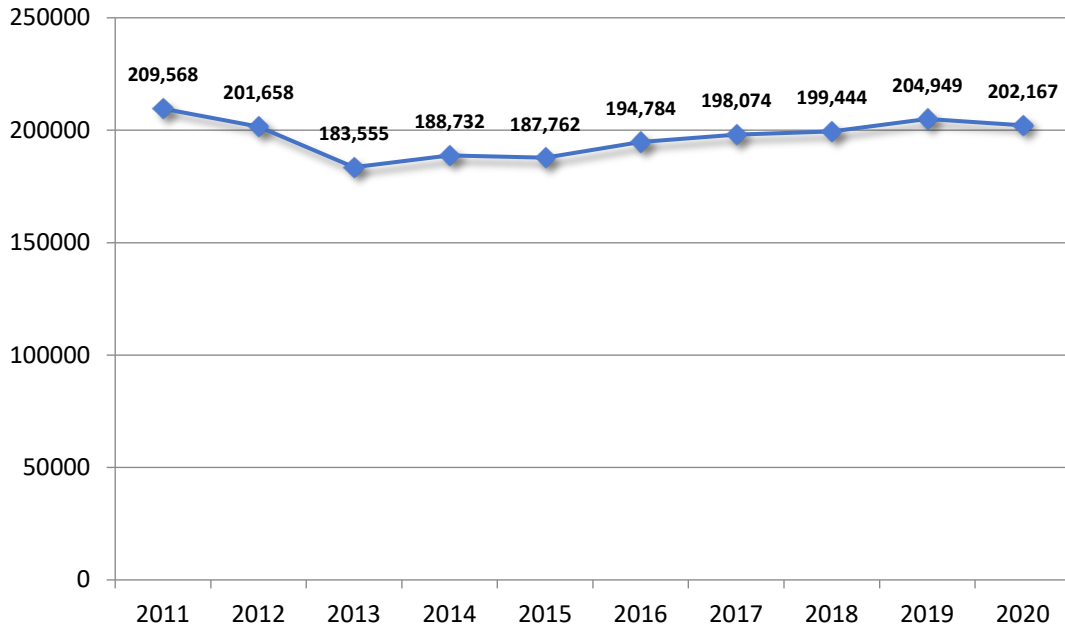
It is clear that while both CAD and 911 events have been trending upward, the pandemic had an impact on 2020 call volumes. In response to the COVID pandemic, the HPS implemented an Alternative Response Officer (ARO) protocol to reduce in-person calls for service where appropriate. Our ARO program handled 26.7% of all priority 3 and 4 calls, effectively minimizing potential risk of infection to our members and the public.

