

St. Catharines Downtown Association

in partnership with the City of St. Catharines,
the Niagara Region and the Niagara Regional Police Service presents

Information for our Downtown Business Community

St. Catharines is a prosperous and growing city but is not immune to the challenges that face many other communities today including poverty, homelessness, addictions and mental illness.

In times of crisis or concern, who do I call?

- **Call 911:** To report emergency events in progress such as fires, person suffering from an overdose, acts (in progress) of vandalism, graffiti, dangerous acts, violence or other criminal activity.
- **Call 905-688-4111, select option 1 for Niagara Regional Police:** To report a crime which is not an emergency such as public drunkenness, noise by-law violations, vandalism, graffiti, break and enter (after the fact) and other disruptions.
- **Visit www.niagarapolice.ca/en/community/reportacrimeonline.asp** to report a crime such as theft, fraud, property damage and graffiti.



- **Call 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) for Crime Stoppers of Niagara** or on-line at www.niagaratips.com if you have any information on a crime and wish to be anonymous.

- **Call 905-688-5600 for the City of St. Catharines' Citizens First line:** To report maintenance or safety concerns (including graffiti) at City parks, trails, roads and sidewalks, or by email citizensfirst@stcatharines.ca or use the City's free [Pingstreet](#) smartphone app to report.
- **Call 211 for [InCommunities](#):** To connect individuals in need of support, information or referral to the appropriate agencies, services and resources in the community including access to shelters.
- **Call 905-980-6000 ext. 3808 for the [Niagara Region's Homelessness Services and Community Engagement](#) division:** For information on homelessness services such as prevention, outreach, emergency shelters, supportive and transitional housing, coordination and delivery of the Region's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

What should be done when someone enters our business and is exhibiting potentially dangerous behavior (from drugs, alcohol or mental health issues)?

Remain calm and do not approach the individual. Call 911 for immediate police response if you feel unsafe.

What are tips to de-escalate a difficult situation?

There are agencies that provide safety and de-escalation training. Contact the St. Catharines Downtown Association at 905-685-8424 or scda@mydowntown.ca if you are interested in this training for your staff.

Quick Tips for De-Escalating a Difficult Situation

It is important that you try to set limits for individuals who are being disruptive.

Use the following three steps for setting limits:

1. **Straightforward** be clear and simple
2. **Reasonable** set appropriate limits
3. **Enforceable** act on any limit you set

Example: "If you stop yelling and disturbing the other customers you are welcome to come back in the future, but if you continue to yell at me or my staff the police will be called and you will not be able to return."

If there are safety concerns or an individual is not leaving after being asked to do so, call 911.

What should residents or business owners do if they find syringes on their property?

Property owners are responsible for removing needles found on their property and should do so carefully. The Niagara Region has useful information posted on its website about how to [dispose of sharps and prescription drugs safely](#).

Who can provide proper syringe handling training?

[Positive Living Niagara](#) can provide training about harm reduction and safe sharps disposal for local businesses and their employees. Contact the St. Catharines Downtown Association at 905-685-8424 or scda@mydowntown.ca if you are interested in training for your business. Sessions will be organized in the near future.

What should residents do when they find syringes on public property?

Don't touch or try to remove the syringe. Report syringes found in City parks to Citizens First at the City of St. Catharines by calling 905-688-5600. City staff will remove it as soon as possible; they are trained to safely handle syringes. You may also call the Niagara Region's Waste Info Line at 905-980-6000 for syringes found on public property such as municipal roads or parks.

How do we report graffiti?

The City of St. Catharines is committed to reducing and eliminating graffiti in our neighbourhoods. Prompt reporting and removal of graffiti is essential.

- To report graffiti in progress on private or public property, call 911.
- To report graffiti after the fact, call the Niagara Regional Police non-emergency line at 905-688-4111.
- You may also report graffiti (after the fact) by calling the City's Citizens First desk at 905-688-5600 or email citizensfirst@stcatharines.ca
- Report using [Pingstreet](#): A free smartphone and tablet app. Go to the 'Report a Problem' feature to send a picture of graffiti to the City.
- Submit an [online](#) report on the graffiti to the City of St. Catharines.

