




HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Hamilton Police Service Board
BOARD MEETING DATE:	May 29, 2025
SUBJECT:	2024 Year End Report - Communications Branch
REPORT NUMBER:	25-032
PRESENTATION:	No
OUTSTANDING BUSINESS ITEM:	No
SUBMITTED BY:	Frank Bergen, Chief of Police
SIGNATURE:	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The attached Appendix A – 2024 Communications Branch Annual Report, provides a summary of statistical information concerning our Communications Branch for 2024.

The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) Communications Branch is the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the City of Hamilton. As such, the PSAP answers all 911 calls for the City as well as dispatch for Police. This report provides an overview of the call volume and resources associated with the Communications Branch in 2024.

The goals and objectives listed below were achieved in 2024 and are reflective of our Strategic Plan and its Key Priorities.

- Community Safety – Focus on What is Essential
- Culture and Capacity – Ensure Employee Well Being
- Core Assets – Leverage Technology and Innovation

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix A – 2024 Communications Branch Annual Report

FB/M.Spencer

- c. Paul Hamilton, Deputy Chief – Support
Michael Spencer, Superintendent – Field Support Division

Vision: To be a trusted partner in delivering public safety.

Mission: To serve and protect in partnership with our communities.

Our Values: Compassionate, Dedicated, Inclusive, Integrity, Innovative, Professional, Teamwork



2024 Communications Branch Annual Report



FIELD SUPPORT DIVISION

**HAMILTON
POLICE SERVICE**
Together. Stronger. Safer.

Appendix ‘A’ – 2024 Communications Branch Annual Report

The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) Communications Branch functions as the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the City of Hamilton. As such, it is the centralized hub responsible for receiving and triaging all 9-1-1 emergency calls originating from within the city, including those from residents, workers, visitors, and commuters. In addition to call-taking, the Communications Branch manages all police dispatch operations, ensuring timely and effective deployment of frontline resources in response to public safety needs.

SUMMARY

- This report provides statistical data on telephone calls handled and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) events recorded from 2015 to 2024. Notably, there was a 5.3% decrease in total CAD events between 2023 and 2024.
- It also includes call volume statistics for the same period. In 2024, there was a 3.9% decrease in the number of answered 9-1-1 calls compared to 2023.
- The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) continues to actively participate in the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) Steering Committee and Working Group. These collaborative bodies include representatives from the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Fire Department, and HPS, and are focused on planning and implementing enhancements to emergency communications infrastructure.

REPORT STATISTICS

This annual report provides both narrative and statistical summaries of the key activities undertaken by the Communications Branch in 2024. Tables A, B, and C present telephone call volumes and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) events from 2020 to 2024, including a five-year comparative analysis.

*Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) calls reflect incoming communications to the Police PSAP from other Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), such as Ambulance services. Prior to 2022, these calls were infrequent, typically reserved for urgent situations. However, in 2022, Ambulance services transitioned to a soft phone system, which required routing calls through the ACD line due to the discontinuation of their analog line. This change resulted in a notable increase in ACD call volume.

In addition, beginning in 2021, the Police PSAP started capturing data on outgoing calls. These figures, included in Table A, contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of total call activity and workload within the Communications Branch.

Table “A” - Telephone Calls Handled

TELEPHONE CALLS HANDLED	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
9-1-1 calls answered	201,226	218,803	225,796	263,042	252,592
Administrative calls answered	169,182	178,257	177,558	165,732	166,755
ACD Calls (calls from partner agencies)	558	324	368	8,181*	12,093*
Outgoing Calls	N/A	119,258	112,497	127,758	103,814
Total Calls Answered in Communications	370,966	516,642	516,219	564,713	535,254

Table B presents the number of calls entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system from 2020 to 2024. Call takers are responsible for answering incoming telephone calls, assessing the nature of each call, and

determining whether a police response is required. When a call for service is identified, the details are entered into the CAD system for dispatch. The table also includes a five-year comparative analysis. In 2024, total CAD events declined by 5.3% compared to 2023.

