

May 21, 2025

Item 9.1
Board of Police Commissioners
May 21, 2025

HALIFAX

The Police Response to Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents in Halifax

Halifax Regional Police and RCMP Halifax Regional Detachment

Background

- Hate is a global problem which can have devastating impacts on individuals and communities
- Crimes and incidents which are motivated by hate target people or groups of people based on certain characteristics, such as their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disability
- They strike at the very core of a person's identity and have a disproportionate impact in that the individual person is victimized but so too is the wider group which shares the same characteristics
- The effects reverberate into the broader community, leaving individuals and groups with feelings of being unsafe, vulnerable, stressed, and isolated

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Definitions

Hate crime: A criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the suspect's hate, bias, or prejudice, based on the victim's real or perceived ancestry, race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion/creed, sex, age, mental or physical disability, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor

Hate incident: Behaviours that, though motivated by hate, bias, or prejudice against a victim's real or perceived ancestry, race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion/creed, sex, age, mental or physical disability, gender identity and/or expression, or sexual orientation, are not criminal acts

The Law

- Hate crimes is a category which encompasses multiple criminal offences
- The Criminal Code addresses hate crimes in two different ways:
 - Five specific hate-motivated offences; and,
 - For all other offences, e.g. assault, property damage, uttering threats, the hate element is taken into consideration upon sentencing (**Section 718.2(a)(i)** of the Criminal Code)
- The five specific hate-motivated Criminal Code offences are:
 - **Section 318(1)** – Advocating Genocide
 - **Section 319(1)** – Public Incitement of Hatred
 - **Section 319(2)** – Wilful Promotion of Hatred
 - **Section 319(2.1)** – Wilful Promotion of Antisemitism
 - **Section 430(4.1)** – Mischief to Property used for Religious Worship/by an Identifiable Group

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Increase in police-reported hate crimes

- Data from Statistics Canada show that the number of police-reported hate crimes increased nationally by 32% between 2022 and 2023, the third sharp increase in four years and doubling the overall number in Canada since 2019
- In HRM, the number of police-reported hate crimes increased significantly in 2022 and 2023, and Nova Scotia became the province with the highest rate of police-reported hate crimes in the country in 2023
- Hate crimes are under-reported, so this data should not be considered as reflecting the true number of hate crimes and incidents which occur in HRM
- Taken together with heightened geopolitical tensions and the changing international landscape with regard to equity, diversity, and inclusion sentiments and initiatives, this report was submitted to inform the Board and community members of the police response and approach in this area

Police-reported Data

Number of police-reported hate crimes in Halifax Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), 2014-2023

