

Memorandum

WMPSC-C 3-2024

Subject: Illegal Dumping 2023 Year End Summary

Date: February 26, 2024

To: Waste Management Planning Steering Committee

From: Nicholas Lidstone, Contract Supervisor

This memorandum is intended to provide an update to members of the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee regarding illegal dumping activities in 2023 and mitigation measures planned for 2024 to address illegal dumping in Niagara region.

2023 Summary

A total of 673 illegal dumping reports/incidents were received in 2023. A summary breakdown is provided below, with further details noted in the report.

- 160 of 673 illegal dumping incidents were found through regional staff proactive monitoring.
- 36 of 673 illegal dumping incidents were reported by local area municipal staff.
- 477 of 673 illegal dumping reports/incidents were received through the Waste Info Line, the Online Reporting Tool, and Crime Stoppers.
- 90 investigations resulted in staff finding suspected generator evidence, in which 46 Part I Provincial Offences Notices and 47 warning letters were issued. It is worth noting that for some illegal dumping investigations, more than one generator name was found which resulted in multiple enforcement actions taken.

Since the establishment of the Illegal Dumping Working Group (IDWG) in 2012, staff have tracked the number of reports/incidents of illegal dumping across the region. A break down of the illegal dumping investigations categorized by area municipality is presented in Appendix 1.

Residents may report incidents of illegal dumping through the following tools:

- Niagara Waste App
- Niagara Online reporting tool
- Niagara Waste Info Line
- Crime Stoppers of Niagara

The 673 illegal dumping reports/incidents in 2023 are on par with the 675 illegal dumping reports/incidents investigated in 2022.

Public Space Litter Bins - Illegal Dumping and Annual Blitz

In the spring of 2022, staff installed warning stickers on public litter bins, primarily in St. Catharines, where the majority of illegal dumping in public space litter bins occur. The stickers provided warning that the public spaced litter bins are not intended for household waste and illegal dumping would result in a \$175 fine.

In 2023, Waste Management staff continued to proactively monitor public space litter bins and respond to reports/incidents of illegal dumping in, and around, public space litter bins. In 2023, 25% (168) of illegal dumping investigations were conducted as a result of material illegally dumped in, or around, public space litter bins. This was similar to 2022 when 24% of all illegally dumped materials were found in the area of public space litter bins.

Waste management staff conducts the annual Litter Bin Blitz to audit public space litter bins for the presence of illegally dumped materials. If evidence was found during the blitz, staff attempted to issue a Part I Provincial Offence Notice (PON). If a Part I PON cannot be issued, a warning letter is mailed to residents whose household garbage is found during the inspection.

In 2023, the litter bin blitz was conducted between November 13-17 where 457 public space litter bins were inspected. Of the total, 16% (73) contained illegally dumped materials. As a result of the 2023 public space litter bin inspections, nine (9) individuals were issued a (PON) for illegal dumping. The year over year litter bin blitz comparison for 2020-2023 are included in Appendix 1.

2023 Enforcement Activity

Waste management staff investigate any incident of illegal dumping on public property. If evidence of the material's origin is found, staff will attempt to issue a Part I PON for the contravention of the Niagara Region Waste Management By-Law. If the officer is unable to make in-person contact with the offender (i.e. the individual has moved, insufficient evidence, unable to locate individual, etc.), staff will issue a warning letter based on the evidence gathered. In 2023, 90 investigations (13%) resulted in staff finding suspected generator evidence, in which 46 Part I PONs were issued. In 2023, 37/46 (80%) PONs resulted in convictions, 5/46 (11%) are still awaiting a resolution with Provincial Offences Court, and 4/46 (9%) did not achieve a conviction. The total number of PONs in 2023 is an increase from 2022, 2021 and 2020 when 27, 12 and seven (7) Part I Provincial Offence Notices were issued, respectively.

Reward System

In an effort to promote and encourage residents to report illegal dumping, Niagara Region, in cooperation with the Local Area Municipalities, offers a reward system. If an individual's report results in an act of compliance or a conviction under the Waste Management By-law, the person that reported is entitled to a \$50 or \$200 reward, depending on the violation. To date, seven (7) rewards were awarded to Niagara residents based on 2023 illegal dumping investigations. Staff anticipate additional rewards may be issued based on 2023 illegal dumping investigations once ongoing Provincial Offences Court proceedings are finalized.

Next Steps

Illegal dumping is a concern for both the Niagara Region and local area municipalities. from an environmental, societal, and cost perspective. On average, it costs Niagara Region approximately \$24,000 annually in staff time to investigate and follow up on illegal dumping incidences. In 2023, approximately \$26,000 was spent on public education to discourage illegal dumping. The cost tally does not include clean up cost by local area municipalities.

In 2024, staff will continue to investigate reports/incidents of illegal dumping in order to identify offenders and issue fines, where appropriate. Staff will continue to use anti-illegal dumping signage to inform residents that placing privately generated material, or household waste into a public space litter bin is an offence under the Region's Waste Management By-law. Additionally, staff will proactively monitor public space litter bins and conduct the annual Litter Bin Blitz in 2024. Furthermore, staff will continue to utilize

an app based Geographical Information System (GIS) tool, which allows for real time data collection and accurate hot spots tracking for illegal dumping to help increase effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement activities.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Appendices

WMPSC-C 1-2024 Appendix 1 - Illegal Dumping Statistics