



SASKATOON _____
POLICE SERVICE

TO: Shirley Greyeyes, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Cameron McBride
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2024 June 10

SUBJECT: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

FILE #: 2,007-4

ISSUE:

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is increasing at a national level, of specific concern is the disproportionate high rate in Saskatchewan. This report will discuss what proactive measures are being taken by the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) to address the high rate of IPV and raise awareness to the issue.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Goal 2 of the 2024 SPS Business Plan identifies the need to maintain core policing operations and address community concerns. There are many factors that contribute to the high rate of intimate partner violence that include addictions, mental health, discrimination, gender equality and poverty. Further, belief systems and social norms between cultures contribute to reported crimes here in Saskatoon. This report includes statistical information taken from Statistics Canada as well as SPS statistics of reported crime, calls attended and annual captured data.

Goal 5 of the 2024 SPS Business Plan discusses enriching relationships between Saskatoon Police Service and communities served. The partnerships built by the SPS in order to address intimate partner violence are strong relationships of mutual trust between the police and the community and are foundational to maintaining public safety and delivering effective policing strategies.

DISCUSSION:

IPV refers to harm caused by a current or former intimate partner or spouse. IPV can happen in many forms of relationships, including:

- within a marriage, common-law or dating relationship
- regardless of the gender and sexual orientation of the partners
- at any time during a relationship and even after it has ended
- whether or not partners live together or are sexually intimate with one another

(Canada, W. a. G. E. (2022, February. *Fact sheet: Intimate partner violence.*)

IPV can occur in public spaces but often occurs in private locations. Due to technology, the SPS Domestic Violence Section also deals with online forms as well. IPV can present itself in many forms including:

- **Physical abuse** (any form of physical abuse including forced alcohol or drug use)
- **Criminal harassment** (stalking)
- **Sexual violence** (sexual acts without consent)
- **Financial abuse** (control of a partner or ex partners finances)
- **Coercive control:** (psychological and emotional abuse)

This report provides a snapshot of IPV in Saskatoon and how we compare on a provincial and national level. Further it highlights what steps the SPS is doing to address the issue and the partnerships that are being formed in response to the problem.

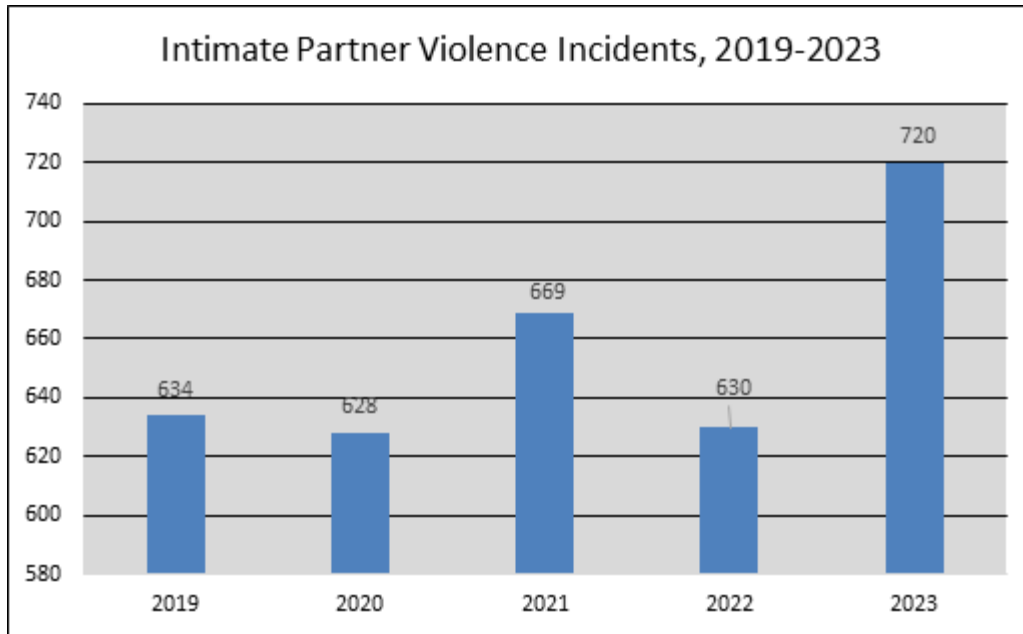
Currently, the SPS Domestic Violence Unit has two Sergeants assigned that fall under the direct supervision of the Interpersonal Violence Staff Sergeant. They are tasked with investigating domestic assault, threats, and harassment files that are more serious in nature that extend beyond patrols capacity. Files may also include a sexual component like sexual assault or intimate images. These are files that may require specific investigative techniques such as search warrants, production orders and/or extensive interviewing of suspects, victims, and witnesses.