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
7	8	3	11	17	8	17	19	72	121

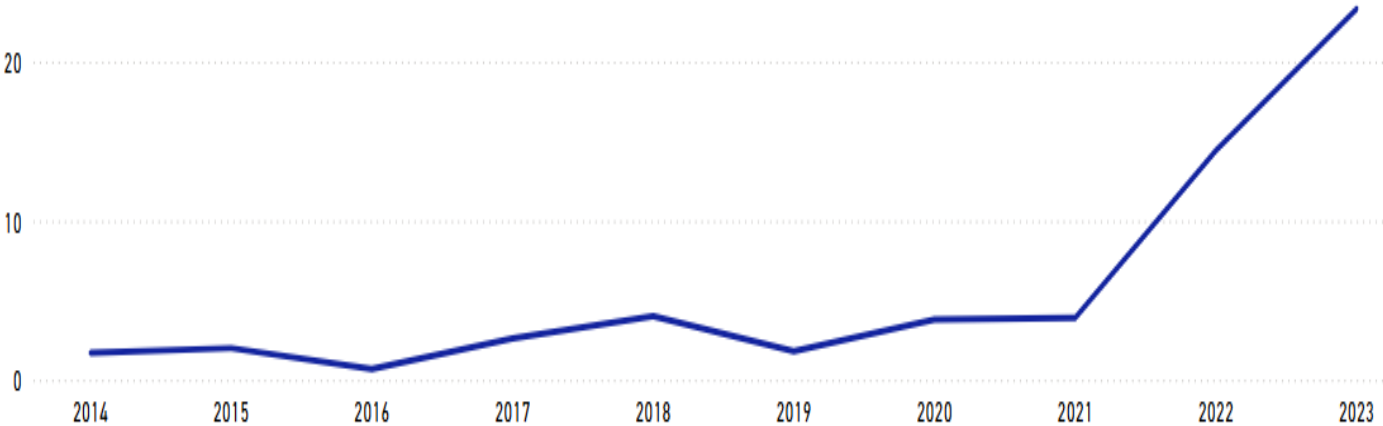


Source: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024013-eng.htm>

Police-reported Data

Rate per 100,000 population of police-reported hate crimes in Halifax CMA, 2014-2023

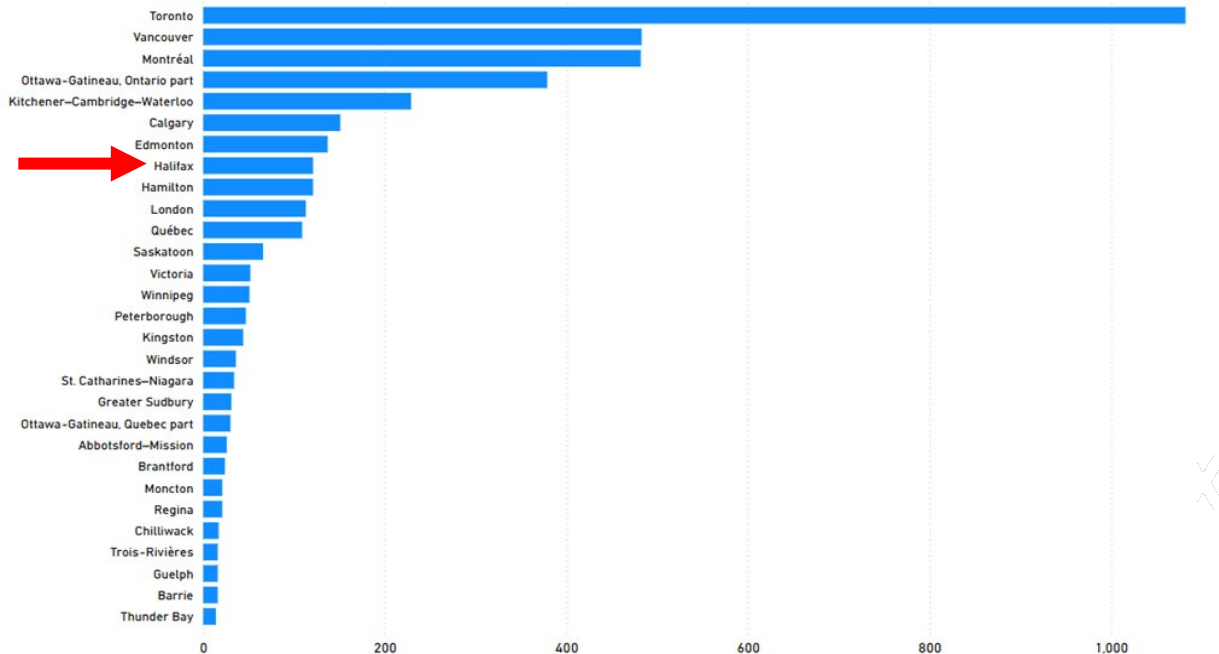
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
2	2	1	3	4	2	4	4	14	23



