

Crime Analysis

Taber Police Service

2019

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and

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INTRODUCTION

As a means of providing the context for this crime analyses, a brief overview of the Town of Taber and the Taber Police is provided below. As Taber is growing slowly, the context and makeup of the community does not frequently change and, as a result, provides an excellent base from which to conduct crime analysis.

The Taber Police Service has served the Town of Taber as its police service since 1904. The Town of Taber is situated geographically 52 kilometers east of Lethbridge, Alberta and 100 kilometers north of the Montana Alberta border. Taber acts as a regional hub for the residents within the M.D. of Taber, however, Taber itself has a population of approximately 8400 people according to the 2016 Statistics Canada census.

The Taber Police Service is an organization which is governed by the Taber Municipal Police Commission. The Police Act (2000) states that a police commission shall,

"Oversee the police service and for that purpose shall do the following:

- A) allocate funds that are provided by the council;
- B) establish policies providing for the efficient and effective policing;
- C) issue instructions, as necessary, to the chief of police in respect to the policies referred to in clause (b);
- D) ensure that sufficient persons are employed for the police service for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the police service." (p.22)

The Taber Police has three core functions, the provision of policing services,
Public Safety Dispatch and Support, and Community Support. In the Public Safety
Dispatch area, our regional E911 communications center receives calls for service from
the citizens of the Town of Taber and the M.D of Taber, they dispatch the Taber Police
and local and regional fire services, and they forward ambulance calls to the Alberta
Health Services Southern Communication Centre based out of Calgary. They also
forward police calls for service to the RCMP when the incident is not within the Town of
Taber. Taber Police Service Communications Operators' responsibilities do not end with
the dispatch function. Their responsibilities also include administrative support of Taber
Police members through the preparation of court disclosure packages, file creation, and
release document preparation to name a few.

As part of the policing service's function we provide 24/7 policing to the Town of Taber. Included in that is the Community Standards Unit (CSU), which services the bylaw enforcement needs of the community. The unit is made up of one full-time Police Constable and two full-time summer students.

As of 2019, the authorized strength of the Taber Police Service is 15 police officers. The Province of Alberta funds one of these police officer positions. There are currently 4 Auxiliary Police officers, 4 full-time and 4 part-time (Casual) Communication Operators, 1 Public Security Communication Manager, 1 administrative support position, 5 part-time casual prisoner guards and a large volunteer complement.

In terms of the community support function, the Taber Police Service works with various community agencies and volunteers to support the community as a whole.

Osborne (2001) wrote, "analysis is necessary to understand the scope of a problem and to be certain the problem is actually a problem. Sometimes crime and public disorder issues are public perception or a misinterpretation or under-analysis of statistics and do not exist in reality. Some problems, which are not so noticeable, are actually severe and have a strong negative impact on the community." (p. 23). This quote speaks to the importance of conducting regular statistical analysis of crime in order to confirm or refute whether issues exist concerning crime in a particular area. The Alberta police standards require that each police service conduct a yearly crime analysis.

2019 marks the thirteenth year that the Taber Police Service is conducting a yearly crime analysis. This exercise will allow us to advise our stakeholders of current crime trends observed within the Town of Taber and it allow us to intelligently deploy our resources. It should also be noted that the Taber Police Service executive closely watches for trends of criminal activity that may be occurring within our community. These trends are examined in our police reports to the Commission. Our small size allows us to be fluid and adaptable to community concerns and, as such, the utilization of crime analyses, from a purely statistical and academic point of view, has less efficacy than crime analyses within a larger police service that have more resources available to be deployed to address any identified issues.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to gather the data used in this analysis an anecdotal review of the crime stats reported to Statistics Canada through the Police Reporting and Occurrence System (PROS) was conducted. In each case, the reports of crime were tallied and have been displayed both numerically and by chart. We utilized a 5-year window and gathered the data through manual searches of the databases. The date range for the data commenced January 1 of the given year and was terminated December 31 of that same year. The total reports of crime were tabulated and were compared against the previous years' numbers. As with all data, there is much speculation as to whether or not reports of crime are a determinant of actual crime within a given community. Although not infallible, we believe that given the time period specified and the scrutiny that is involved with inputting the data into our records management systems that, although we can't ensure accuracy, we believe the results are an actual reflection of the occurrences of reported crime within our community and, as such, can be used as a means of making educated guesses to help improve upon policing practices within our community.