Intimate Partner Violence (Saskatoon Statistics)

When looking at Saskatoon specifically from 2019 to 2022 the numbers have been relatively consistent with the exception of 2021 being higher. Looking at 2023 there was a 14% increase when compared to the previous year.

Intimate Partner Violence	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Incidents	634	628	669	630	720
Incidents with Charges	471	473	500	502	535
Percent with Charges	74.3%	75.3%	74.7%	79.7%	74.3%

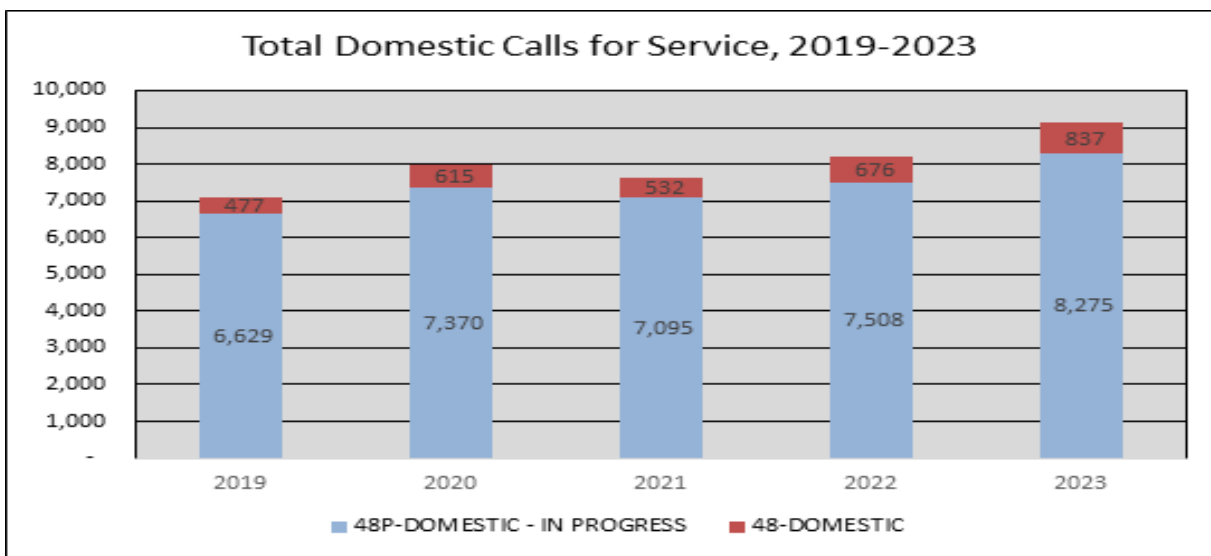
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In 2023, 4 of the 12 homicides recorded in Saskatoon had an IPV component linked to the investigation. Three of the charged individuals were male with the remaining one being a female.

Calls for Service

At the SPS, calls are coded along with their respective 10 codes for patrol response as “Domestic” (10-48) and “Domestic in Progress” (10-48 P). The below chart breaks down the calls for service between Domestic and Domestic in Progress, in order to direct an appropriate police response to calls coming into SPS communications.



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Calls coded as domestic include not only intimate partner violence but any call involving members of the same family or other relationship. For example, a call of an incident between siblings or parents and children are coded as domestic disputes.

Community Partnerships

- **Family Service Saskatoon:** There are three Domestic Violence Court Case Workers (DVCCW's) that assist victims of domestic violence through the court process. The availability of crisis intervention strategies is important in IPV situations and these workers offer critical victim services resources. They work assisting the Domestic Violence Section but are based in the Child Centre. This partnership allowed SPS and the DVCCW's to make an amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) based on an identified challenge. The previous MOA allowed SPS to share victim information with DVCCW's on charged files only. The new MOA now extends to victims where charges are not laid to ensure they are still connected with the DVCCW.

