

PUBLIC

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

**Compliance with Board Policy No. 01/20: Access to COVID-19
Status Information by York Regional Police**

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board receive this report pursuant to Board Policy No. 01/20, Access to COVID-19 Status Information by York Regional Police.

SYNOPSIS

On April 13, 2020, the Ministry of the Solicitor General (the “Ministry”) launched an online look-up tool for authorized police communication and dispatch personnel to access COVID-19 positive status information (the “look-up tool”) in accordance with Ontario Regulation 120/20, *Access to COVID-19 Status Information by Specified Persons* made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. The Ministry designated specified members of York Regional Police (“YRP”) as authorized users and granted those persons access to the look-up tool.

On July 22, 2020, Ontario Regulation 120/20 was revoked and, as a result, expired. In accordance with Clause 10 of Board Policy No. 01/20, Access to COVID-19 Status Information by York Regional Police, this report is to advise the Board that YRP has complied with all applicable clauses of Policy No. 01/20.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND

On April 3, 2020, Ontario Regulation 120/20, *Access to COVID-19 Status Information by Specified Persons* ("O. Reg. 120/20"), which was made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, came into force.

On April 13, 2020, the Ministry launched an online look-up tool intended to be used by authorized police communication and dispatch personnel to access COVID-19 status information in accordance with O. Reg. 120/20 and for the purpose of preventing, responding to, and alleviating the effects of the COVID-19 emergency in the context of frontline police attending calls for service. On or about the same date, the Ministry granted specified members of our 911 Communications Centre access to the look-up tool as authorized users.

On July 17, 2020, YRP made a request of the Ministry to discontinue our access to the look-up tool. In response, the Ministry subsequently revoked YRP's access to the look-up tool on July 20, 2020. YRP's decision to withdraw from the program was based upon a review of the benefit of the tool relating to public safety in York Region and the risks associated to accessing the personal health information made available to authorized users at YRP by way of the look-up tool.

As part of the above-referenced internal review, YRP identified that the look-up tool was not sufficiently user-friendly and did not permit authorized users to conduct searches that would consistently provide accurate results while still allowing YRP to maintain stringent limits on how members conducted their searches. This issue was attributed, in part, to the quality and consistency of the data that was input by the front-end user. For instance, the 911 Communications Centre learned that addresses were character-sensitive with respect to how they were entered by the front-end user. This meant that while a specific address may indicate a negative result for COVID-19, the members using the look-up tool discovered that a negative result could simply mean that the address was entered differently by the front-end user than by the 911 Communications Centre (i.e. "Avenue" versus "Ave."). This lead, in part, to our decision to seek to have our access terminated.

On July 20, 2020, the Ministry not only acceded to YRP's request by revoking our access, it also discontinued access to all authorized user accounts across the province on the same day.

On July 22, 2020, O. Reg. 120/20 was revoked by the provincial government and expired.

Pursuant to Clause 10 of Policy No. 01/20, YRP has complied with all applicable clauses of the policy, as follows:

- a) Only members of our 911 Communications Centre were permitted to act as authorized users (per Clause 6(a) of Policy No. 120/20). Only members in the position of Communicators, Communications Supervisors or Commanders of the 911 Call Centre were authorized to access the look-up tool. A total of 120 members of YRP had access to the look-up tool. All of those persons were authorized to access the look-up tool by the Ministry. No one other than those persons used the look-up tool.

- b) The only purpose for which authorized users were permitted to request COVID-19 status information from the look-up tool and give notice of that status to another member was to prevent, respond to or alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 emergency (as per Clause 6(b) and (c) of Policy No. 120/20).
- c) Authorized users at YRP were permitted to log positive and negative portal results into our computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) system for the purpose of assisting officers attending calls to make an informed decision regarding the prevention, spread or alleviation of COVID-19. Members were ordered to not otherwise add COVID-19 results obtained from the look-up tool to our Versaterm RMS system, except as may be required within an occurrence report or officer’s notes. Members were also ordered not to add COVID-19 results to the Canadian Police Information Centre (“CPIC”) database, including intelligence databases. Internal reviews conducted by our Information Technology experts have not revealed any entries made to a database contrary to these orders (as per Clause 6(d) of Policy No. 120/20).
- d) Internal reviews conducted by our Information Technology experts revealed that all entries to the CAD system containing information obtained from the look-up tool were successfully purged as of August 31, 2020 (as per Clause 6(e) of Policy No. 120/20).

Jim MacSween, B.A.A.
Chief of Police

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request