

HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICES BOARD

POLICY DOCUMENT

Policy No.:	ADM-05
Policy Subject:	Board Communications Policy
Date Approved:	September 20, 2012
Reporting Requirement	
Review Date:	

Legislative Authority:

Section 37 of the *Police Services Act* - A board shall establish its own rules and procedures in performing its duties under this Act.

O. Reg.421/97 to the *Police Services Act* – Code of Conduct for Members of Police Services Boards. (attached)

Board Policy:

The Halton Regional Police Service Corporate Business Plan has identified “*Communication and Dialogue*” as one of its themes. In support of this theme, a goal to “*Build public awareness of and support for the Halton Regional Police Service and policing in general*” has been approved. An effective tool in building awareness and support for the Police Service is through effective communications.

This policy addresses the following:

- notification of Board Members related to situations involving the Police Service’s response to certain calls for service, and
- the monitoring of emerging issues.

Part I - Matters of a Significant or Sensitive Nature

1. When a call for service is responded to by the Police Service that is of a significant or sensitive nature and may generate media and/or public interest, the Chief or his designate shall notify the Board Chairman at the earliest possible time. Updates shall be provided as available and necessary. This notification can be made by phone or via email. If the notification is made via email the Board’s Executive Director shall also be copied.

Examples of matters of a significant or sensitive nature include but are not limited to:

- incidents where the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has invoked its mandate
- the on-duty death or serious injury of a member of the Halton Regional Police Service
- serious incidents (murder, attempt murder, etc.)
- incidents involving members of the Board, Police Senior Management, Members of Council (Regional or local), and Members of Parliament (Provincial and Federal).

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2. The Chief shall provide the Chairman with the following information:
 - (a) a summary of the incident,
 - (b) if a news release will not be released, the reason(s) why (i.e. SIU investigation, confidentiality, etc.)
 - (c) if a news release will be issued, when that will/did occur.
3. Upon receipt of notification from the Chief or designate, the Chairman shall either inform the other Board members of the incident and any updates received or direct the Executive Director to carry out the notification.

Part II - Inquiries from the Media:

4. Unless otherwise specified, the Chairman of the Board is the official spokesperson for matters within the jurisdiction of the Police Services Board. Should the Chairman be unavailable, the Vice-Chairman shall be the spokesman. Any media requests received by the Police Service's Corporate Communications Office related to Board responsibilities shall be forwarded to the Board Office. The Board's Executive Director shall immediately notify the Chairman of the request.
5. The Executive Director shall also notify the Board Chairman of any media requests received directly at the Board Office.
6. In response to an inquiry regarding factual information, administration of the Board, or a decision rendered in the public portion of a Board meeting, the Executive Director may act as a spokesperson on behalf of the Board
7. Following notification of the Chairman of any media inquiries, the Chairman may make inquiries regarding the issue and any legislative requirements. The Chairman may also direct the Executive Director to undertake such inquiries on his behalf.
8. In the event individual Board members are contacted directly by members of the media, they shall familiarize themselves of their responsibilities in the Code of Conduct for Members of Police Services Boards. A copy of the Code of Conduct is attached to this policy.
9. The Chairman or such other member as authorized by the Board shall, as appropriate, consult with the other Board members and, as appropriate, the Chief of Police, prior to responding to media requests for interviews or comments. The consultation shall include any background information gathered and a proposed response to the inquiry or other course of action.
10. The Board spokesperson shall only comment on matters within the jurisdiction and mandate of the Board, and shall avoid speaking on matters within the legislated authority of the Chief of Police.

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11. Most media inquiries received regarding the Halton Regional Police Service are operational in nature and properly within the domain of the Chief and his staff. However where operational matters may spark significant public interest or debate, the Chief shall inform the Board members before a public statement is made. This may be done via email or telephone. The purpose of informing the Board is as a courtesy, to ensure that Members are aware of major occurrences.
12. When the Chairman or the Board are of the opinion that a response from the Board is required, the Board spokesperson and the Chief of Police shall consult, as needed, to ensure the proper coordination, timing and dissemination of information to address the issue. Prior to the release of any response from the Board, the Chairman or spokesperson shall provide the Board with a copy of the news release and any applicable background information.