RESULTS

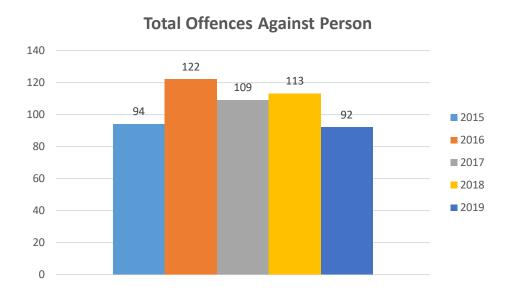
The reports of crime can be broken down into five categories; offences against the person, property offences, other criminal code offences, drug offences and provincial Acts. All information gathered from this report can be found in the data obtained from the following table:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	% Of Difference 2018 to 2019
OFFENCES AGAINST PERSONS						
HOMICIDE						
Attempted Murder	0	1	0	0	0	0%
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0%
TOTAL HOMICIDE	0	1	0	0	0	0%
ROBBERY	2	0	0	3	1	-67%
ASSAULTS						
Sexual Assault	9	19	13	10	12	20%
Assault (Level 1)	73	77	71	70	58	-17%
Assault Weap/Bodyhrm	4	13	9	20	16	-20%
Aggravated Assault	2	3	5	3	1	-67%
Assault on Police	3	5	7	8	0	-100%
TOTAL ASSAULTS	91	117	105	107	87	-19%
KIDNAPPING / HOSTAGE / ABDUCTIONS	1	4	4	3	4	33%
TOTAL OFFENCES AGAINST PERSONS	94	122	109	113	92	-19%
PROPERTY OFFENCES						
BREAK AND ENTER	22	46	49	32	49	53%
THEFTS OF MOTOR VEHICLES	22	22	23	24	26	8%
THEFTS OVER \$5000	3	5	8	9	10	11%
THEFTS UNDER \$5000	141	178	222	185	242	31%
POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY	14	20	33	22	31	41%
FRAUDS	56	49	49	37	72	95%
TOTAL PROPERTY OFFENCES	258	320	384	309	430	39%

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	% Of Difference 2018 to 2019
OTHER CRIMINAL CODE						
PROPERTY DAMAGE	161	145	129	133	156	17%
DISTURB THE PEACE	109	96	123	167	149	-11%
CRIMINAL HARASSMENT	17	16	10	25	11	-56%
UTTERING THREATS	58	73	69	65	44	-32%
BREACH OF PROBATION/BAIL VIOLATION	131	132	138	165	202	22%
IMPAIRED OPERATION	47	59	48	51	54	6%
TOTAL OTHER CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES	523	521	517	606	616	2%
DRUG OFFENCES						
COCAINE POSSESSION	6	6	1	10	5	-50%
COCAINE TRAFFICKING	14	16	3	5	5	0%
METHAMPHETAMINE POSSESSION	0	0	1	11	17	55%
METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKING	0	0	0	1	7	600%
OPIOD POSSESSION	0	0	0	1	1	0%
OPIOD TRAFFICKING	0	0	0	0	5	500%
OTHER	4	11	5	8	6	-25%
TOTAL DRUG OFFENCES (Including Marihuana)	75	75	25	65	n/a	n/a
TOTAL DRUG OFFENCES (Excluding Marihuana)	n/a	n/a	n/a	36	46	28%
PROVINCIAL ACTS						
CANNABIS POSSESSION UNDER 30g	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	30	n/a
CHILD WELFARE	10	10	14	15	14	-7%
LIQUOR ACT	152	138	122	134	128	-4%
MENTAL HEALTH ACT	64	82	73	111	92	-17%
OTHER PROVINCIAL STATS	2214	1855	2155	2007	1916	-5%
COLLISIONS	134	126	143	148	135	-9%
MUNICIPAL BYLAWS	449	367	532	501	495	-1%
TOTAL PROVINCIAL ACTS (Excluding Marihuana)	3023	2578	3039	2916	n/a	n/a
TOTAL PROVINCIAL ACTS (Including Marihuana)	n/a	n/a	n/a	2940	2810	-4%