Family Service Saskatoon employees are directly involved in the Domestic Violence Court process as well as partnering with the SPS in hosting events like the *Proclamation Ceremony* for Victims and Survivors of Crime Week held annually at the SPS in the month of May. The theme for Victims and Survivors of Crime Week this year was “The Power of Collaboration”. The goal of Victims and Survivors of Crime Week is to raise awareness about the issues facing victims of crime and the services, assistance and laws in place to help victims and their families.

- **Victim Services Saskatoon:** Victim Services is located adjacent to the Service Centre on the main floor of SPS headquarters. Workers assist with investigations by explaining the process and connecting victims to services within the community. Staff can also assist in investigations requiring an Emergency Intervention Order (EIO) when immediate protection is required. This can include a restraining order, giving exclusive possession of the home to the victim, removing the abuser from the home, providing assistance in removing personal items from the home and/or other conditions necessary to ensure immediate protection of the victim.
- **Saskatoon Sexual Assault & Information Centre (SSAIC):** IPV often includes sexualized violence. The SSAIC provides free trauma informed support services to victims of sexualized violence including sexual assault, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment. Investigators in the Domestic Violence Unit recently received training on how to use a trauma informed approach when dealing with victims of sexualized violence.

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- **Ministry of Social Services (MSS):** SPS investigators work closely with MSS workers in investigations where children are involved. There are currently three MSS staff that are integrated and are based in the Child Centre.

National Statistics (Statistics Canada)

On a national level, the Statistics Canada website contains many trends. There are many breakdowns including who the violence is against in terms of race, age, and gender. When comparing it to local numbers, a disturbing fact is that when analyzing the national statistics rates of both police reported family violence and specifically intimate partner violence, the rates are highest in Saskatchewan of all the provinces. Saskatchewan reported 732 reports of IPV reported to police, per 100,000 population. This is 99 cases higher than Manitoba who is listed in second. The overall Canadian average is 337 reported victims per 100,000 population (information based on 2022) Of interest, is even though Saskatchewan is the highest of the provinces, all three of the Territories had higher rates.

Proactive Approaches to Intimate Partner Violence

- **Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol (Clare’s Law)**

Saskatchewan was the first province to introduce Clare’s Law. Clare’s Law was named after Clare Wood who was the victim of a murder at the hands of her ex-boyfriend in the UK in 2009. During the investigation, her family discovered the accused had a previous history of violence against women, including threats, repeated harassment, and had kidnapped an ex-girlfriend at knifepoint.

In Saskatchewan Clare’s Law is known officially as the Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol and was officially implemented according to the Government of Saskatchewan website on June 29, 2020. Clare’s Law allows eligible individuals the right to request information about their partners' history of violent or abusive behaviour from law enforcement agencies. By offering access to such information, the law provides individuals with knowledge to make informed decisions in their relationships and to identify any potential risks of domestic violence. Clare’s Law is meant to be proactive, as opposed to reactive. It provides potential victims with important information, allowing them the opportunity to make an informed decision therefore reducing violence.

Domestic homicide reviews show that a history of IPV and other related criminal activity are major risk factors for re-occurring violence. By identifying and sharing these risk factors with eligible applicants, police can reduce incidents of IPV and decrease the risk of intimate partner homicide.

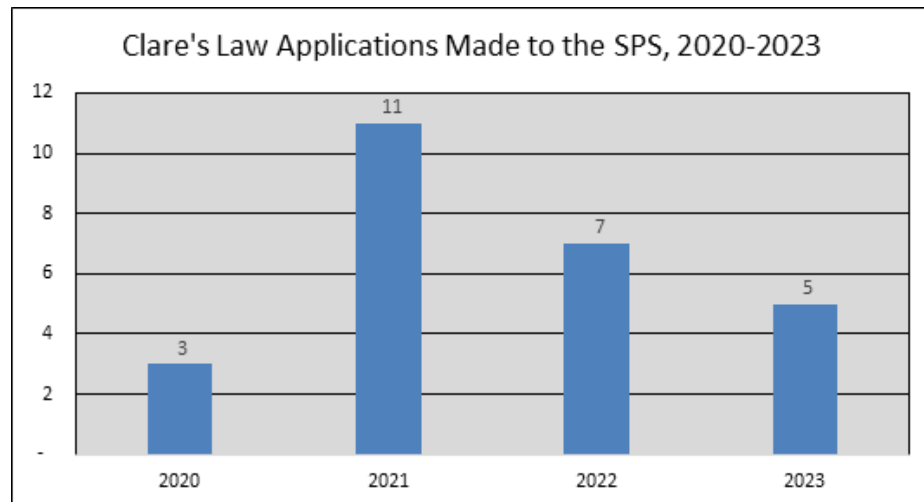
There is valuable information about Clare’s Law on the SPS website which explains the protocol that has been prepared and adopted by the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police. After a Clare’s Law request is received, an investigator for the SPS Domestic Violence Unit conducts a thorough assessment. Following this assessment, the Multi Sector Review Committee (MSRC) meets to decide on disclosing relevant information.

