

Solicitor General

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132-2020-28

By e-mail

February 12, 2020

Ms. Laura Moy
Director Corporate services and Clerk
The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh
lmoy@tecumseh.ca

Dear Ms. Moy:

Thank you for your letter and for sharing the resolution that was passed by the Tecumseh Town Council on 9-1-1 misdials.

Ontarians depend on reliable and effective 9-1-1 services when they seek help in the case of an emergency. Effective and timely access to emergency services is important and critical to the health and safety of all. Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontario has a 9-1-1 communications system that enables quick and effective responses to emergency situations.

The Ministry of the Solicitor General is always interested in engaging with stakeholders and partners on issues that are of the public interest. As you have noted in your letter, misdials are not unique to Tecumseh and can present a challenge for 9-1-1 call dispatchers when they receive calls for an inappropriate purpose or unintentional/accidental calls (e.g., misdials, automatic dialing, redialing or hang-ups). These calls take up important resources from first responders and can potentially delay their responses to actual emergencies where someone may be injured or in immediate danger.

The ministry understands that there are important considerations that need to be taken into account when looking at how to address the issue of 9-1-1 misdials in Tecumseh. Your request for the provincial government and other partners to lobby the telecommunications industry and smart phone manufacturers to develop a solution to 9-1-1 misdials has been noted. The ministry is working with inter-ministerial partners and stakeholders from fire, police and ambulance services to explore ways to deter inappropriate and accidental use of 9-1-1 services in the province.

Regarding other tools and supports to deter misdials, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) launched a public awareness campaign in 2017 to help educate the public on when it is appropriate to call 9-1-1 and how to decrease the chances of making unintentional calls. The OPP "Know when to call 9-1-1" [campaign and information page](#) contains helpful information that may be of use to your jurisdiction.

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Furthermore, criminal charges can be laid against individuals who misuse 9-1-1 in some circumstances; however, it is up to the discretion of individual police services to decide to lay a charge.

I trust that this information will assist you. Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Jones', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Sylvia Jones
Solicitor General