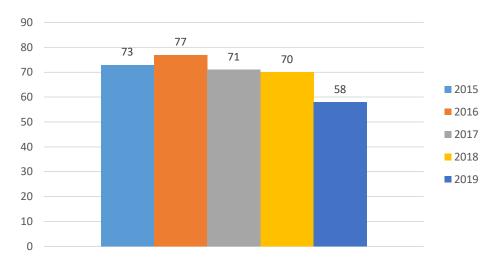
OFFENCES AGAINST PERSON

The Offences against Persons category of crime relates to all reported incidents of crime that directly involve a person as a victim of the crime. Some examples are, but not limited to, assaults on police, assaults, sexual assault, abductions, etc.

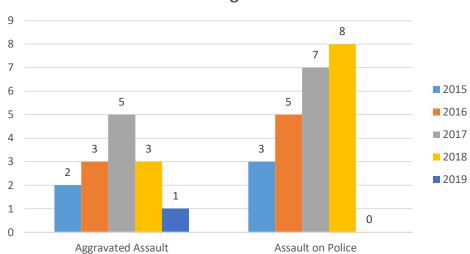


Overall, the 2019 crime analysis determined there was a 19% decrease in the total combined Offences Against Persons crime rate, which went from 113 reports in 2018 to 92 in 2019. This means that if you lived in Taber in 2019, there was a 1.1 % chance of you being the victim of an offence against person. Percentage-wise there is a miniscule change from what was reported in 2018, with the number decreasing by .02%. These numbers are based off of the 2016 census where it was reported that the Town of Taber had a population of 8428. It is likely that the population numbers have increased since that time. This indicates that the percentage would be actually lower and would be even more reflective of the safety of Taber as a community.





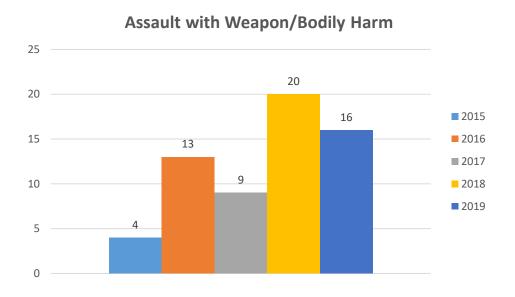
Offences Against Person



The number of reported offences that are included in the Offences against Person category decreased in 5 of the 9 offence types. The 2 offences with increases were sexual assault and kidnap/hostage/abduction. The remaining 2 of 9 offence types that saw no change were in the homicide category, with 0 attempted murders or murders reported. In

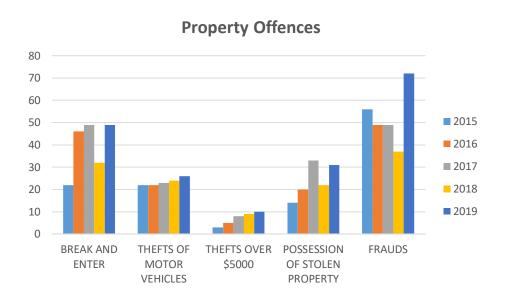
the areas aggravated assault and assault on police we saw significant decreases. The category of note is the Assault against Police area where 0 reports of assaults against police occurred in 2019. This is completely against the previous 5 - year trend where Canada Statistics show an increase every year over a five year period from 2014-2108. The 2019 statistics will not be available until later in 2020, but it would be interesting to see if that yearly rise has continued provincially or nationally.

