



**SAANICH POLICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

**REVIEW AND DECISIONS ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN
PSO INVESTIGATION REPORT 2011-01**

RE: SUICIDE OF 22(1)
(JACK LEDGER HOUSE – DECEMBER 19, 2010)
SAANICH POLICE FILE 2010-30466

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BACKGROUND

On December 19, 2010 at 1736 hours Saanich Police received a call from Jack Ledger House reporting that a [REDACTED] 22(1) was missing from the facility. According to staff at Jack Ledger, [REDACTED] 22(1) had been missing for approximately 45 minutes prior to the facility notifying police. The call was categorized automatically by PRIME as a “Priority 3” (Routine – dispatch when unit available; attendance by the officer within one hour or complainant to be notified), and remained a “Priority 3” based on the information received, and the routine manner Ledger staff reported the incident. At the time the call was received, Saanich Police had the majority of its resources managing a Stabbing/Attempt Murder investigation (SPD file 10-30455 refers), but Saanich, Oak Bay, and Victoria Police could have responded to emergency situations in Saanich if required.

Approximately ninety-two (92) minutes after Jack Ledger staff initially called Saanich Police to report that [REDACTED] 22(1) was missing, Saanich Police Telecommunications received a 911 call for PAS (Provincial Ambulance Service) regarding [REDACTED] 22(1) death by apparent suicide on a beach near Jack Ledger. [REDACTED] 22(1) death resulted in Saanich Police conducting a review of the circumstances surrounding the incident. The review was completed by S/Sgt. Kelly Dukeshire in the Professional Standards Audits and Plans Division. S/Sgt. Dukeshire authored a report on his review of the circumstances relating to [REDACTED] 22(1) death. In his report, S/Sgt. Dukeshire found that, although Jack Ledger staff did not report [REDACTED] 22(1) disappearance as something that was urgent in nature or specifically request police attendance, the best police response, given the available information at the time, would have been to re-categorize the call to a “Priority 2” (Urgent – Dispatch as soon as possible; attend as soon as possible, Non-stackable calls).

Since this incident occurred, Saanich Police have worked with Jack Ledger House to improve their reporting of missing persons and other situations that may require police attendance. Additionally, Saanich Police have created a response protocol specific to Jack Ledger to ensure the best response possible.

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On February 18, 2011 S/Sgt. Dukeshire's report and recommendations were reviewed and discussed by Chief Constable M. R. Chadwick, Deputy R. Downie, and all five Divisional Inspectors. The following articulates that review and decisions as they relate to S/Sgt. Dukeshire's recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS & DECISIONS

RE: SAANICH POLICE POLICIES OB180 v. OO30

S/Sgt. Dukeshire – Comments and Recommendation(s)

Policies governing police response to reports of missing persons are OB180 and OO30. OB180 provides direction as to what steps are required upon receipt of a missing person call and OO30 specifically defines the response codes by assigning 'priorities' for all calls for service including missing person calls.

Policy OB180 directs that certain "routine" missing person calls could be referred to either the Youth or Detective divisions without patrol involvement or attendance which by definition is a "Priority 4" response. Yet policy OO30 indicates the prioritization of all missing person calls will be considered "Priority 2" which by definition requires "dispatch" and police "attendance as soon as possible".

S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #1

All missing person calls should be prioritized as "Priority 2" or higher (save for referrals, i.e. involving chronic runaways, group home scenarios with no identified or significant risk factors). Based on the above the amendment could be as simple as adding a 5th sub-category to the missing persons classification as follows:

"Non-Dispatchable/Referral (no suspicious/mitigating circumstances as per Operational Policy OB180) – Priority 4".

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Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #1

S/Sgt. Dukeshire is correct in his assessment that internal policy governing police response to reports of missing persons are addressed in policies OB180 and OO30. Additionally, policy OB180 directs that certain “routine” missing persons can be managed through a “Priority 4” response despite the fact it contravenes policy OO30 which prioritizes all missing person calls as “Priority 2”. “Priority 2” calls are defined as “Urgent – Dispatch as soon as possible; attend as soon as possible. Non-stackable calls.” In order to ensure consistent application of policy OB 30, S/Sgt. Dukeshire recommends strict adherence to the policy, with the suggestion that a 5th sub-category be added to include the following: *“Non-Dispatchable/Referral (no suspicious/mitigating circumstances as per Operational Policy OB180) – Priority 4”*.

