



TORONTO POLICE ASSOCIATION

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NEWS RELEASE

Toronto Police Association launches ad campaign to keep Toronto focussed on public safety

January 13, 2009 – The Toronto Police Association has launched a series of billboards and television advertisements to ensure public safety remains a top priority for Torontonians.

“The foundation of a strong and prosperous city is the safety of its residents and visitors,” said Toronto Police Association President Dave Wilson. “Right now there are a number of serious issues on our doorstep that impact the safety of Torontonians and their families, particularly gun crime, police response times and staffing levels.”

While Toronto has recently seen modest decreases in general crime rates, the most dangerous crimes, those involving guns are rising dramatically. This past year, the number of shootings in Toronto rose by 18 percent from 200 occurrences in 2007 to 236 occurrences in 2008, with the number of shooting victims increasing nearly 42 percent, from 237 individuals in 2007 to 336 individuals in 2008.

In addition to concerns of escalating gun crime, Wilson points out that Toronto is lagging behind its own performance targets for the time it takes to respond to the most serious emergency calls from the public. In 1994, the Toronto Police Restructuring Task Force set a service standard of six minutes for police to respond to 85 percent of Priority 1 emergency calls. According to 2008 data, it takes three times longer, or 18 minutes, to respond to these urgent calls for assistance.

“As the nature of crime and its investigative requirements continue to become more complex, we must ensure our police service is equipped with sufficient numbers of experienced personnel and resources to respond to emergency calls from the public in a timely manner,” said Mr. Wilson.

Compounding the issue of response times, the Association notes that Toronto is on the verge of a large number of police retirements. In 2008 alone, more than 800 officers were eligible to retire, and according to estimates that number will rise to more than 1200 officers by 2012, which represents more than 20 percent of Toronto’s current officer strength.

“The Toronto Police Association is committed to public safety. In 2009, we will continue to be a strong community partner, working to raise issues that are important to the safety of Torontonians and their families,” stated Mr. Wilson. “We will continue to advocate for a police service that is properly equipped to do the job required of it by the people of Toronto.”

Appearing today throughout Toronto, the ads feature a simple, but memorable message from the 8000 women and men of the Toronto Police Association - “Public Safety: It’s What We Do.”

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