



# Police Reference Document

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## Introduction

Many of the provinces have legislation that governs police services.

[British Columbia](#)

[Alberta](#)

[Saskatchewan](#)

[Manitoba](#)

[Ontario](#)

[New Brunswick](#)

[Nova Scotia](#)

[Prince Edward Island](#)

Ontario is the first province to include a declaration of principles in its legislation, which states:

### Declaration of principles

1. Policing shall be provided throughout Ontario in accordance with the following principles:
2. The need to ensure the safety and security of all persons and property in Ontario, including on First Nation reserves.
3. The importance of safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Code.
4. The need for co-operation between policing providers and the communities they serve.
5. The importance of respect for victims of crime and understanding of their needs.
6. The need for sensitivity to the pluralistic, multiracial and multicultural character of Ontario society.
7. The need to be responsive to the unique histories and cultures of First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities.
8. The need to ensure that police services and police service boards are representative of the communities they serve.
9. The need to ensure that all parts of Ontario, including First Nation reserves, receive equitable levels of policing.

## Policies

The creation and implementation of comprehensive policies and procedures is crucial to the operation of effective police services. In Ontario, the Ministry of the Solicitor General is responsible for creating and updating the [Policing Standards Manual](#) which contains sample board policies. These sample policies provide a description of the areas in which policies should be made.

Most of the provinces have created their own policing standards.

[Alberta](#)

[British Columbia](#)

[Manitoba](#)

[New Brunswick](#)

[Nova Scotia](#)

It is recommended that policies be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they are still effective and appropriate considering amendments to legislation, Ministry directions regarding changes to professional police practices, standards and training. Review of the policies should be documented and kept on file.

## Hiring

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police implemented a new constable selection system which commenced on January 1, 2020. The new process was developed after extensive consultation and input from provincial and municipal police services across Ontario as well as numerous external professional advisory groups. It is designed to address barriers to potential recruits and be more accessible and affordable than the previous selection system since it offers on-line convenience to potential recruits while being sensitive to the needs of candidates in different parts of Ontario.<sup>1</sup>

The *Ontario Police Services Act* mandates that prospective police officers are required to be Canadian citizens or a permanent resident of Canada, at least 18 years of age, physically and mentally able to perform the required functions, are of good moral character and habit and have successfully completed at least four years of secondary school education or its equivalent.

All of the other provinces have similar standards with British Columbia, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick having a minimum age of 19 years.

Applicants must also have a valid driver's licence with no more than six demerit points, have current certification in CPR and first aid, a valid O.A.C.P. testing certificate and be able to pass a security clearance, background investigation, credit and reference checks.

## Training

Provincial legislation and standards require that all police officers must complete training that includes techniques to de-escalate conflict situations as well as training with respect to human rights and systemic racism. Training that promotes recognition of and respect for the diverse, multiracial and multicultural character of Ontario society and the rights and cultures of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples is also required.

Having a policy that includes training requirements above the minimum demonstrates that a department appreciates the significance of training.

The ongoing training of officers must be clearly documented and retained on file. In the event of a claim; clear, detailed documentation will be crucial to the defence of the police department.

## Supervision

Alberta's provincial police standards mandate that services are required to have a written performance management system which includes an "early intervention" component to proactively address potential performance issues. An early warning system helps identify any potential issues with personnel. The early warning system may track data such as sick days, traffic collisions, public complaints and excessive force allegations.<sup>2</sup>

Performance Management has been defined as: the practice of reviewing current performance and the factors that might affect future performance, and making decisions in response to that information, so that appropriate actions are taken in order to make future performance better than it might otherwise be.<sup>3</sup>

An early warning system helps identify any potential issues with personnel. When issues are identified, the appropriate action might be specialized training or disciplinary action.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oacp.ca/en/news/statement-transition-to-new-oacp-constable-selection-system-applicant-testing-services.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/65be10e5-1d1a-4fa8-a807-d68af51965a3/resource/872e08e4-e6d0-4d43-ad4b-db8fb689e338/download/policing-standards-2-1-april-30-2018.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://library.college.police.uk/docs/homeoffice/Practical\\_Guide\\_to\\_Police\\_P1.pdf](http://library.college.police.uk/docs/homeoffice/Practical_Guide_to_Police_P1.pdf)

## Problem-Oriented Policing

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) is an approach to developing strategies for countering persistent crime problems and draws from a broad range of approaches to inform a focused course of action. It is designed to identify and remedy the cause of recurring crime. Problem-oriented policing involves two distinctive features: (1) analyzing crime data and using that information in designing strategies and tactics and (2) engaging community representatives and others in the analysis and planning process.

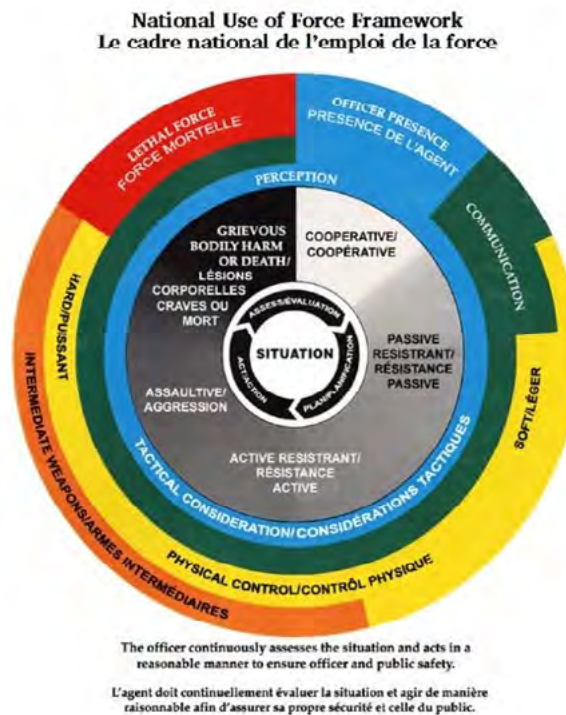
An example of POP would be where gun crime hotspots have been identified. Increased patrol and street searches of suspicious individuals is the strategy determined to be most promising.<sup>4</sup>

One common mnemonic that captures the essential components of POP is SARA, which stands for: Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment. When optimally applied, POP has a significant impact on persistent problems across a range of criminal issues.<sup>5</sup>

## Use of Force

The Canadian Association Chiefs of Police (CACP) has developed a National Use of Force Framework as an aid to training. The framework is a tool to assist officers in assessing situations involving use of force. The CACP has also developed the model below.