As a result of information provided in S/Sgt. Dukeshire’s report, and discussion generated through senior management, it is clear that the PRIME BC provincial standard for the categorization of missing person calls is “Priority 3” unless it involves a “missing child” which defaults to a “Priority 1”. In either case, the call can be re-categorized by the person inputting the data or dispatching the call. It would appear that the ability to change the priority status is in place to permit flexibility based on situational factors and variables. More specifically, a “Priority 3” missing persons may require an elevated response to a “Priority 1” or a “Priority 2” depending on the situation. Conversely, it could potentially be downgraded to a “Priority 4” as well. The “Priority 3” provincial standard appears consistent with majority of missing person calls which would be “routine” in nature and not “urgent” with a requirement to “attend as soon as possible.” The ability to re-categorize the call in accordance with identified or potential risk factors, ensures that each case is examined on its own merit and responded to based on the circumstances and information obtained. Additionally, a “Priority 3” categorization ensures that police are not automatically committed to routine matters that could tie up resources and disrupt an agency’s ability to respond to more urgent matters, thus compromising public safety. With this in mind, it appears that the recently created Administration Bulletin #45 provides the requisite criteria and structural framework for evaluating and categorizing missing persons calls

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for service. Although the protocol was designed for responding to calls for service at Jack Ledger, it could serve as a model for missing person calls.

Recommendation #1 - Decision

That the current PRIME BC provincial standard of initially categorizing missing persons as “Priority 3” remain in place.

RE: POLICY OB180 – “Mitigating Circumstances”

S/Sgt. Dukeshire – Comments and Recommendation(s)

Policy OB180 speaks of “suspicious or mitigating circumstances” which, if identified in any particular report of a missing person, could alter the police response. OB180 defines “mitigating” as when a missing person is “considered to be at an elevated level of risk due to age or diminished mental capacity”.

S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #2

That the definition of “mitigating circumstances”, located in policy OB180 immediately preceding section 4, be expanded as follows:

“For the purpose of this section, the term ‘mitigating’ applies to persons who are considered to be at an elevated level of risk due to age or diminished mental capacity or are at risk of harming themselves or others”.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #2

As a result of his review, it was S/Sgt. Dukeshire’s position that policy OB180 was otherwise appropriately worded and contained sufficient direction for the handling of missing person calls. While this is a sound recommendation, discussion at the senior management level focused on best practices, and where possible changes could be made to ensure a response that promotes

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public safety in all situations, given the ever-present variables in the policing environment (i.e. call load, call type, available resources, and concurrent events). Discussion on best practices resulted in additional recommendations which have been articulated at the end of this report.

Recommendation #2 - Decision:

That S/Sgt. Dukeshire's recommendation #2 be implemented.

RE: POLICY OO30 v. CAD AUTOMATIC PRIORITIZATION

S/Sgt. Dukeshire – Comments and Recommendation(s)

S/Sgt. Dukeshire identified discrepancies between Saanich Police policy OO30 and the automatic CAD classification system. When missing person calls are received and corresponding general occurrence files are created in PRIME, the CAD system automatically classifies the call as "Priority 3" and therefore requires a manual adjustment in order to be in compliance with Saanich operational policy.

S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #3

That Administrative Bulletin #44 remain in effect permanently as it reflects what current policy already calls for.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #3

The original intent and purpose behind Admin Bulletin #44 was to ensure a "Priority 2" response for all calls to Ledger House until sufficient time had passed to enable a proper evaluation of SPD file 2010-30466, the suicide of 22(1). While this was prudent, it was implemented as an interim measure and not to be permanently implemented as a business practice, unless the review by Professional Standards and the senior management group decided that such action was necessary. After a thorough review of S/Sgt. Dukeshire's

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report, senior management determined that, responding “Priority 2” to all missing person calls to Jack Ledger was not prudent.

Recommendation #3 - Decision

That Admin Bulletin #44 be immediately rescinded and replaced by Admin Bulletin #45. Admin Bulletin #45 appropriately provides the requisite criteria and structural framework for evaluating and categorizing missing persons calls for service from Jack Ledger and is specific to that institution.

RE: PRIORITIZATION OF MISSING PERSONS CALLS

S/Sgt. Dukeshire – Comments and Recommendation(s)

Regarding reports of missing persons received from the community at large:

S/Sgt Dukeshire advised that policy suggested all missing person calls warranted a “Priority 2” response or higher (as reflected in policy OO30), but that current practices were to classify missing person calls as “Priority 3” or, in some cases, “Priority 4.”