Table “B” – CAD Events

CAD	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Events created by Call Takers	237,724	250,548	262,431	291,581	267,284
Events created by Dispatchers	32,360	39,654	25,409	26,458	26,471
Events generated by Mobile Officers	24,423	28,071	20,861	19,385	19,407
CAD events to Telephone Reporting Unit (TRU)	10,402	11,055	9,276	5,827	4,689
CAD Events created by Station Duty and Specialty Units	11,982	9,043	20,873	8,282	15,192
Total CAD Events Created by HPS	316,891	338,371	338,850	351,533	333,043

Table C details the number of events created by the Communications Branch and subsequently transferred to emergency services partners, including the Hamilton Fire Department, Hamilton Paramedic Service, and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). This data also includes the number of '9-1-1-ADV' (Advised Events), which primarily consist of accidental 9-1-1 calls such as misdials and hang-ups that do not require emergency response.

Table “C” Advised Events

ADVISED EVENTS:	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ambulance Advised Events	48,210	54,406	59,902	63,747	64,855
Fire Advised Events	3,204	3,472	3,646	4,252	4,607
9-1-1 Advised Events	81,730	88,802	86,116	118,122	85,400
OPP Advised Events	4,709	5,249	5,531	6,642	6,455
Total Advised Events	137,853	151,929	155,195	192,763	161,317

In summary, the Hamilton Police Service Communications Branch managed a total of 535,254 telephone calls in 2024, resulting in the creation of 333,043 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) events. When compared to 2023, the following year-over-year changes were observed:

- Total telephone calls to Communications (9-1-1 and administrative lines) decreased by 2.3%
- Answered 9-1-1 calls decreased by 3.9%
- Total CAD events decreased by 5.3%
- Calls transferred or tiered to other emergency service partners (Fire, Ambulance, and OPP) increased by 1.7%
- Administrative calls increased by 0.6%

These trends provide valuable insight into evolving call volumes and service demands within the Communications Branch.

Figures D and E illustrate the number of 9-1-1 calls and CAD events recorded by the Hamilton Police Service over the past 10 years. The number of CAD events consistently exceeds the number of 9-1-1 calls, as not all CAD entries originate from emergency calls. In addition to 9-1-1-generated events, CAD events are created through administrative calls, officer-initiated proactive stops, front desk (station duty) interactions, and self-

generated entries by specialty units. This broader scope of input accounts for the higher volume of CAD events relative to 9-1-1 calls.

Figure “D” 9-1-1 Calls Handled By Year (2015 – 2024)

