

SASKATOON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

*Information Update to Community Stakeholders and Request for Comment on **“Contact Interview Guidelines for Municipal Police Services in Saskatchewan”***

The Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners, as the conduit between the community and the Saskatoon Police Service, has communicated previously and received feedback from the community, on the issue of “Street Checks”, also referred to here as “Contact Interviews”.

When the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners asked for feedback from the public on this issue in the spring of 2016, it received well over 100 responses, all of which were sent to the Saskatchewan Police Commission for its consideration in developing guidelines for use by municipal police services. Now that the Saskatchewan Police Commission has issued its guidelines, the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners would like to, again, share this information as well as obtain the views, opinions and suggestions of stakeholders in Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan Police Commission Contact Interview Policy Elements:

- Overall, the provincial Policy stands in favour of the use of Contact Interviews as they “can provide police with a valuable tool that can effectively prevent and solve crime and enhance community safety”, provided the guidelines are followed.
- “Contact Interview” means a contact with the public initiated by a member of a police service with the intention of gathering information that is not related to a specific known incident or offence.
- Contact interviews may only be conducted in a manner that respects and protects the rights of the public under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Bill of Rights, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and similar federal and provincial human rights legislation, and may not be conducted by members of a police service on a random or arbitrary basis.
- Contact interviews are appropriately conducted by police service members only where the subject’s behaviour or the circumstances of the contact cause the police officer to have a concern as to the subject’s purpose or for the subject’s safety. Circumstances could include: When there is no apparent reason for the subject’s presence in a particular area; When the subject’s actions, behaviour or demeanor raise a concern as to his/her purpose or for his/her safety; or When the subject appears to be lost, confused, frightened or in need of assistance.
- Contact interviews may not be conducted based solely on the subject’s: Location in an area known to experience high levels of criminal activity and / or victimization; Actual or perceived race, ethnicity or national origin; Colour; Religion; Age; Gender, gender identity or sexual orientation; Physical or intellectual disability or impairment; Mental disorder; Any other ground of discrimination prohibited at law; Socio-economic circumstances; Medical condition; or Other personal characteristic of a similar nature.
- The provincial Policy also addresses issues including the conduct of police officers during the Contact Interview, information that can be requested, the use of contact information, statistical reporting requirements, training for officers, and the requirement that local police services create their own policies that are consistent with the intent of the Saskatchewan Police Commission Policy on Contact Interviews.

In response to the above provincial guidelines, the Saskatoon Police Service is currently developing training standards, reporting methods and record management procedures in accordance with the new provincial policy. The resulting report will be reviewed by the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners in the fall of 2018.

The Police Commission would appreciate your input on the provincial Policy. A brief (only 4 questions) survey on this issue can be completed on behalf of groups or by individuals, and is available on the Police Commission website until August 31, 2018 at <http://saskatoonpolicecommission.com/survey>.

Thank you for your attention to this important community safety issue and for enabling the Saskatoon Police Commissioners to undertake its role as a conduit between the Saskatoon Police Service and the public.