In 2019 the number of reports that the Taber Police Service received regarding sexual offences increased by 20%. In 2016 the Taber Police Service recorded its highest sexual offence reported levels, since the inception of yearly crime analysis. In 2019 the Taber Police Service reported 12 sexual offences. In those 12 reports, 1 resulted in formal charges being laid, 4 were determined to be unfounded, 2 reported insufficient evidence to proceed, 2 incidences where the victim declined to proceed, 2 where departmental discretion was used based on circumstances regarding the incident, and 1 occurrence where no charges were laid because the subject of complaint was under 12 years old.



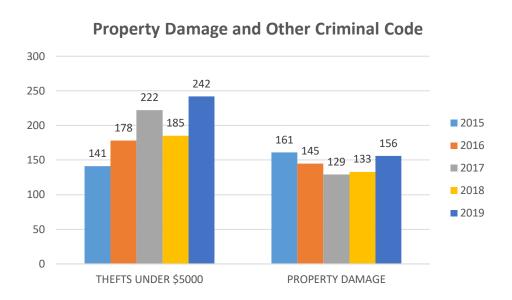
PROPERTY OFFENCES

Property Offences are crime types where an item belonging to someone else is the subject of an offence. Examples of property offences include theft, possession of stolen property, break and enter, frauds, etc.



There was an overall 39% increase in Property Offences in 2019, which followed a 20% decrease in 2018. There were 384 property related offences reported in 2017, 309 reports in 2018, and 430 reports in 2019. Since 2014, Stats Canada reported national yearly increases in property crime related offences. Referring to the national crime statistics for 2018, property crime in general was at a 2.24% increase in Canada. (Moreau, 2019) It was forecasted in the 2018 crime analysis that the decrease observed in 2018 was likely an anomaly and that a potential rise in this crime type throughout the 2019 year was hypothesized. This has occurred. An example is demonstrated in the

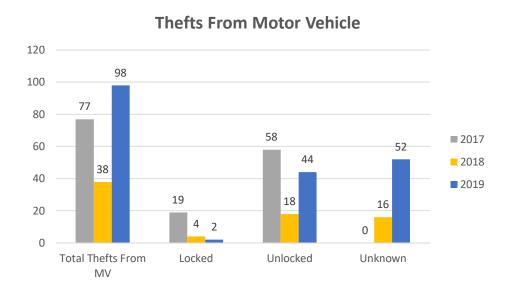
reports of theft of motor vehicles that increased 8%, and in the theft over \$5000 category which reported an 11% increase. Further to this, by taking a snapshot of the Possession of Property less than \$5000 category, many of the investigations have recovered property that has not been returned to the owner. This leads to a speculation that there are still many unreported theft complaints possibly from our jurisdiction.

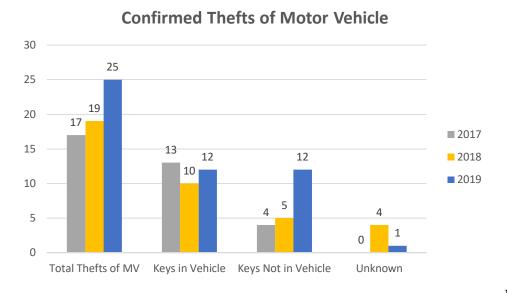


The Taber Police Service observed increases in all 6 Property Offence categories. The largest increase in the Property Offence category occurred in the category of Fraud. This is an increase of 95%, from 37 occurrences in 2018 to 72 occurrences in 2019. Moreau (2019) states, "Nationally, the rate of police-reported fraud (including identity theft and identity fraud) increased for the seventh year in a row, up 12% from 2017 and 46% higher than a decade earlier." (pg.1)

The next highest increase was reported in break and enters, which rose from 32 reports in 2018 to 49 (53%) in 2019. Within the 49 reported break and enters, 14 were to businesses, 14 were to residences, 17 occurred to other structures such as unattached

garages, construction sites or sheds, and 4 were regarding individuals being unlawfully in a dwelling house. Statistics Canada crime statistics for 2018 indicate an Alberta average increase of 1.71% in break and enter offences. A national decline was noted in break and enter offences -1.28%, (Moreau, 2019). This is opposite of what occurred in our community. The increase seen in our community is likely linked to the high numbers associated in certain drug offences and the individuals involved in that culture.



