



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

To / Destinataire OPL Board / C.A. du Conseil d'administration

cc: Sonia Bebbington, Chief Executive Director and Chief Librarian /
Directrice générale et bibliothécaire en chef

From / Expéditeur Craig Ginther, Division Manager, Facility and Technology Services /
Directeur, Services des installations et des technologies

Subject / Objet Public Incidents / Incidents publics **Date:** January 14, 2026 / 14
janvier 2026

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on public incidents at Ottawa Public Library (OPL) over the past three years, as a follow-up to the last update provided to the OPL Board (the Board or OPLB) at the meeting of June 13, 2023 ([OPLB-2023-0613-10.1](#)) and following recent media interest in this issue.

Background:

OPL uses a comprehensive approach to provide welcoming and inclusive spaces while balancing the safety and security of clients and staff. This approach includes both proactive and reactive strategies such as policies and procedures, training, technology supports, facility/space design, security services, and incident analysis, monitoring, and evaluation. Per OPLB Policy 010 - OPLB CEO Reporting and Board Monitoring, risk management reports or updates are provided to the Board as required or scheduled.

Public Incident Trends 2023-2025:

In 2025, OPL had approximately 3.5 million in-person visits. Of this total, there were 880 public incidents, representing 0.025% of all client interactions. Incident numbers continue to rise, as noted in the 2023 Board report, due in part to increased diligence in reporting by staff and increases in some types of activity classified under broad categories (see below).

As noted in the 2023 report, some incident categories include a wide range of situations. For example:

- **Personal Incidents** include harassment, assault, and threats of violence; in some instances, these are between clients and in others directed towards staff.
- **Causing a disturbance** generally refers to disruptive behaviour and code of conduct violations of all types, ranging in severity from instances of excessive noise to aggressive behaviours.
- **Trespassing** statistics reflect a combination of notices being issued for the first time, and clients returning to a branch after having received a notice.
- **Other Non-Security** incidents include things like fire alarms pulled accidentally or power outages.
- **Suspicious Activity** includes situations such as phone scams or suspicious client behaviour (for example, using someone else's card to access computers).

Public incidents over the past three years are summarized in the following table:

Incident Type	2023	2024	2025
Break & Enter	0	1	0
Causing a Disturbance	178	258	374
Demonstration/Protest	0	1	3
Drug & Alcohol Use	123	140	145
Other Non-Security	28	16	33
Personal Incidents	43	73	86
Suspicious Activity	37	45	43
Theft	44	56	37
Trespassing	73	61	125
Vandalism	37	43	34
Total	563	694	880
In-person visits	3,365,950	3,538,950	3,508,850
Incidents as % of in-person visits	0.017%	0.020%	0.025%

Media coverage:

Several news stories about OPL incidents were published following the 2023 Board report, including by [CBC](#) and [CTV](#), and an article about library security across Canada, not including OPL data, appeared in the [Walrus](#) the day before the Board meeting.

A media inquiry was received in late 2025, requesting updated numbers from the June 2023 report. The response to that inquiry resulted in this story: [Ottawa Public Library sees increase in reported incidents in 2024](#). OPL has since received a follow-up request from the same news agency for the number of incidents through to the end of 2025, which has been provided and may result in a follow-up story.

Conclusion:

While an increase in total reported incidents has been observed - most notably in the categories of *Causing a Disturbance* and *Trespassing* - this rise is believed to be attributable in part to improved reporting diligence by staff, as well as increases in certain types of activity captured within these broader categories (as noted above). At this time, identified trends do not necessitate additional action; incident activity continues to be closely monitored.

For any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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