



# TRANSIT POLICE

## VOICE MAIL AND CELL PHONE NUMBERS

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### POLICY

The Transit Police operates a call management system and has established internal protocols to properly receive and process telephone calls, while maintaining confidentiality of the Transit Police cell phone numbers, where appropriate. Adherence of Transit Police Personnel to the requirements within this policy will enhance communications between Transit Police Personnel and the public and stakeholders.

### Definitions

Chief Officer – The Transit Police Chief Officer or delegate.

FOIPPA – BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Member – Designated Constable (all ranks), the Chief Officer or a Deputy Chief Officer of the Transit Police.

Metro Vancouver Transit Police (“Transit Police”) – The operating name for the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service.

PSC – Public Service Counter of the Transit Police.

Transit Police Personnel – The Designated Constables and civilian staff who work for the Transit Police.

### General

1. The Transit Police recognizes that voice mail is a function that enhances the ability of Transit Police Personnel to communicate with others and provides improved service to the public.
2. The Transit Police will provide its personnel (sworn and civilian), where appropriate, with individual voice mailbox access through a centralized VoIP voice mail system (“voice mail”). This excludes supplementary voice mail for those staff persons issued other telecommunication devices.
3. Availability of individual voice mail will assist the Transit Police in limiting public distribution of police cell phone numbers, thereby enhancing police officer safety

and increasing availability of the cell lines for current investigations and emergencies.

4. The Transit Police Personnel use of the voice mail system will comply with the *Police Act*, the Transit Police policies and procedures, and other applicable laws and legislation.
5. The Transit Police Personnel will retrieve their voice mail at least once during their shift and respond to the voice mail in a timely fashion, taking into consideration operational and investigative requirements, as well as the need to be responsive to enquiries from the public.
6. The Transit Police Personnel will be held responsible and accountable for use of any unique log-in passwords applicable to their use of the organization's voice mail system. Personal log-in passwords must not be shared or given out at any time, unless exigent circumstances exist.
7. All administration and support of the voice mail system and its links to the cell phone system will be handled by the Transit Police Information Technology Section, unless otherwise determined by the Chief Officer.
8. Use of any covert phones by Members of the General Investigation Unit will not be subject to this policy.

## PROCEDURES

[See also: [SOP61 – Mobile Communications Devices](#) and [Policy OO010 – Communications; Operations](#)]

### PSC Call Processing

9. When the PSC receives a call for a staff person, they will transfer the caller to the appropriate phone number (cell phone or desk phone). For operational Members without a desk phone, calls will be directed to their cell phone.
  - (1) Where possible, when there is a general public enquiry and the PSC is trying to determine the appropriate staff person to assist, the PSC will call ahead to the staff person's phone to inform them of the circumstances prior to transferring the call.
10. The PSC will not provide members of the public with cell phone numbers of Transit Police Personnel.
11. Where a caller does not reach the intended staff person and does not wish to leave voice message, PSC may take a message and send details in email to notify the staff person. (Hand written messages are not to be taken and left in a Member's mail slot.)

- (1) All notification emails will be electronically retained by PSC in the designated Records archive folder for any retrieval or audit requirements; a copy of the archive folder will also be uploaded at least monthly to OWL as backup.
12. The PSC line is automatically recorded through the call management system and archive records can be requested through the Privacy Officer and in compliance with Transit Police policy.
  - (1) Where exigent circumstances exist, a request may be made directly to the OCC to obtain a call recording, subject to the OCC Manager's approval for the release. In such cases, the OCC Manager will also inform the Privacy Officer as soon as is practicable.

### Receiving Calls/Messages

13. A PSC transferred call will go directly to the cell phone for pick-up. If the call is not picked up by the staff person, the caller can leave a message.
14. Transit Police Personnel will follow the instructions for the cell phone to retrieve voice messages and process the message as appropriate.
15. For Transit Police Personnel who may have an assigned individual desk phone (which has voice mail capacity), they may also receive voice mail through that device; the notification will show by a "red light" signal on the desk phone.
  - (1) Those Transit Police Personnel with an individual desk phone are required to activate the voice mail feature.
  - (2) Where appropriate to the staff person's function or in special circumstances, the voice mail system can be set up (via "Message Settings" in the user instructions) to forward calls to another work phone, work issued cell phone, or Email.

### Message Retrieval

16. It will be the responsibility of Transit Police Personnel to check for voice mail and retrieve any messages at least once during their shift.
17. When Members will be absent in excess of their weekly leave, they will be required to place an extended absence message ('out of office') on their voice mail and advise of their return date. This requirement is particularly important for Members given their policing duty and public accountability.
  - (1) Due to a seven day retention period for voice mail left on cell phones, when Transit Police Personnel will be out of office beyond seven days, instructions are to be added to the 'out of office' message to inform the caller of the extended leave period and that the caller may seek assistance by calling back to the PSC (e.g., PSC can take an email message or refer the caller to a supervisor).

## Operational Considerations

18. Transit Police Personnel (in particular Members) will need to consider operational demands when setting features on their cell phone and their availability to take calls; for example, use of the 'do not disturb' feature or setting the phone on vibrate.
19. Cell phones issued to Transit Police Personnel are provided with the 'privacy' setting activated. Transit Police Personnel may choose to have this feature unlocked, taking into account operational and security considerations with respect to their particular function. If the privacy setting is unlocked, then the staff person will need to be mindful that their cell phone number will become visible when making a call.
  - (1) To have the privacy feature unlocked, the Member will be required to submit a request to their Supervisor, who will then forward the request to the IT Help Desk.
  - (2) In circumstances of an un-privatized cell phone, the staff person may make a 'private' number call by temporarily adjusting settings on their cell phone.
20. For evidentiary and information/privacy (*FOIPPA*) reasons, Transit Police Personnel are prohibited from: call forwarding from their work phone calls/voice messages to their personal phone; and using their personal phones to conduct police department business, including investigation related phone calls.
21. Members receiving voice mail related to a police file will not delete the voice mail until the record of the call is saved and transferred to the General Occurrence file. This must be done within fourteen days of opening the voice message in order to avoid automatic deletion of the message by the service provider.

### Business Cards

22. For operational and security reasons, the standard Transit Police business cards issued to Transit Police Personnel will provide the PSC line of 604-515-8300. Those Transit Police Personnel with an individual desk phone may have the desk phone number used instead. Any exceptions to this protocol will be as so determined by the Chief Officer.
23. Cell phone numbers will only be included on business cards where necessary for position function (e.g., Senior Management Team, Human Resources, General Investigation Unit, Professional Standards Unit, Intelligence Officer, Neighbourhood Police Officers, and the Communications Unit), as so authorized by the respective Manager.
  - (1) As standard practice, operational Members will not have their cell numbers added to their business cards; any individual exceptions will require the Member to obtain the approval of their Inspector. When an operational Member wishes to provide their cell number to a member of the public or other person, this may be added in writing when needed.

- (2) When approval is granted to have a cell phone number added to a business card, the Manager/Inspector will forward the request approval to the staff person in Operations Support Services responsible for the card production.