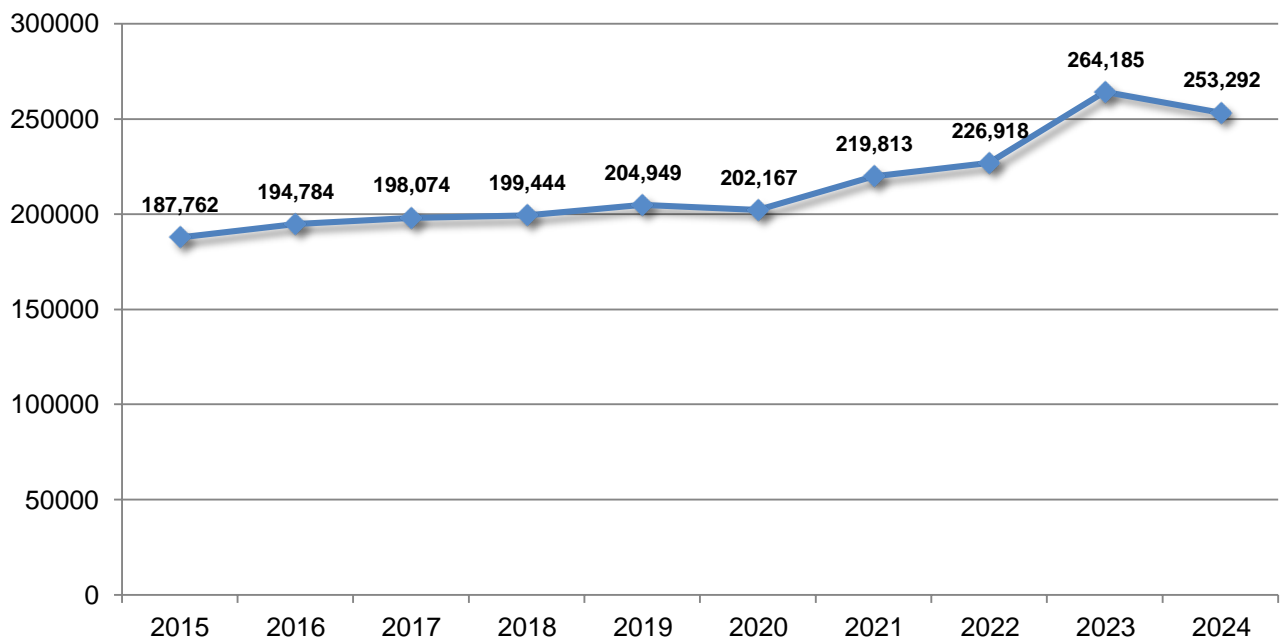
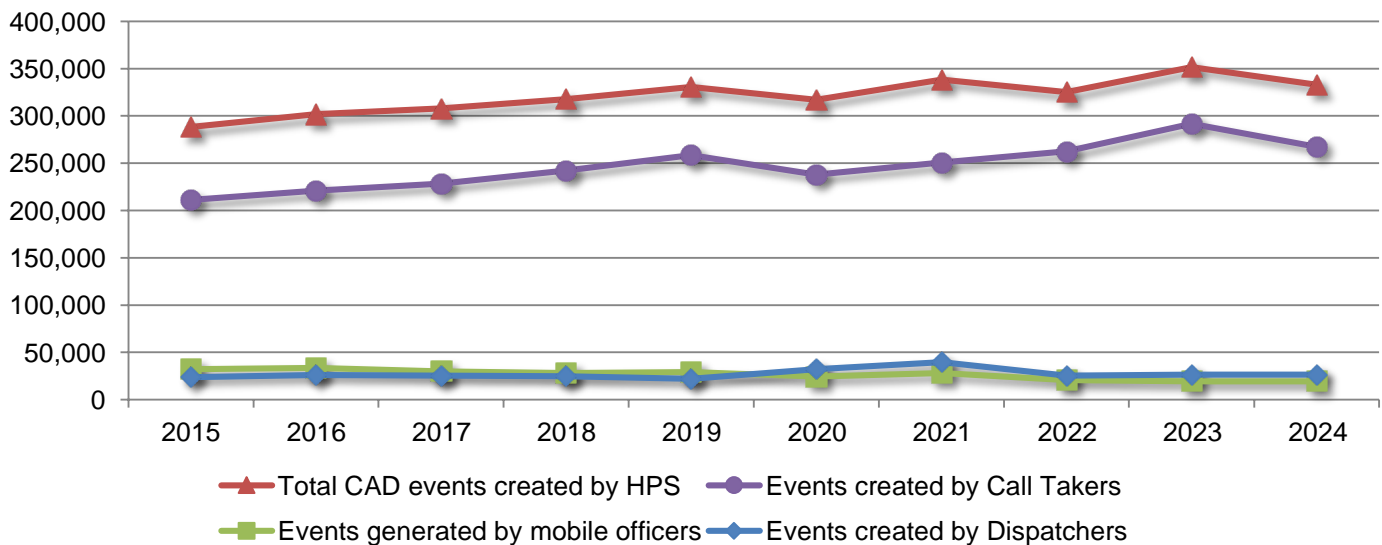


Figure “E” CAD Events Created by Year (2015 – 2024)