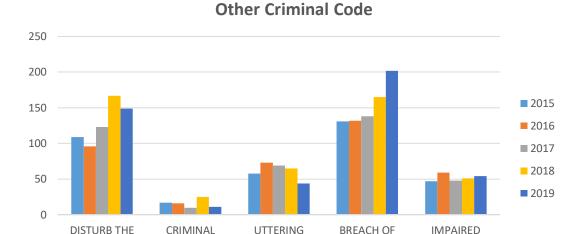


A review of all reported Property Offences involving vehicles was undertaken and several suggested preventative measures could decrease the reported number of future thefts from occurring in our community. This review confirmed that 27 of the 36 reported theft of vehicles involved the confirmation of an actual theft of vehicle occurring. In the other 9 occurrences, it was determined that although the incident was initially reported as a theft, an investigation revealed otherwise. Of these 27 confirmed vehicle thefts, 6 involved thefts where the keys were left in the vehicle prior to the theft occurring. In 6 other occurrences, the keys were obtained by someone known to the victim prior to the vehicle being stolen.

Thefts from motor vehicles accounted for 40% (98 out of 243) of all reports of thefts under \$5,000. Of the 98 reports of thefts from motor vehicles, 79 occurrences involved items being stolen from the interior of unattended vehicles. Of 79, 44 of the vehicles were determined to have been unlocked. In 33 other instances, it was unsure if the vehicle was locked and/or items were stolen from the exterior of the vehicle, so the data from these occurrences was not entered into a category. These statistics confirm that removing keys from vehicles and ensuring that doors are locked when vehicles are left unattended would likely decrease the number of reportable thefts within these categories.

OTHER CRIMINAL CODE

Although not all encompassing, the offence description of other criminal code refers to offences that do not fall into the categories of offences against person, drug or property offences. Examples of these types of offences are disturbing the peace, criminal harassment, uttering threats, breach of probation, impaired driving, etc.



2019 saw a slight increase percentage-wise in this crime category (+2%) resulting in 606 reports in 2018 to 616 reports in 2019. 3 out of the 6 categories saw increases with the most notable being criminal harassment which saw a 56% decrease.

THREATS

PROBATION/BAIL

VIOLATION

OPERATION

PEACE

HARASSMENT

The remaining 3 offence types within the Other Criminal Code category all saw between 6% and 22% increases in reports. The largest increase of the 3 remaining types was observed with reports of breach of probation/bail violation offence, with an increase from 165 reports in 2018 to 202 reports in 2019 (22%). This could be attributed to the societal issues surrounding the increase in meth use and the subsequent likelihood, due to lifestyle, to fail to abide by court imposed conditions. Dauvergne (2009) wrote, "The offences most often associated with drug-related incidents tend to be relatively minor in nature. Administration of justice offences (such as failure to comply with an order or breach of probation) occurred in about one-third of all drug-related incidents as did property offences, usually possession of stolen goods." (pg.1)

It is forecasted that the amount of charges laid in this category will likely decrease in 2020 due to the introduction of Bill C-75 in June of 2019, which directs alternative mechanisms for administration of justice offences to be utilized.