While he agreed on the appropriateness of responding “Priority 4” to chronic runaways from institutions such as group homes where a clear historical pattern was present, he felt that police response to all other reports of missing persons, whether it be from an institution such as Jack Ledger House or a private household, should be classified no less than “Priority 2” in all cases. He further suggested that his approach simply dictated that dispatch will occur “as soon as possible” and that attendance will occur “as soon as possible”. “Priority 2” ensures that our department will respond “as soon as possible”.

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S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #4

That Saanich Police discontinue the current practice of allowing the automatic CAD classification of missing person calls to stand as “Priority 3”. All missing person calls should be classified as “Priority 2” or higher (save for the routine/chronic runaway as already discussed) reflecting the department’s philosophy that all missing person calls are considered important and warrant dispatch and assignment to an officer at the earliest availability.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #4

As stated previously, although CAD automatically classifies missing persons as a “Priority 3” (except missing children), each call can be re-classified based on the information received. Additionally, it should be noted that policy OB180 permits direct referrals of “Routine/Not Suspicious” missing youths and adults to the Youth and General Investigation Sections respectively, and does not require an initial assessment of those “routine” missing persons calls. Despite that, discussion revealed that, although “Routine/Not Suspicious” missing person calls are routed to specialized sections, the current practice goes beyond policy requirements and results in an initial review by the on-duty Watch Commander or his/her designate. Despite this practice, policy OB180 is still inconsistent with policy OO30 which categorizes all missing person calls as “Priority 2.” This inconsistency can be overcome by amending the language in policy OB 180 (see Recommendation 12).

In order to remain consistent with current business practices, real time oversight of “Routine/Not Suspicious” missing person calls will be accomplished by implementing Recommendation 13, without the requirement to categorize all missing person calls as “Priority 2.”

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Recommendation #4 - Decision

That the current PRIME BC provincial standard of initially categorizing missing persons as “Priority 3” remain in place.

S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #5

Regarding the phrase “attend as soon as possible” as stated in policy OO30 relating to “Priority 2” response codes, S/Sgt. Dukeshire recommended that this be viewed as not necessarily meaning physical attendance at the complainant’s home or business in all cases but rather, the call itself being “attended to” as soon as possible. S/Sgt. Dukeshire proffered that being “attended to” may simply involve an officer establishing contact with the complainant by telephone or other means in the first instance depending upon the circumstances.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #5

While the logic behind recommendation #5 is sound, it cannot replace the true intent behind a “Priority 2” response and is viewed as a contingency to ensure that the policy of responding to all missing person calls as a “Priority 2” could be adhered to and thus defensible. However, “attending to” a call for service (i.e. not necessarily physically attending), does not have the same impact and desirous outcome of physically “attending” a call for service. Physical attendance affords investigators the opportunity to see, hear, and feel what’s occurring at a call. The verbal and non verbal cues and information an officer can obtain by physically attending a call for service provides far more information and detail compared to what can be gleaned over the telephone. “Attending to” a call is suggested as a measure to ensure the policy demands of responding “Priority 2” to all missing person calls can be met. It does not, however, replace physical attendance and is not an appropriate substitute.

Recommendation #5 - Decision

That the original definition and intent of “attend as soon as possible” be retained.

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RE: ADMINISTRATION BULLETIN #45

S/Sgt. Dukeshire – Comments and Recommendation(s)

S/Sgt. Dukeshire advised that an “update” to Administrative Bulletin #44 was published and came into effect on February 4, 2011 (Admin. Bulletin #45) which detailed three “categories” of missing persons. The word “category” is terminology used by Jack Ledger House within their policies and protocols. As currently worded in the Saanich Admin Bulletin #45, S/Sgt. Dukeshire suggested that the use of the term “category 1, 2 and 3” might naturally be translated by Saanich Police employees (Telecoms staff and police officers) to mean “Priority 1, 2 or 3”.

He further commented that, if the recommendations in his report were accepted (i.e. discontinuing the practice of classifying any missing person calls as “Priority 3”), then it was foreseeable that the bulletin, as it was initially drafted, could cause some degree of confusion.

S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #6

That Admin. Bulletin #45 be amended to include Telecom staff being informed that the word “category” is terminology used by Jack Ledger House and that the term should not be confused as being synonymous with Saanich Police response codes.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #6

Although Telecommunications staff are fully cognisant of the noted differences and page two (2) of Admin Bulletin #45 speaks to the priority of calls, S/Sgt. Dukeshire’s recommendation will be implemented to ensure clarity.

