

2011 Rating

4

We're doing well and headed
in the right direction.

Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

Although crime rates have decreased, the length of investigations of individual crimes has increased, resulting in the need for more sophisticated police services.

In 2008, the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) formed a specialized domestic violence unit.

In 2008, the Niagara Region Domestic Violence Report Card was launched, led by the Coalition to End Violence Against Women.

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program of the NRPS has been noted as a success, with more officers added, for a total of 4.

In the fall of 2011, COAST Niagara (Community Outreach and Support Team) was launched - a partnership between Canadian Mental Health Association Niagara, Distress Centre Niagara, Niagara Health System, and NRPS - that serves as a regional, mobile and urgent response team comprised of a police officer, mental health workers, nurses and social workers trained in psychiatric crisis response. COAST Niagara will focus on adults with serious mental illness, substance abuse and the homeless; individuals in crisis will be linked to appropriate community services.

Every Niagara resident should be able to live, work and play in safe environments. Citizens can fully participate in a community and enjoy their lives when they feel safe and secure in their homes, neighbourhoods, cars, public places or workplaces. Motor vehicle collisions are one of the main causes of preventable injury. Incidents and rates of crime in an area can affect our personal feelings and perceptions of safety and security. Crime is often rooted in poverty and the social and economic conditions of an area.



What we are doing well...

Niagara continues to have low violent and property crime rates, compared to similar communities in the province. In 2003, Niagara had one of the highest per capita accident fatality rates in the province.

In 2007, the Think and Drive community initiative was launched. This, in combination with increased traffic violation enforcement initiatives by the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), has significantly reduced fatal and life-threatening traffic accidents.

Niagara's Emergency Management Services (fire, police and ambulance) are working together for public safety, and to develop integrated systems for emergency response. The public rates their trust in Niagara police officers favourably.

By working together, we can improve safety and security in Niagara

While awareness of domestic violence against women and its effects on children has increased, interventions could be more focused if we had a better understanding of the impact on children, families and the broader community. Distracted driving is a new area to be addressed. Working with our youth and positively engaging them in our community helps to prevent them from entering the justice system and increases opportunities for them to develop as contributing citizens. Addressing the roots of poverty will have a positive impact on crime, safety and security in Niagara.

Sector No.6 CRIME, SAFETY AND SECURITY IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara 2011 (a total of 12 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Feeling safe and secure in Niagara.
- 2) Police officers per 100,000 population in Niagara.
- 3) Overall crime rates and violent crime rates in Niagara.
- 4) Youth crime in Niagara.
- 5) Motor vehicle accidents and fatalities in Niagara.
- 6) Impaired driving in Niagara.
- 7) Calls to police and domestic violence calls in Niagara.
- 8) Domestic violence in Niagara.
- 9) Calls to police, ambulance and fire.
- 10) Fire services
- 11) Emergency Management Services in Niagara.
- 12) Hate crimes in Niagara.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Continue to expand the community policing program and intensify efforts to engage the public, youth and other sectors as partners and leaders in initiatives for community safety.
- 2 Continue to develop the relationships and jurisdictional connections that are clear and well linked in emergency management.
- 3 Continue to support the work of community groups and agencies involved in reducing domestic violence, by ensuring there is a Niagara-wide system of accessible services and safe shelters.
- 4 Continue to develop partnered effective public awareness strategies and campaigns regarding key safety and security issues (eg. Think and Drive).
- 5 Support the work of the Niagara Prosperity Initiative in addressing the roots of poverty in our community.