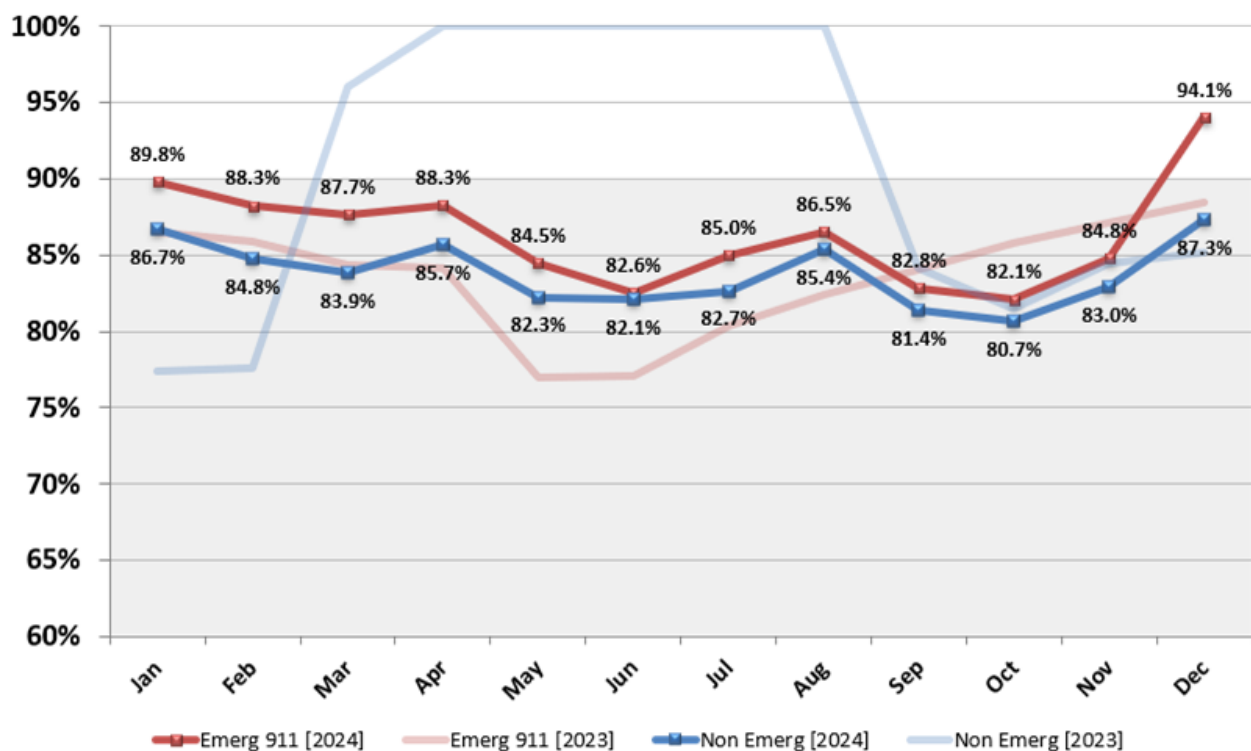


Service Percentage Levels (2024)

Service Level Percentages (2024) – The National Emergency Number Association (NENA), in collaboration with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO), has worked to standardize industry guidelines for 9-1-1 call answer times. According to these standards, 90% of 9-1-1 calls should be answered within 15 seconds, and 95% within 20 seconds (NENA-STA-020.1-2020).

Hamilton Police Communications currently utilizes Avaya telephone software, which employs a 'forced answer' feature to ensure calls are answered as soon as the call taker's phone becomes available. Telephone answering performance is tracked using service level metrics. For 9-1-1 calls, our target is to answer 90% of calls within 12 seconds, exceeding the industry standard. Non-emergency calls have a service level target of 20 seconds. In 2024, the service level for answering 9-1-1 calls within 12 seconds improved slightly, reaching 86.1%, compared to 83.5% in 2023.

Figure 'F' – 2024 monthly service percentage levels



(Telephone answering performance is measured by Service Levels, which represent the percentage of 9-1-1 calls answered within two rings or 12 seconds.)

2024 Strategic Plan Goals Achieved

Community Safety – Focus on what is essential by delivering core policing functions and ensuring appropriate role division with other service providers.

- In 2024, certain non-criminal ambulance assist calls were reassigned from a police response to the more appropriate agency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Additionally, a review of our Priority Response System led to amendments that improved the management of our response and resource allocation. These changes resulted in increased capacity for officers on frontline patrol.

Culture and Capacity – Ensure employee wellbeing by deploying resources to effectively manage workload and continue to implement employee wellness initiatives that focus on prevention, early intervention and a supportive return to work.

- In September 2024, the HPS Communications Branch expanded its staffing by adding four full-time members—one for each of the four squads. This increase in personnel will support our Communicators in managing call volume more effectively, while enhancing overall service delivery.

Core Assets – Leverage technology and innovation by exploring and implementing digital solutions and new processes that improve service delivery, create internal and external efficiencies, and enhance organizational effectiveness.

- In 2024, the HPS Communications Branch, in collaboration with our community partners from the City of Hamilton, continued progress on the NG9-1-1 project. With over 90% of the project now complete, we are on track to 'go-live' in the Spring of 2025. This marks a major upgrade to our call handling and dispatching technology, significantly enhancing our ability to process and dispatch 9-1-1 calls across the City of Hamilton.
- Also in 2024, the Police Service Board approved the creation of a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Coordinator position. This new role is critical to maintaining the technology that supports the PSAP, ensuring continuous, high-quality service delivery to our community.

Staffing

- In 2024, ten new full-time vacancies were created, all of which were filled by part-time members within the Communications Branch.
- Nine current Communications Operators were promoted to Communications Training Officer (CTO) positions.
- One full-time Switchboard Operator was hired to support operations.
- Thirteen part-time Communicators were hired and successfully completed Call Taker/Dispatch training in 2024.

