

Chief's Report
Amherst Board of Police Commissioners
March 26th, 2025

This report covers the month of February 2025



TRAINING

Strategic Resilience: Constable Michelle Harrison completed the second portion of a 3-part training course on Extensive Resilience training for Active First Responders hosted by the Nova Scotia Community College. On February 13th and 14th, she attended the course which was held in Debert. This training covers such topics as developing strategic, effective, resilience-based protocols to deal with cumulative stress and trauma and the continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of self-care and coping strategies in response to stress.

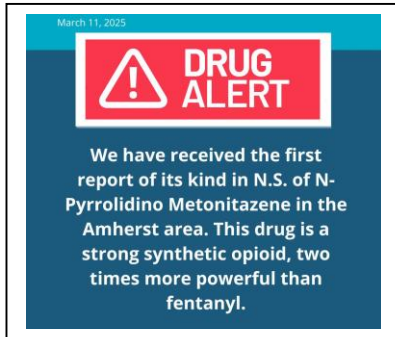
GENERAL OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

Police Pursuits/Failing to Stop: During the month of February APD generated 4 occurrences in relation to vehicles failing to stop for police. On February 4th, APD received information in regards to a vehicle that had been stolen from the Pictou area. The suspects in the vehicle theft were also involved in other incidents and were arrestable. Further information was received that the vehicle was in the Amherst area. At approx. 5:40pm, the suspect vehicle was spotted in Amherst. Patrols attended and made efforts to contain the vehicle, but it fled at a dangerously high rate of speed. The pursuit was discontinued and the suspect was not located. On February 7th, Police received a complaint of a suspicious vehicle that was parked. An officer attended and approached the vehicle on foot and the vehicle fled. A second Police vehicle on the scene pursued for a very short distance and discontinued due to high speeds and poor driving conditions. On the evening of February 8th, two ATVs were observed in the MacDonalds parking lot, both with passengers and no license plates. Both fled from Police at a high rate of speed and cut through the rear of the mall and into the woods. On February 14th, a vehicle fled from police when the driver was identified as a person who was on a curfew. The pursuit was discontinued, but the fleeing driver was involved in an accident and is facing several charges as a result. All pursuits were discontinued as per policy and risk assessments. All pursuit files are subject to a review to ensure that members are following policy.

Shoplifting Complaints: Shoplifting complaints during February drastically increased to 20 complaints from 7 in January. Of these complaints there were 3 people who were involved in more than one complaint. This is a fairly high increase considering our recent stats, but is closer to our stats in the fall (17 in November). Outside of shoplifting complaints, APD also received 16 complaints of theft in February, as compared to 20 in January and 22 in December. Of the 16 complaints in February, 3 were reports of 'gas drive-offs'. Two additional complaints were received in February concerning thefts from a motor vehicle.

Homelessness: As you are aware, we continue to track complaints that have a nexus to homelessness. Often these may also have an element of mental health, and usually involve trespassing, noise complaints, and disturbances. Such files usually involve 2-3 of the same people over and over again, with the majority of people who are homeless rarely having such an interaction with Police. We generated 24 complaints during February that have a connection to homelessness, with 15 of these occurring in the downtown area, and 8 at or near the shelter. While police do often get calls concerning homelessness, the majority of homelessness issues are likely being dealt with and handled by other agencies and the homeless shelter instead of the Police Department.

OPERATIONAL



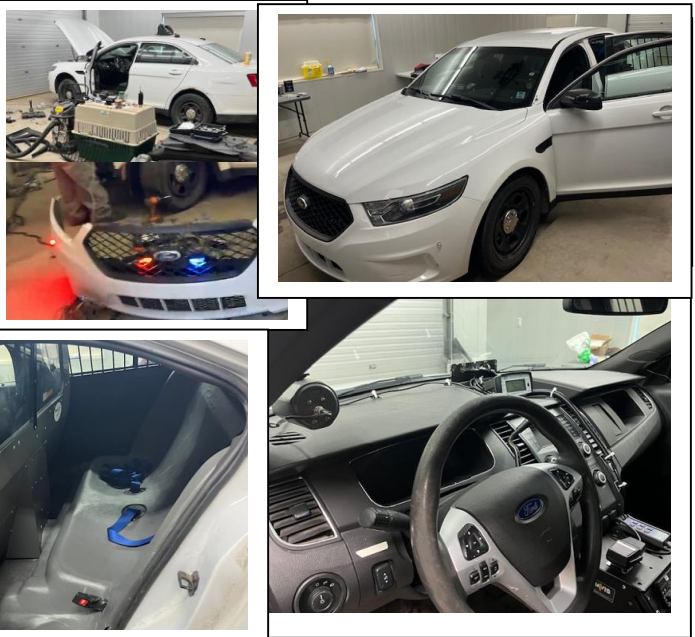
Drug Alert: As previously reported, on February 7th, 2025, Nova Scotia Health sent out a Community Alert concerning a new drug showing up in the drug supply. Lab testing of a suspected crystal meth sample indicated that the substance was *Desalkylgizapam*, a form of benzodiazepine mixed with fentanyl.