Provincial regulations and standards stipulate that members of the police force cannot use force on another person unless the member has completed a training course on use of force.<sup>6</sup> Police training programs that prioritize de-escalation over confrontation are recommended.



4 <https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/spt/Programs/102>

5 <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rgnzd-crm-brf-5/index-en.aspx>

6 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900926>

When a member of a police department uses force, the member is required to complete a Use of Force Report. The circumstances under which a police officer must submit a report are prescribed.

## Pursuit

Approximately 20% of Intact Public Entities police services claims between 2016 and 2020 involve police pursuit. A suspect apprehension pursuit occurs when a police officer attempts to direct the driver of a motor vehicle to stop, the driver refuses to obey the officer and the officer pursues in a motor vehicle for the purpose of stopping the fleeing motor vehicle or identifying the fleeing motor vehicle or an individual in the fleeing motor vehicle.<sup>7</sup>

A police officer is permitted to pursue a fleeing vehicle if the officer believes a criminal offence has been committed or is about to be committed or for the purposes of motor vehicle identification. Prior to commencing a pursuit, there must be no alternatives available.

## Mental Health Issues

Approximately 20% of Intact Public Entities claims between 2016 and 2020 involve claimants who were suffering from mental health issues.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) published a paper in 2008 that states that, in an ideal world, each police organization will have a structure to ensure that people who have a mental illness are dealt with compassionately and humanely, and that the safety of the person with mental health issues (PMI), the officers and the public considered.<sup>8</sup>

The CACP has developed a set of principles which can act as a guideline to assist police forces to develop policies relating to people with mental health issues:

1. Each police organization should have one or more identified personnel who are responsible for issues related to people in the community with mental illnesses. The number, role and involvement of these officers will of course vary depending upon the size of the police service or detachment.
2. Each police organization should identify and develop a relationship with a primary contact person within the local mental health system.
3. Each police organization should have an identified contact person in the emergency services department of any and all hospitals with which they do regular business.
4. Each police organization should ensure that their first responders/patrol staff have an appropriate basic level of knowledge and skill in order to deal with PMI .
5. Each police organization should have a clearly defined policy and procedure by which personnel can access mental health expertise on a case-by-case basis.
6. Not only should police officers have an understanding of how best to work with people with a mental illness, but police organizations should also ensure that all personnel who may be involved with PMI, including those working in victim services and those answering calls and dispatching officers, have sufficient knowledge and understanding of mental illness to carry out their jobs. For dispatch personnel and those taking calls, it means that they need to be able ask the necessary questions and recognise signs that mental illness may be a factor.
7. Each police service should have available a directory or other print material that provides descriptive and contact information for mental health agencies in the area for both employees as well as PMI and their families.
8. Each police organization should participate in a regional liaison committee which is comprised of members of the mental health system and members of the criminal justice system.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.canlii.org/en/on/laws/regu/o-reg-266-10/latest/o-reg-266-10.html>

<sup>8</sup> [https://cacp.ca/human-resources-and-learning-committee.html?asst\\_id=131](https://cacp.ca/human-resources-and-learning-committee.html?asst_id=131)

9. Each police organization should establish a data collection system that reflects the nature, quantity and outcome of interactions with PMI.
10. Each police organization should have a central location where general information about mental illness, local resources and legislation can be stored and easily accessed when needed.

Further information concerning a method of following these principles can be found in the Contemporary Policing Guidelines for Working with the Mental Health System.

## Racism

Human rights experts have helped to identify the following three things that police services should do to build a healthier culture and eliminate systemic racism:

1. collect and analyze disaggregated race-based data;
2. develop an equity, diversity, and inclusion toolkit to review and update all policies, procedures and practices; and
3. identify and remove all aspects of the organizational culture that sustains systemic racism and/or resists attempts to dismantle it.<sup>9</sup>

In 2019, the federal government conducted an inquiry to promote an inclusive society where everyone is able to fully participate in the economic, cultural, social and political spheres. They were told by participants that the federal government must address discriminatory police conduct through tracking and reporting of incidents, adequate investigations into police conduct, and meaningful legal consequences where misconduct arises. They were also told that the federal government should increase funding for community policing, increase financial support for community relations and communication between police forces and communities, and provide trauma-informed policing for racialized peoples, including Black communities and Indigenous Peoples. With specific reference to data collected in the criminal justice context, we were told that disaggregated data is essential to proper understanding.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

The police services required by our changing society are evolving and police forces must adapt to better meet these requirements. Officers are called to situations involving minorities, individuals with mental health issues including addiction and people who have suffered trauma. It is crucial that these officers are equipped with the necessary tools to effectively interact with these individuals. Careful hiring practices, performance management and supervision are important in ensuring the needs of the community are met and the police officers are set up to succeed.

9 [https://www.cacp.ca/index.html?asst\\_id=2208](https://www.cacp.ca/index.html?asst_id=2208)

10 <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/what-we-heard.html#a3>