Recommendation #6 - Decision

That S/Sgt. Dukeshire’s recommendation #6 be implemented.

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S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #7

That Admin Bulletin #45 be amended relating to the dispatch instruction given at the end of each “category” to state, “...will be classified as Priority 2 or higher and dispatched accordingly”.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #7

This recommendation was made to align with the S/Sgt. Dukeshire’s recommendation #1 – responding to all missing persons as a “Priority 2.” Given that S/Sgt. Dukeshire’s recommendation #1 will be not be adopted, altering Admin Bulletin #45 is not required.

Recommendation #7 - Decision

That Admin Bulletin #45 not be amended.

S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #8

That page 2 of Admin. Bulletin #45 be amended further to state, “*Telecom staff will review Operational Policy OO30 relating to missing persons when the Dispatch Priority is unclear. If after reviewing policy OO30 the Dispatch Priority remains unclear, Telecom staff will consult a patrol NCO*”.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #8

While this is a sound recommendation, any uncertainty about call prioritization will be alleviated by implementing recommendation #13 (below).

Recommendation #8 - Decision

See recommendation #13.

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RE: CALL TAKER MANUAL

S/Sgt. Dukeshire felt that, although Administrative Bulletins #44 and #45 speak to the prioritization and dispatch requirements relating to individuals from Ledger House, the Call Taker Manual itself does not speak to the prioritization or dispatch requirements as it relates to missing person calls.

S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #9

That the Call Taker Manual be amended by drawing the call taker's attention to the departmental Operational Manual, directing them to follow the procedures, as outlined in the relevant sections (OB180 and OO30) relating to missing person call prioritization.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #9

The Call Taker Manual, policy OO30, policy OB1180, and Admin Bulletin #45 are interrelated and should reference each other to ensure consistency. S/Sgt. Dukeshire's recommendation has merit but needs to go one step further. More specifically, the documents should be electronically linked to save time and promote ease of navigation.

Recommendation #9 - Decision

See recommendation #14.

RE: SGT. STEPHENS REQUEST - CAD ACCESS IN PATROL NCO OFFICE

S/Sgt. Dukeshire – Comments and Recommendation(s)

From the circumstances in this case and during his interview with S/Sgt. Dukeshire, Sgt. Stephens expressed his opinion that it would be beneficial for the road NCO's office to have at least one terminal that would provide access to CAD which would greatly assist the road supervisors with their awareness of what is taking place on the road and in their preparation for their pending shift.

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S/Sgt. Dukeshire - Recommendation #10

That CAD be installed in the road NCO's office at the earliest opportunity.

Senior Management Discussion and Decision – Recommendation #10

CAD terminals are currently located in the TSU supervisor's office and the Watch Commander's office. S/Sgt. Dukeshire's recommendation will improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. He further recommended that, if feasible, CAD be installed at both workstations to ensure the availability of CAD when both workstations are occupied.

Recommendation #10 - Decision

Install two (2) CAD terminals in the patrol NCO office.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Recommendation/Decision #11

That policy OO30 be amended to reflect that Missing Persons "Type of Response" be categorized as a 2/3. Additionally, that a link to the amended version of policy OB180 (pending) be added to the Missing Persons category of policy OO30 to ensure that Telecommunications immediately notify the attending officer or supervisor about the call, regardless if its priority. This will ensure that "Priority 3" missing person calls do not sit in the queue unannounced.

Recommendation/Decision #12

That policy OB180 be amended to align with the language and processes articulated in Admin Bulletin #45. Further, that policy OB180 be amended to ensure the definition of "child" is

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consistent with the definition utilized by PRIME BC, and that “adult” and “youth” be defined by age.

Recommendation/Decision #13

That all missing person calls for service, except non-dispatchable “Priority 4” calls, be broadcast to the member responsible or member’s supervisor if the member is unavailable. This will ensure that, even under routine circumstances, the attending member or supervisor is apprised of the call prior to viewing it on the mobile data terminal (MDT). This awareness will facilitate an early assessment of all missing person calls.

Recommendation/Decision #14

That the following documents, as they relate to missing persons calls for service, be electronically linked to each other to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness: OO30, OB180, Admin Bulletin #45, and Telecoms Call Taker Manual.



Chief Constable Mike Chadwick #307