This is significant because this is the first instance of *Desalkylgizapam* being detected in the drug supply. Since that time, we had another instance of *Desalkylgizapam* in a sample from Amherst. In this case, our members had seized numerous substances which included pills thought to be Xanax. Fentanyl was not in this particular sample. It is very common for illicit drugs to be mixed with other drugs unbeknownst to the users. Benzodiazepines are central nervous system depressants or sedative-hypnotics. They slow down the nervous system, giving them calming, sleep-inducing properties, which significantly increases risk and danger of drug poisoning. On March 2nd, NS Health posted a second 'Drug Alert' in regards to the first report of a fentanyl-like drug '*pyrrolidino metonitazene*' which is twice as powerful as fentanyl. This sample was sent to the lab for testing as a result of a Cumberland Street Crime file. Our street crime unit had arrested a male from Moncton, NB on a stolen motorcycle and a search subsequent to arrest resulted in the seizure of what appeared to be 87 grams of fentanyl, 7 grams of cocaine, 10 grams of meth, multiple hydromorphone pills, LSD, prescription pills and 136 grams of hashish. The accused pleaded guilty and received 4 years custody. The incident occurred in Fenwick on December 18th, 2024. The sample examined by the lab contained a mix of fentanyl, cocaine, xylazine, furanyl and caffeine. This alert was the subject of a CTV news brief on March 12th, 2025: [N.S. news: Strong opioid found in Amherst area](#)

Multiple Charges: A 54-year-old Springhill man is facing charges following an incident where he fled from Police on February 14th, 2025. Police had observed John Warner, who is the subject of a previous incident on January 25th at 2:40 in the morning which resulted in the seizure of more crystal meth as well as baggies with fentanyl. At the time he was arrested and charged with possession of meth for the purpose of trafficking as well as possession of fentanyl for the purpose of trafficking. He was released by the courts on conditions. During the February 14th incident, Warner fled from police who shut down the pursuit before observing the fleeing car get into a roll-over accident. Warner fled on foot but was caught and arrested. Police seized a handgun at the scene and later executed a search warrant on the vehicle and retrieved a second home-made firearm and an assortment of drugs that is suspected to be Crystal Meth. Warner is facing numerous new charges as a result and has been remanded into custody at this time.

APD Vehicles – Over the last 2 months, we have had numerous issues with our patrol vehicles that has resulted in a severe shortage of vehicles. This started in January when the transmission went in Vehicle #1. This vehicle, a Ford Taurus was due to be replaced and while we had received the ‘new’ vehicle one had arrived, the equipment for it was not yet ready. This left us with 4 vehicles. At the end of January, one of the Dodge Durango’s blew the motor. It was taken out of service and the motor was replaced shortly after under warranty. On February 11th, another Durango blew the motor and yet another blew on February 15th. This left us extremely short on cars with only one marked vehicle in use while members used the unmarked MCU and SCEU vehicles to patrol as during this



time frame, the School Resource Vehicle also had mechanical issues. As a result, we reached out to town hall and were able to get an old Police Car which had been decommissioned. Members of our department, including Sgt Aaron Graham, Cst Pavlovic, Cst Millard, Cpl Babineau and Justin MacKay all chipped in and were able to ‘retro-fit’ this car with equipment we had in our inventory, do some repairs and, with the assistance of town garage, make it ‘patrol-worthy’ by adding lights & siren with control panel, plastic prisoner seats, silent patrolman, PA, C-8 gunlock and radar. Nick-named ‘Frank’ (Frankenstein) this vehicle has been resurrected and has been in use during the shortage. Since that time, Dodge has replaced the motor in Vehicle 3 and Vehicle 2 should also be completed shortly. The new Vehicle 1 has also been brought to Halifax to be outfitted with the new equipment. Sergeant Graham and the members of his shift, along with Justin MacKay were all issued written ‘Noteworthy Events’ for their efforts and dedication.

OPERATIONAL STATS – FEBRUARY 2025

Occurrences:	375	Criminal Code Charges:	71
Impaired by Alcohol:	3	CDSA:	0
Impaired by Drug:	0	CBCA:	0
Traffic Tickets:	29	PPA:	0
Traffic Written Warnings:	14	Vehicle Checks:	79
LCA:	1	Foot Patrol Hours:	17 hrs, 11min
Parking Tickets:	0	Parking Warnings:	0