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Currently the SPS Interpersonal Violence Staff Sergeant sits on the MSRC which is a provincial committee that meet as required.

Who Can Apply:

- Someone who may be at risk themselves
- Medical Professionals
- Social Workers
- Lawyers
- Police Officers



- **Domestic Violence Court**

Domestic Violence Court is a therapeutic court. Members of the SPS Domestic Violence Unit sit on a committee that meet quarterly. Present in these meetings are: Provincial Judges (who presided over DV Court), Probation Services, representatives from the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, RCMP, Domestic Violence Court Case workers, Crown Prosecutors and other key organizations responsible for how accused persons are dealt with. Therapeutic court offers a domestic violence treatment option which allows those that are willing to take responsibility for their actions to complete a counselling program for domestic violence and address any substance abuse problems they may have. Individuals are not sentenced until after they have a chance to complete the program. Those who do not participate proceed as normal through the court system. SPS hosted the provincial Domestic Violence Court Conference on November 3, 2023.

- **Saskatoon Sexual Assault & Information Centre (SSAIC)**

Creating education opportunities for front line patrol members is important at the SPS. By building a strong community partnership with the SSAIC we were able to have the SSAIC do parade presentations to all the Platoons in April 2024 with the intention to continue these in future years. Sexualized violence is often a component of IPV and the knowledge gained in these presentations is valuable to our front-line officers.

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Future Strategic Initiative:

Given the disproportionate high rates of IPV within Saskatoon and the province, an IPV Response Team project is currently being developed. This program will run similarly to the current Police and Crisis Team (PACT). The IPV Response Team would partner with Family Service Saskatoon’s IPV Outreach Workers and go out in the community together and provide a proactive response. This program will hopefully be in place for 2025. The key objectives of this program will provide;

- In person victim support
- Offender management
- A working partnership/collaboration with various community stakeholders
- Offer an off-site reporting location for victims

This program aligns with our 2024 Business Plan as an activity of “Develop an Integrated Preventative Response Team to support identifying and managing intimate partner violence”. This project is innovative, trauma informed approach, and a first of its kind within our Province while modelling other IPV programs throughout Canada.

CONCLUSION:

The disproportionate high rate of IPV in our city and province has SPS members attending a high number of IPV related calls daily. SPS tackles IPV through the hard work done by our Domestic Violence investigators as well as our patrol officers on the street. Members continue to attend calls for service and investigate those files of IPV where victims are willing to proceed with charges. The statistics for calls for service for SPS show a significant increase which supports our initiative of creating an IPV Response Team with the hopes of tackling this issue in our community. In addition, by investing in community partnerships we are being proactive through education, training and promoting community awareness.

SPS continues to focus on pursuing new and innovative initiatives. One example of this is the Moose Hide Campaign. This is a movement that started in British Columbia and continues to grow across Canada in an effort to highlight gender-based and domestic violence. In many Indigenous cultures, moose hide is medicine. Spearheaded by the Community Engagement Division, pins were made available to all members of the SPS. Members were encouraged to wear Moose Hide pins throughout the month of May. This illustrates the continued effort being put forth by members of the SPS in response to IPV.

Written by: Dale Amyotte, Staff Sergeant, Interpersonal Violence Section
Approved by: Richard Bueckert, Inspector, Investigative Services Division
James Oliver, Acting Superintendent, Criminal Investigations
Deputy Chief Darren Pringle
Approved by: Cameron McBride, Chief of Police