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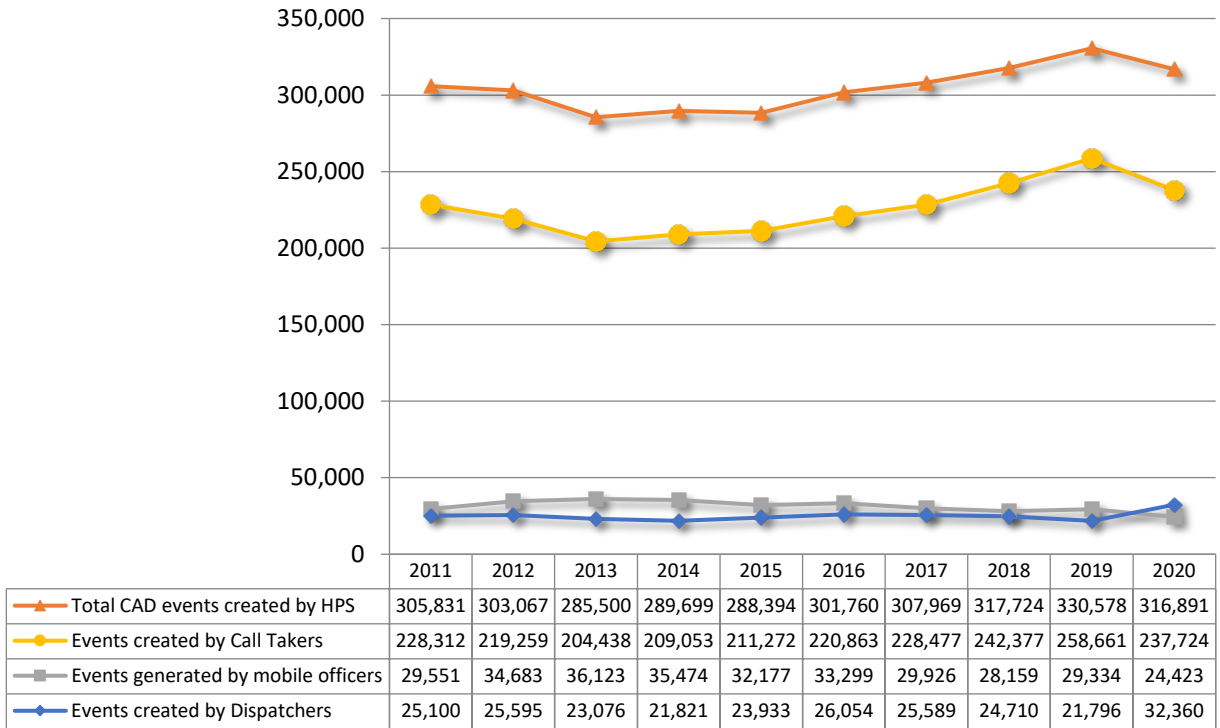
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911 CALLS HANDLED BY YEAR (2011 - 2020)



CAD EVENTS CREATED BY YEAR (2011 - 2020)



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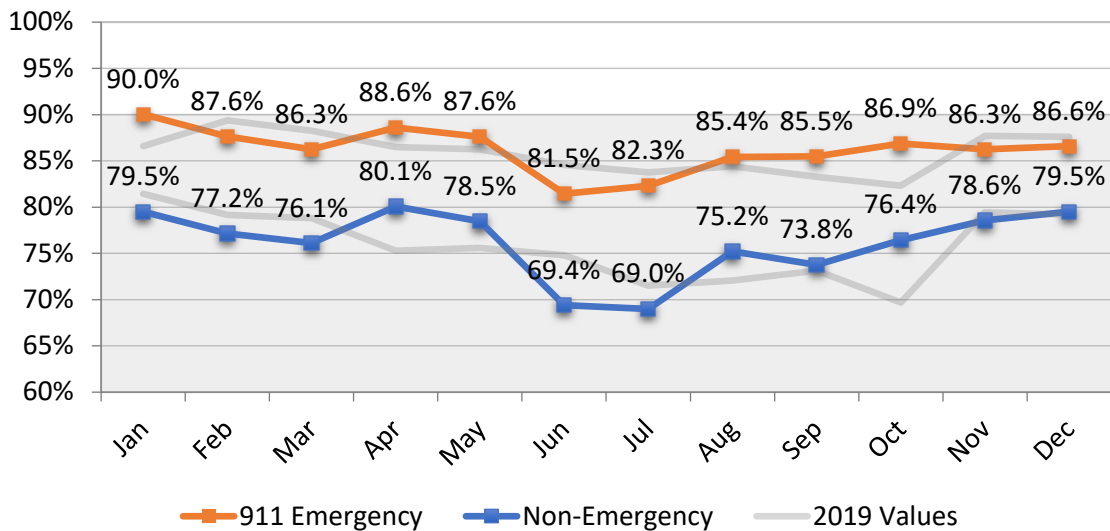
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Service Percentage Levels (2020)

The Avaya telephone software continues to distribute calls efficiently. With the ‘forced answer’ feature, calls are answered as soon as a Call Taker’s telephone is available. Service levels have improved to meet our 90% target. See the chart below for monthly service percentage levels.

