

Spotlight on Public Safety

Monthly report to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners - March 2013



Sgt. Scott MacDonald HRM's Interim Public Safety Officer



The 2012 year end crime statistics were reviewed at the last regular meeting of the HRM Board of Police Commissioners. The numbers were encouraging and match trends occurring across the country.

Overall crime in HRM is down 9.2 per cent when comparing 2012 to 2011. Violent crime is down 14 per cent, with homicides down 37 per cent and attempted homicides down 25 per cent. The robbery rate is down by 21 per cent. Property crimes have fallen by 7.8 per cent, with decreases in break and enters (-20 per cent), frauds (-3 per cent) and stolen motor vehicles (-12.8 per cent).

Certainly the intelligence-based enforcement efforts of HRM Partners in Policing have contributed to these improvements. Scholars will point out that national demographic changes are also a contributing factor to the decrease in crime rates.

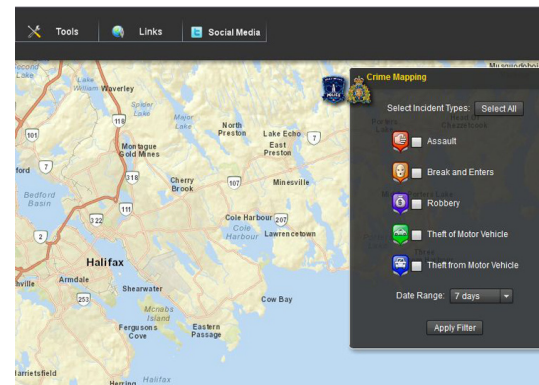
Sir Robert Peel, credited with many aspects of modern policing, noted that: "The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it." And in HRM, further progress is certainly required, particularly for firearms offences.

Crime statistics provide a moment-in-time snapshot of criminality. Long-term improvements require ongoing prevention efforts by individual citizens and collective efforts to tackle the root causes of crime. Remember, each and every one of us has a role to play in public safety!

Community Engagement

Engage citizens and community groups in playing an active role in public safety in HRM.

- On February 14, Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP launched HRM Crime Mapping, an interactive site that provides citizens with contextual and timely information about crime in the areas where they live, work and play. The site is updated daily at 12:15 a.m. and maps incidents of five specific crime types – robberies, assaults, break and enters, thefts of vehicles and thefts from vehicles. These crime types were selected given that citizens can take steps to protect themselves from becoming a victim if armed with information about what's happening in our community. The site also provides links to HRP and RCMP's social media sites, websites and crime prevention information. Visit <http://www.halifax.ca/Police/PublicSafety/HRMCrimeMapping.html> for more information or to access the site.



Diversity

Strengthen HRM's connection with our diverse communities while at the same time addressing quality-of-life issues within those communities.

- On February 26, Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP officers experienced a unique opportunity to explore African Nova Scotian culture. Officers arriving at the Black Cultural Centre were met by students from nearby Graham Creighton Junior High who had prepared a presentation for the group. The members were then sent on a trivia challenge, ensuring both a thorough tour of this unique centre and education on the history and culture of African Nova Scotians. It was a great finale to African Heritage Month.
- HRM acknowledged African Heritage Month through a recognition event on February 21 for the founding members of the Racially Visible Employee Caucus (RVEC) of HRM. The event provided a networking opportunity where attendees met the RVEC founding and general members and learned about HRM's recently established African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office.

Public Safety is everyone's responsibility. WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY?

Partnerships

Align with all levels of government, social agencies and community partners to realize efficiencies and improve public safety programs and services in HRM.

- Sgt. Scott MacDonald, HRM's Public Safety Officer, joined with millions of Canadians to set a Guinness World Record for the most people texting simultaneously, and more importantly, to end the stigma surrounding mental illness on Bell Let's Talk Day. The 96,266,266 calls, texts, tweets and Facebook shares resulted in \$4,813,313.30 being raised for mental health programs in Canada.

Police Community Response

Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and Halifax District RCMP must continue to implement policing strategies which reduce crime and enhance public safety.

- During the month of February, Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP launched a pedestrian safety blitz to educate citizens on the importance of limiting distractions when driving and walking on HRM roadways. This education was delivered in-person out on the roads, as well as through an HRP Traffic Cop social media presence: Facebook - facebook.com/HRPTrafficCop and Twitter - twitter.com/HRPTrafficCop

Sustainability Initiatives

HRM as an organization must undertake a variety of initiatives to improve public safety.

- The HRM Community Response Team continued to work on 11 issues which are negatively impacting various communities in HRM. The team also met with new HRM Councillors Matt Whitman and Steve Craig to provide an overview and discuss how team members can assist them with future crime prevention initiatives.

March is Fraud Prevention Month

Throughout March, HRM Partners in Policing will be providing weekly fraud prevention tips for citizens as part of Fraud Prevention Month. Each week will focus on a different type of fraud with information being disseminated through media releases, videos, websites and social media.

Visit www.halifax.ca/Police/FraudAwarenessMonth.html



Communications Corner

Communication underpins the success of the HRM Public Safety Strategy. Below is an overview of major communication initiatives from February:

HRP

Media relations

- Issued 43 media releases, 32 were about crimes/crime trends and public safety issues, and 11 were proactive/educational.
- Responded to 387 media requests.

Social media

- The HRP Twitter account has 10,310 followers and 6,790 people like HRP on Facebook.
- The HRP YouTube channel was viewed by 447 people in February, bringing our total views to 140,244.

Community outreach/education

- Produced two community newspaper columns - one introducing our new Diversity and Equity Officer and the other on HRM Crime Mapping.

RCMP

Media relations

- Issued 15 media releases, 14 were about crimes/crime trends and public safety issues, and one was proactive/educational.
- Responded to 96 media requests.

Community outreach/education

- Produced two community newspaper columns - one outlining online dating safety tips and the other on Fraud Prevention Month.

Social media

- There are 7,560 people who like RCMP on the English-language Facebook page and 42 on the French-language Facebook page. The RCMP Twitter account currently has 7,282 followers in English and 421 in French.