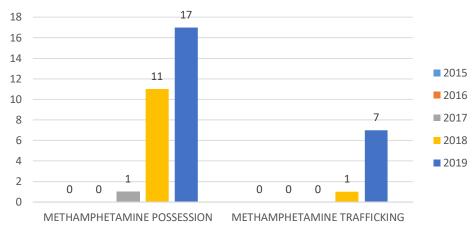
Out of the 202 occurrences in this category, the two most common were breaches of release conditions (54) and failing to attend court (45). Property damage saw the next highest increase at 17%, which translates to an increase from 133 reports in 2018 to 156 in 2019

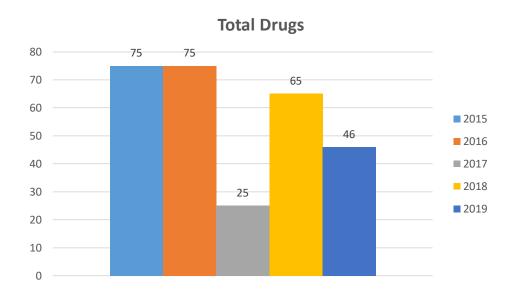
Impaired driving statistics presented a slight increase with 54 occurrences reported in 2019 compared to 51 in 2018. Out of the 54, 50 were actual with 4 being unfounded. A total of 39 charges, 22 roadside alcohol related suspensions and 2 drug related roadside suspensions were issued. Since its inception in June of 2019 to the end of 2019, the Taber Police Service conducted 1032 Mandatory Alcohol Screening (MASS) tests. As a direct result of the MASS program, 12 drivers were charged with impaired driving related offences.

DRUG OFFENCES

Drug offences are those crimes reported that involve contraventions of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Examples of crimes that are included within this category are possession and trafficking of all illegal drugs and production of illegal drugs. Cannabis related offence types have been removed from this section and placed in the Provincial Act crime type due to the changes in federal law.







In 2018 total drug offences reported to, or investigated by, the Taber Police Service saw an overall increase of 160% as compared to 2017. With this inflated percentage increase from last year in mind, 2019 saw a decrease by 29% in overall drug offences. As a note, the cannabis offences that were placed into the Provincial Act category accounted for 28% of that decrease. Out of the 7 offence types, only 3 saw increases. These were within the categories of Methamphetamine trafficking,

methamphetamine possession, and opioid possession. Possession of methamphetamine reports totaled 17 in 2019. This particular offence type was added in 2017 following the Taber Police Service noting an increase in reports of methamphetamine possession that had never previously been observed within the Town of Taber. In 2018 the concerning statistic in this category was that there was a 1000% increase, with 11 occurrences reported that involve Methamphetamines. This number has continued to rise. As forecasted in 2017, the trend in southern Alberta has come to the town of Taber. Factors such as the implementation of the supervised consumption site in Lethbridge, and the shift to meth use in that facility, in February of 2018, and the trend of travelling criminality has been felt in our community. As shown by recent intelligence, many of the transient drug users that are now living or frequenting our community, or have ties to our community, have connections to Lethbridge and Calgary. The transient nature of the individuals involved in the use of illegal drugs causes concern from a policing perspective. Moreau (2018) stated, "Methamphetamine-related offences accounted for 16% of all police-reported drug-related crime. A number of police services have indicated that crystal meth is a growing issue in their communities and has contributed to increases in all types of crime, including property and violent crimes." (pg.1)

According to the literature, Statistics Canada reports have demonstrated a steady increase in drug occurrences involving heroin, methamphetamines, ecstasy and other CDSA offences since 2014. Meanwhile, the 2017 crime reports show that cannabis and cocaine related offences had declined for five straight years. The 2018 Stats Canada crime report shows a 9.56% increase in 2018 for the possession of Methamphetamines. As a regional comparator for the same statistic, Alberta saw a 16.72% increase in 2018.

