

## Peel pauses work on 9-1-1 misuse fee program

Region says implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 has reduced wait times by 78 per cent

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A new 9-1-1 program in Peel has led to reduced emergency call wait times, preliminary data suggests.

The Region of Peel recently implemented Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911), which, among other upgrades, uses an automatic abandoned call-back feature that eliminates the need for manual call-backs.

According to data from Peel Regional Police, NG911 has led to a 78 per cent decrease in 9-1-1 wait times in Peel. Since its implementation, 81 per cent of 9-1-1 calls were answered within 20 seconds versus just 43 per cent in 2023. Over 75,000 calls have been processed by automated abandoned call-back.

Prior to the implementation of NG911, the Region of Peel was considering implementing fines for misuse of 9-1-1 calls. The number of 9-1-1 calls being made for frivolous purposes was reaching critical mass, and Regional Staff were directed to research the feasibility of fines for those using the service improperly.

Since NG911 has shown early success, the Peel Police Service Board requested the Region of Peel pause its work on a potential fine program as it is not needed at present. Councillors approved this request on consent at the Region's January 9 Council meeting.

Still, Regional Staff, in partnership with Peel Regional Police, are working on an education campaign to inform the public about the proper use of 9-1-1.

This campaign aims to address the common causes of misuse of the 9-1-1 system and reduce non-emergency 9-1-1 calls throughout Ontario, said Regional Staff in their report.

Staff note in the report that NG911, in tandem with the educational campaign, will likely reduce 9-1-1 call strain to the point where fines for 9-1-1 misuse will not be necessary.

Regional Staff will report back to Council in the future with further results of NG911.

Should future NG911 data suggest a benefit in continuing with the development and implementation of misuse fees, Council may direct staff to resume development of the program at any time, reads the report. As the positive impacts of NG911 may entirely offset the need to develop a misuse fee program, pausing the development of the program to assess the full impact of the technology ensures that staff resources are allocated in the most effective manner.