As we move into 2025, we are excited to have received approval to hire an additional four full-time Communications Supervisors. These staffing enhancements will help us better manage call volume while improving the span of control for our Supervisors. This will ensure we maintain our capacity to deliver effective public safety services to the community.

Training

- All Communications members completed four hours of NG9-1-1 training on the new Call Handling System (CHS).
- One Communicator successfully completed Crisis Intervention Training (CIT).
- Six Communicators participated in the ASIST Suicide Prevention Training Program.
- Four Communications Training Officers (CTOs) attended the Civilian Coaching and Mentoring Course offered by the Toronto Police Service.
- Three Communicators attended the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Resiliency Course.
- One Acting Supervisor completed the Ontario Police College Communications Supervisor Course.
- Ten Communications members participated in the Road to Mental Readiness training.
- Four Communications Operators received Scribe Training at the Ontario Police College (OPC).
- One Communications Operator attended the Scribe Facilitator Course at OPC.
- Two Communications members completed Incident Command (IC) 200 training.
- Nine Communications Operators were trained as Communications Training Officers.
- The construction of the NG9-1-1 Call Handling Equipment Testing Lab was completed in 2024. This space now serves as the Communications Training Centre and houses the offices of the Training Coordinator and the PSAP Coordinator, who collaborate to provide comprehensive training for HPS Dispatchers and 9-1-1 Communicators.
- Two Communications Operators attended the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Conference.
- Three Communications Operators attended the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Conference.
- Three Communications Operators attended the Police Communicators Conference.

Public Safety Answer Point (PSAP)

The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) is the Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the City of Hamilton. Of all 9-1-1 calls received by HPS Communications, 57.5% were fielded solely by Police. The remaining 42.5% of calls were transferred to partner agencies and monitored by Police Communications to ensure that police involvement was not necessary (Bell FlexPortal stats).

- 42.5% of 9-1-1 calls are transferred to Secondary PSAPs, including Ambulance, Fire, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Niagara, Halton, Peel, and "Non-PSAPs" such as COAST (Bell FlexPortal stats).
- Ambulance handles the majority of these transferred calls, accounting for approximately 34%.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has mandated that all Canadian PSAPs upgrade their systems to support NG9-1-1 calls through the Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet). Originally scheduled for March 2025, the CRTC has extended the deadline to March 31, 2027, acknowledging the additional time required for the transition.

HPS has dedicated resources to support the migration of E9-1-1 systems to NG9-1-1 compliant technology. We are working closely with the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Fire Department to implement a fully redundant and resilient Call Handling System, ensuring all other 9-1-1 related systems are NG9-1-1 compliant.

- The City of Hamilton has advised that we anticipate our cutover to NG9-1-1 in the spring of 2025.
- Task lists for the NG9-1-1 project are nearing completion.
- Hamilton is set to be a leader in the NG9-1-1 transition. London PS was the first Police/Solacom PSAP in our region to cut over, and Peel was the first Police PSAP in Ontario to make the transition with their Motorola solution. Hamilton is expected to cut over following Barrie Fire and Toronto Police Service.

HPS continues to foster a strong relationship with our new partner, Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS). We have established an interoperable talk group on the Motorola radio system, allowing for open communication between Hamilton and Niagara dispatch in the event of a 9-1-1 system failure.

Additionally, HPS and NRPS have entered into a reciprocal agreement to handle each other's calls during outages. In the event of a full PSAP outage in Hamilton, NRPS will answer 9-1-1 calls on behalf of HPS and create CAD events, shared over the newly established Motorola talk group. HPS will provide the same support in the event of an outage at NRPS's PSAP.

Lastly, new emergency evacuation guidebooks will be developed following the cutover to NG9-1-1, as the operational plan and evacuation procedures will be more specific and distinct from the current guidelines.

Conclusion

In 2024, the Hamilton Police Service Communications Branch made significant strides in enhancing its operations, staffing, training, and technological advancements. The continued progress on the NG9-1-1 project, along with strategic staffing improvements and the development of critical interagency partnerships, positions HPS Communications to better meet the evolving demands of public safety.

With the anticipated transition to NG9-1-1 in 2025, alongside ongoing efforts to improve training, response capabilities, and system resiliency, HPS is well-prepared to continue delivering high-quality service to the community. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to innovation, operational efficiency, and a steadfast focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of the residents of Hamilton.