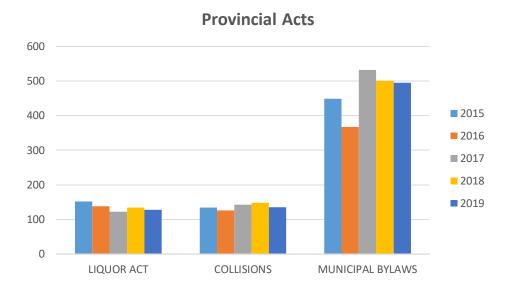
(Moreau, 2018; Allen, 2017). This is in line with the increases shown in these categories within our community.

The largest increase was noted in trafficking Methamphetamines with a 600% increase with 7 reports in 2019. This was up from 1 in 2018. A close second was the category of Opioid trafficking area which showed a 500% increase. Although the numbers of the two crime types combined only total 22 in 2018, those reports can have severe repercussions for the community. The major concern is that between 2015 and 2018 we had 0 reports of Opioid trafficking until 2019.

The last offence type in the Drug Offences category is classified as "other controlled substances". This offence type includes opiates, prescription medications, ecstasy and other illicit substances such as psilocybin. This category saw 6 reports in 2019, which is down from the 8 reports in the previous year.

PROVINCIAL ACTS

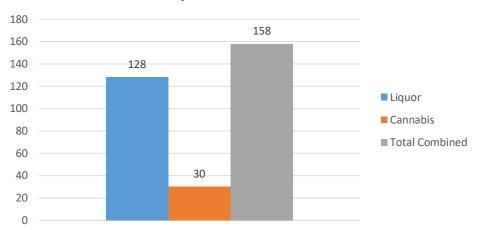
Provincial Acts are the numerous laws enforced by police that are enacted through an Act of the Provincial Legislature of Alberta. Although there are hundreds of these Acts, this report will deal with reports of crime under The Child Youth Enhancement Act, The Gaming and Liquor Act, The Cannabis, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and The Mental Health Act. Other Provincial Statutes, Traffic Collisions and Municipal Bylaws are also measured in this section. Although not criminal complaints, a large proportion of police resources are dedicated to the enforcement and investigation of Provincial Acts. This has seen some changes for the 2019 year as cannabis was added to the Gaming and Liquor Act.



The 2019 numbers indicated that there was a decrease from 2018 of 4% in all categories of the number of reports to the Taber Police Service concerning Provincial Acts. Percentage decreases within this category range between -1% and -17%. The largest decrease was reported in Mental Health occurrence down by 17%. Although the numbers are down this year, this will be an ongoing area of concern and it has taken a community approach to react properly to these types of incidences. The decrease could be directly linked to the positive working relationship that has been developed in our community with the Hub and Spoke model. This approach seems to be the most effective to best assist our mental health clients.

Although liquor act offences were down 4% in 2019, the newly formed Cannabis, Liquor and Gaming Act occurrences account for 158 occurrences if the cannabis line was included. As a comparator, a graph has been developed that combines these two lines.

2019 Liquor and Cannabis

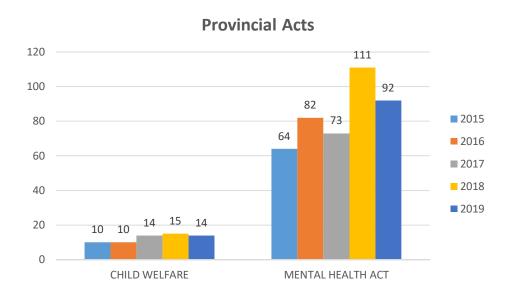


The numbers for the municipal bylaw occurrences dropped slightly in 2019 to 495 occurrences as compared to 501 in 2018. This has remained fairly constant as it only constituted a decrease of 1%.

Another area that was fairly constant was child welfare reported occurrences decreased 1%, or by one report. After evaluating each child welfare report it was determined that there were 11 occurrences where a concerned citizen made reports to the police. 2 reports were initiated by Child and Family Service (CFS) workers and 3 others came in from concerned family members or the school the child attended. Each report made to the Taber Police Service of a child welfare nature is shared with the Taber CFS office to ensure each organization involved can fulfill their mandates and responsibilities. South Country Child and Family Services continues to be an important stakeholder/partner of the Taber Police Service in ensuring the safety of the children within our community.