Part III - Matters of a Routine Nature:

13. On a daily basis or as required, the Executive Director shall forward the news releases issued by the Service to Board members for their information.
14. On a regular basis, the Executive Director will monitor various media outlets for emerging issues which may generate media or public interest. The Executive Director shall make inquiries as to any impact there may be on the Police Service or Board. This information shall be forwarded to Board Members.

Police Services Act
ONTARIO REGULATION 421/97
MEMBERS OF POLICE SERVICES BOARDS — CODE OF CONDUCT

Consolidation Period: From June 13, 2005 to the [e-Laws currency date](#).

Last amendment: O.Reg. 298/05.

This Regulation is made in English only.

1. Board members shall attend and actively participate in all board meetings. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 1.
2. Board members shall not interfere with the police force's operational decisions and responsibilities or with the day-to-day operation of the police force, including the recruitment and promotion of police officers. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 2.
3. Board members shall undergo any training that may be provided or required for them by the Solicitor General. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 3.
4. Board members shall keep confidential any information disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the board, or part of a meeting of the board, that was closed to the public. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 4.
5. No board member shall purport to speak on behalf of the board unless he or she is authorized by the board to do so. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 5.
6. A board member who expresses disagreement with a decision of the board shall make it clear that he or she is expressing a personal opinion. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 6.
7. Board members shall discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and according to the Act, any other Act and any regulation, rule or by-law, as provided in their oath or affirmation of office. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 7.
8. Board members shall uphold the letter and spirit of the Code of Conduct set out in this Regulation and shall discharge their duties in a manner that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the board. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 8.
9. Board members shall discharge their duties in a manner that respects the dignity of individuals and in accordance with the *Human Rights Code* and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Canada). O. Reg. 421/97, s. 9.
10. Board members shall not use their office to advance their interests or the interests of any person or organization with whom or with which they are associated. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 10.
11. (1) Board members shall not use their office to obtain employment with the board or the police force for themselves or their family member. O. Reg. 298/05, s. 1.
(2) For the purpose of subsection (1),
“family member” means the parent, spouse or child of the person, as those terms are defined in section 1 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 11 (2).

12. A board member who applies for employment with the police force, including employment on contract or on fee for service, shall immediately resign from the board. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 12.

13. Board members shall refrain from engaging in conduct that would discredit or compromise the integrity of the board or the police force. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 13.

14. (1) A board member whose conduct or performance is being investigated or inquired into by the Commission under section 25 of the Act or is the subject of a hearing before the Commission under that section shall decline to exercise his or her duties as a member of the board for the duration of the investigation or inquiry and hearing. O. Reg. 277/00, s. 1.

(2) If the application of subsection (1) results in a board not having enough members able to exercise their duties in order to constitute a quorum during an investigation, inquiry or hearing under section 25 of the Act, the chair of the Commission may appoint that number of persons necessary to constitute a quorum, who shall act in the place of the members who are unable to exercise their duties. O. Reg. 277/00, s. 1.

(3) The chair of the Commission,

(a) shall specify in an appointment made under subsection (2) that the appointee may only exercise such duties as are necessary for the effective operation of the board during the investigation, inquiry or hearing and, for such purpose, may specify the duties the appointee may or may not exercise; and

(b) shall cancel an appointment made under subsection (2) as soon as a member of the board who declined to exercise his or her duties under subsection (1) resumes exercising his or her duties or is replaced under subsection 25 (8) of the Act. O. Reg. 277/00, s. 1.

15. If the board determines that a board member has breached the Code of Conduct set out in this Regulation, the board shall record that determination in its minutes and may,

(a) require the member to appear before the board and be reprimanded;

(b) request that the Ministry of the Solicitor General conduct an investigation into the member's conduct; or

(c) request that the Commission conduct an investigation into the member's conduct under section 25 of the Act. O. Reg. 421/97, s. 15.