Source: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024013-eng.htm>

Police-reported Data

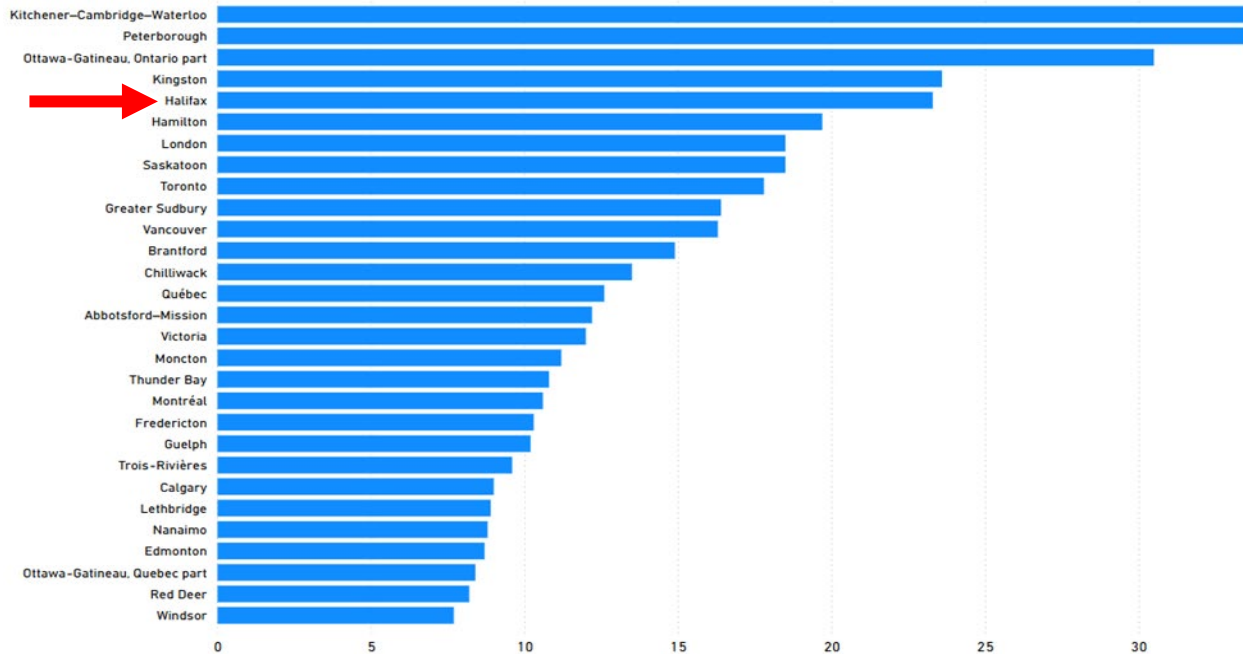
Number of police-reported hate crimes, by CMA, 2023



Source: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024013-eng.htm>

Police-reported Data

Rate per 100,000 population of police-reported hate crimes, by CMA, 2023



Source: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024013-eng.htm>

Additional HRM Data

Number of police-reported hate crime files where charges were laid, 2022-2024

Year	HRP			HRD		
	# files charged	# persons charged	# charges	# files charged	# persons charged	# charges
2022	9	12	18	1	2	3
2023	11	11	22	3	5	6
2024	10	10	17	5	8	13

- The most common charges were assault, mischief/property damage, and uttering threats
- Where a hate crime is recorded but no charges were laid, this could be for several reasons. The most common reasons are that no suspect has been identified, followed by files where the victim does not wish to proceed with charges

Additional HRP Data

- **Hate incidents:**

- Are not criminal offences so are not covered in the hate crime data reported by Statistics Canada
- Between 2022 and 2024, HRP and HRD have recorded 742 hate incidents across HRM, with 711 recorded as occurring within HRP areas

- **Targeted groups:**

- Across both hate crimes and hate incidents in HRP, the most targeted characteristic is race, with hate towards Black, South Asian, and Arab/West Asian groups being most common
- Hatred towards actual or perceived newcomers (xenophobia) is the second most targeted characteristic, followed by sexual orientation, religion, and gender

- **Locations:**

- Across both hate crimes and hate incidents in HRP areas, the most common location type is public areas such as streets, parking lots, and parks, followed by residential dwelling units (often neighbour disputes), transit locations, and schools

HRP Hate Crime Unit

- In January 2022, HRP implemented the Hate Crime Unit (HCU), the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada. It is located in the Integrated Criminal Investigation Division (CID) and currently staffed by one HRP Detective Constable position
- During the 2024/25 HRP Operating Budget process, a second position was approved
- The HCU is required to review all files with a suspected or confirmed element of hate motivation
- The total number of files reviewed by the HCU since 2022 ranges between 200-300 per year (both hate crimes and hate incidents)