The other offence type within the Provincial Acts category with a decrease in 2019 was other provincial stats (-5%). The offence type within this category titled Other Provincial Stats is made up of 13 offences listed under the Traffic Safety Act. Some of

these offences are moving traffic violations, fail to stop or remain at an accident scene, and motor vehicle insurance coverage violations, to name a few. Of the 1916 reports of offences included in the Other Provincial Stats section, 1648 resulted in charges being laid; a decrease of 128 charges from 2018. Collisions saw a decrease between 2018 and 2019 as they fell from 148 reports to 135 (9%). After increases in the past two years, this year marks a decline which is positive for traffic safety purposes.



CONCLUSION

In an ever-changing climate the Taber Police Service can use crime analysis statistics to assist in an educated response to various criminal concerns within our community. A snapshot of the issues of concern are reviewed so we can direct a focused response.

The offences against persons category revealed a substantial decrease in reports.

This can lead to an inference that Taber is a safe community.

In the property offences crime types, there was a significant increase, as was forecasted in the 2018 Crime Analysis. Even with this increase occurring, the actual numbers in the Town of Taber may even be higher than reported. Morneau (2019) wrote, "The decision by an individual to report a criminal incident to police has a considerable impact on the number of crimes ultimately recorded by police. The latest cycle of the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), which provides information on the crime reporting behavior of Canadians aged 15 and older for selected offences, indicated that about one-third (31%) of crimes are reported to police." (pg.5)

The nexus between recent trends of transient activity, Methamphetamine increases and property crime is clear. As an example, an analysis of 10 individuals, that the Taber Police Service had regular encounters with, was conducted. The snapshot revealed they were involved with, identified or suspected of being involved in 18 % of the total property crimes in 2019. This does not include the large number of unsolved occurrences where the individuals may have been involved but not listed on the occurrence. These 10 individuals were chosen because they are transient in nature, are involved in the drug culture, and have ties to larger municipalities.

Until late 2017, meth usage in Taber had been relatively non-existent. This increasing meth use in Taber can be explained as this same trend has been observed across the province, as Meth has become the drug of choice among illicit drug users within communities. Casey (2019) wrote, "Dr. Matthew Young advised that, while there has been an increase in the availability, use and harms associated with meth use across Canada in the last 10 years, he explained that the impacts of Meth are currently being felt most acutely in the Western Provinces." (pg.14). A continued focus on drug education community partnerships, particularly the work of the school resource officer, and building resiliency in youth, will be an important tool to assist in this issue.

Mental Health Act occurrences have decreased, but regardless, the continued ability of the Taber Police Service to foster and grow our community partnerships is imperative to ensure effective response to this societal issue. The current Hub and Spoke model within our community regarding mental health is an example of an effective response.

The Police Executive Research Forum (2014), advised, "At the most fundamental level, police have expanded their mission, taking on the goal of preventing crime and reducing crime rates, rather than merely responding after crimes are committed. Today's best police departments are always looking for ways to be proactive rather than reactive." (p.42). This consistently has been a way of doing business for the Taber Police Service and it is crucial that it continues to ensure effective community response. Carter (2009), writes, "new dimensions of ILP (Intelligence Led Policing) depend on strong community relationships. Crime will continue to be a critical responsibility for the police as will the need for community support. ." (p.319). As drug use escalates, the need for social supports will continue. This involves continued partnerships with addictions, mental

health and victim services workers and advocates. From a policing perspective, it is important to continue enforcement and investigations regarding these individuals. The continuation of intelligence gathering, source cultivation and aggressive police work will be a vital part of the entire body of work that will be required to help combat this issue.

The Taber Police Service, through strategic planning and proper resource allocation is prepared to respond effectively. This crime analysis can be utilized as research to further promote and ensure the mission statement of the Taber Police Service is fulfilled.

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