What is done about graffiti on businesses?

The City's [Graffiti By-Law](#) requires property owners to maintain their property free of graffiti. Properties not maintained free of graffiti will be served notice by the City and are obligated to clean graffiti within seven days of being served. The St. Catharines Downtown Association may be able to assist in having graffiti removed from downtown business properties. Contact the SCDA at 905-685-8424 or scda@mydowntown.ca to find out if assistance is available.

How much of a police presence is there in Downtown St. Catharines?

The Niagara Regional Police Service are committed to increased foot patrols within the downtown core at all hours of the day through the dedicated officers assigned to the Foot Patrol Unit and general patrol officers assigned to Beat Patrols. The NRPS actively encourages all officers to engage with the community and business owners whenever possible to ensure a visible presence in the community and address concerns in a proactive manner.

What is being done about individuals who are homeless?

The City is working with [Niagara Region Community Services](#) and other community partners to connect people and their families who are living rough or homeless with outreach workers and appropriate services, resources and supports. The Niagara Region supports community agencies to provide services for those who are homeless, including prevention, outreach (for those who are homeless or at risk for homelessness), emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing and assistance to secure permanent housing. For more information, call the Region's Homelessness Services and Community Engagement division at 905-980-6000, ext. 3808.

Individuals in need of support or access to services can call 211 for referrals to the appropriate agencies, services and resources in the community.

Where do we direct people for shelter?

Niagara Region funds emergency shelter programs across the region. There are several shelters across St. Catharines including Southridge Shelter at 201 Glenridge Avenue, the YWCA at 183 King Street (for women and families) and The Raft at 17 Centre Street (for youth). A full list of emergency shelters can be found on the Region's [website](#).

Shelters are regularly full or overcapacity due to a lack of affordable housing and low rental vacancy rate in Niagara. The Region is looking for opportunities to create new shelter beds to serve emergency needs, while also supporting the development of more affordable housing to help individuals find sustainable housing.

Many of the shelter providers run outreach programs to connect with people who may not be connected to services. In St. Catharines, you can connect with any shelter to be linked to outreach supports, or connect directly with [Start Me Up Niagara](#) or [Community Care of St. Catharines & Thorold](#).

Where do we direct people for addictions support?

There are a number of agencies offering counselling, treatment and support for alcohol and drug addictions in St. Catharines and across Niagara. A list of programs is available from [Public Health](#).

Where can we get a naloxone kit?

Naloxone reverses the effects of an overdose from opioids such as fentanyl, heroin, methadone and morphine. Kits are free in Ontario. **It is not an antidote** but it can keep a person alive until emergency services arrive. Positive Living Niagara can also provide training for your business. Contact the St. Catharines Downtown Association at 905-685-8424 or scda@mydowntown.ca if you are interested in training for your business.

[Public Health](#) has more information available about signs of an overdose and opioid statistics in Niagara on their website.

What is being done to improve the situation?

The Niagara Region is at the beginning stages of developing a Community Safety and Well-being Plan as a local strategy to address and reduce crime, drug overdoses and addictions.

Business participation will be critical to the success of the plan and members will be invited to participate in its development. If you are interested in becoming involved, let the [St. Catharines Downtown Association](#) know. For more information about the plan, see this recent [report](#) to Regional Council.

How can people help make the community a safer place?

Make sure to report problems or concerns to the appropriate organizations and agencies. Those reports are essential to making the community a safer place.

What are the next steps?

The St. Catharines Downtown Association will be hosting information sessions with Positive Living Niagara this fall for businesses and employees. If interested, please register with the SCDA at 905-685-8424 or scda@mydowntown.ca. As well, the SCDA is planning to host a “Meet your Neighbour” event in the near future to help the downtown business member community connect and to share suggestions or ideas about ways to improve safety, cleanliness and community within the downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA).

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