
To: All Municipal Police Chief Constables

And to: All Municipal Professional Standards Managers

From: Stan T. Lowe, Police Complaint Commissioner

Date: January 19, 2012

Re: Professional Standards File Audits

PURPOSE

As you are aware, section 183 of the *Police Act* requires the implementation of a contemporaneous file monitoring system to facilitate the oversight function of the OPCC. Pursuant to the Act, Municipalities are required to assume the costs of the monitoring system. After significant consultation with the Solicitors General Ministry, it was apparent that the costs associated with monitoring system proposed were prohibitive in the current economic climate. The OPCC determined that as an interim measure the File Transfer System website (FTS) should remain in place, supplemented by reviews conducted by the OPCC to ensure compliance with the spirit of section 183 of the Act.

In addition, as part of the general responsibilities and functions of the Police Complaint Commissioner, the legislation requires the Commissioner to oversee and monitor complaints, investigations and the administration of discipline and proceedings, as well as ensure the purposes of the legislation are achieved.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, our office has developed an auditing program where designated OPCC staff members will visit each municipal department on an annual basis to review a selection of investigative files to ensure that the requirements, as set out in the *Police Act*, are being fulfilled. A primary component of the audits will focus on an evaluation of the investigative files for completeness in terms of compliance with section 183 of the Act. The OPCC audit team will also meet with PSS managers to discuss the department's procedures for ensuring that legislative requirements are being met.

PROCEDURE

As discussed above, on an annual basis, designated OPCC analysts will attend each municipal police department to review a sample of investigative files and will also meet with managers to discuss the processes they have in place for meeting the requirements of the *Police Act* with respect to the complaint process.

Prior to the visit, each department's Chief Constable will receive direct correspondence from my office. This is intended to notify departmental staff to ensure that they have the opportunity to coordinate a mutually convenient date and time with our Office, and to provide them with sufficient time to arrange full access to the selected files. A copy of the checklist that will be used to audit the files will also be forwarded to each Chief's office in advance. As we move further along with the new complaint process, the audit checklist will be revised to meet new challenges or issues as they may arise or be suggested. Following the departmental visits, each department will be provided with a copy of the completed audit results which will include an analysis of areas where departments are exceeding their legislative requirements. It will also discuss, if applicable, areas where procedural improvements could be made and include recommendations that could assist in making the improvements. Each department will have the opportunity to provide the Commissioner with comments about their audit results; any strategic plans to be implemented in response to their audit findings; and their experience with the annual audit process.

The goal of these reviews is to work in concert with Professional Standard Sections to promote positive, efficient and effective practices that meet legislative requirements as well as operational support for investigators and discipline authorities.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance in this regard. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my Deputy, Mr. Rollie Woods.



Stan T. Lowe
Police Complaint Commissioner