(Telephone answering performance is measured through Service Levels- the percentage of 911 calls answered within 2 rings/12 seconds, and non-emergency calls answered within 3 rings/20 seconds).



Staffing

- There were three full time vacancies in 2020 which were filled by internal HPS candidates
- Communications Training Officer (CTO) positions were posted and six candidates were successful

Training

- Annual block training was provided for 41 out of the 76 members. (Due to COVID this training was suspended)
- All Supervisors and Acting Supervisors received one day of Communications Yearly Development training
- Two Communicators attended Crisis Intervention Training. To date, 42 Communicators have received this training
- One Acting Supervisor/Trainer attended Coach Officer Course

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- Virtual training on the NICE recording system was received by three members
 - Virtual training on the AVAYA call handling system was attended by the Supervisory team
 - The Communications Trainer attended the Leading a Learning Organization Course
 - The PSAP Coordinator attended the Influencing Police Leadership Course

Current and Future Challenges:

911 Disclosure Obligations

The mandatory disclosure of 911 calls for all judiciary matters has increased the workload of our members (ref R v MGT & OACP/MAG Framework MOU). HPS manages disclosure requests via our administrative assistant who is further augmented by accommodated members. HPS is in the process of implementing a DEMS (Digital Evidence Management Solution) and will participate in AXON trials commencing early 2021. It is hoped that DEMS will improve the efficiency and accuracy of the 911 audio disclosure process.

NICE SYSTEM UPGRADE

The NICE system is the Recording and Logging system that is utilized to record all 911 and administrative phone calls into the Communications Centre. 2020 saw the implementation of a NICE upgrade which included a Quality Assurance piece and redaction capabilities. There are further upgrades being considered going forward to further ensure the system complies with future needs.

CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) UPGRADE

CAD or Computer Aided Dispatch is the software program utilized within the Communications Centre. All calls for service are typed up onto this system and dispatched via this system. In Q4 of 2020, Communications began testing of an upgrade to our current CAD system. This system will be NG9-1-1 compliant which is a standard all Canadian PSAPS will need to meet in upcoming years.

NG9-1-1 MIGRATION

Communications continues to prepare for the pending system upgrades listed above in anticipation of the mandated implementation of NG9-1-1 in March of 2024. All Canadian PSAPs must migrate to an NG9-1-1 platform well in advance of the 2024 cut-off date. This migration will have an impact upon the Communications Centre and as a result the following must be considered:

- The CRTC has advised that Telephone Service Providers shall update their systems in anticipation of NG9-1-1. This migration will be a Canada wide project. All PSAPs will be on-boarded from mid/late 2021 through to early 2024. These are newly established dates which were altered due to the current pandemic
- The Communications Centre face numerous system upgrades and replacements including a space needs assessment in order to migrate to the new NG9-1-1 technologies
- The HPS has worked in collaboration with the City of Hamilton, Hamilton Fire Department and Hamilton Paramedic Services to create an NG9-1-1 Executive Steering Committee. This mandate of this committee is to identify, procure and implement a NG9-1-1 solution for the

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City of Hamilton that capitalizes on efficiencies, ensures interoperability and delivers public safety. This committee meets monthly to ensure preparedness for the CRTC timelines

- The NG9-1-1 Steering Committee directs a Working Group (comprised of members from same organizations), and has commenced a procurement process in order to initiate project management for these changes
- It is anticipated that the migration to NG9-1-1 will also impact many Communications Standard Operating Procedures and policies as new sources of emergency information (text and video streaming) become available to call takers and dispatchers. These impacts are being considered and assessed for implications relative to staffing levels

The members of the Communications Branch continue to be an integral part of our emergency first response to ensure public safety for our citizens and visitors. The next two years will see many developments and changes to this area of the police service as NG9-1-1 continues to shape the future of the HPS PSAP.

RD/M. Schulenberg

cc: Marty Schulenberg, Superintendent – Support Services
Paul Evans, Inspector – Support Services
Acting Managers Lisa Osika and Michelle Muracco – Support Service

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable

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