HRP Training

- Training and education are critical components in the overall HRP response to addressing hate crimes and incidents
- To coincide with the implementation of the HCU, HRP embarked on an extensive internal online and in-person training program for both sworn and civilian members, including frontline positions of patrol, CID, and call-takers and dispatchers
- Training in this area remains an ongoing process, with the content being refined and updated as new and relevant information is received
- All new police recruits receive training in this area and targeted sessions have been delivered to newly-promoted supervisors, and Community Response Officers

HRP Hate Crime & Hate Incident Policy

- The HRP Hate Crime and Hate Incident Response policy was issued in June 2022, and stipulates that a General Occurrence (GO) report must be completed for all crimes and non-criminal incidents where hate is confirmed or suspected to have been a motivating factor
- Reports are referred to the HCU so they may provide advice and/or assistance as required. If appropriate, the HCU will assume carriage of the investigation
- As appropriate, the HCU will contact the victim, and offer or direct them to support services such as Victims' Services and/or additional community resources which may be of benefit
- Where a file is charged, the HCU will liaise with the assigned Crown Prosecutor and ensure the file contains evidence to support the hate motivation element

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HRP Community Outreach & Public Information

- Hate crimes are one of the most under-reported types of crime
- Common reasons for not reporting hate include:
 - Individuals may have become desensitized to experiencing hate and feel it is not important enough to report
 - There may be fear of escalation or retaliation, or feelings of shame and embarrassment
 - Lack of trust and confidence in police may also prevent these crimes from being reported, and/or uncertainty around the criminal justice process

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HRP Community Outreach & Public Information

- In September 2022, HRP began engaging with individual community groups regarding their perspectives and experiences of hate crimes and incidents
- The purpose of the engagement was to provide information, explore options for information-sharing, and listen to the community's views and experiences
- HRP is guided by communities as to the most appropriate content, location, and format of any engagement
- It is felt that these sessions and the wider HRP response to hate crimes and incidents, have provided opportunities to enhance HRP efforts in building relationships with diverse and marginalized communities who are likely to be targeted by hate
- HRP has created a website page which provides information on hate crimes and incidents and produced an information card for officers to hand out in the community
- HRP will issue a media release to inform the public on investigations where appropriate to do so

RCMP Halifax Regional Detachment

- Within 'H Division' (Nova Scotia), the RCMP has a dedicated provincial Hate Crimes Coordinator, who works with various community groups throughout the province, engaging in community outreach to form relationships that may prevent criminal activities
- Rather than leading investigations, the Hate Crimes Coordinator provides expertise and guidance as a resource for divisional units and acts as a central repository for hate-related information to be disseminated throughout the province
- The RCMP membership (officers, public service employees and civilian members) are provided with quarterly Teams presentations involving various disciplines in and around Hate Crime
- The "Investigator's Guidebook" was created and released in 2024 to all police officers

RCMP Halifax Regional Detachment

- The Hate Crimes Coordinator undertakes daily analysis of police databases to identify any new reports or emerging trends of Hate Crime within the province and ensure that victims of Hate Crime receive the best possible service
- The Hate Crimes Coordinator engages regularly with the Nova Scotia Jewish Council and has direct contact with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community regarding reported incidents
 - The consultation consists of strategic communication calls prior to media releases involving reports of hate-motivated incidents in and around Halifax and the province, allowing for increased support and transparency with the communities served by RCMP in Halifax and Nova Scotia
- HRD will issue a media release to inform the public on investigations where appropriate to do so

RCMP Halifax Regional Detachment

- The RCMP has a specific internal policy on hate-motivated crimes, and ensures the public is aware of all available resources and material through its public website, which outlines key information on this area and includes a section on the Hate Crimes Task Force (HCTF), which the RCMP co-chairs with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation
 - The HCTF was launched in 2022 in recognition of the need for a national coordinated and improved policing and prosecution response in this area
 - It has a diverse membership with a range of expertise and knowledge and is dedicated to information-sharing and working in partnership to drive forward the policing response to hate crimes and incidents across Canada
 - The Task Force has developed a pamphlet which is available for use by all agencies across Canada

Questions?

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