

	Abbotsford Police Department Policy and Procedure	
	Operations	Communications
	II.M.070	Public Notifications

PREAMBLE

In British Columbia, the release of private information by a public entity is governed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). Although the protection of individual privacy is extremely important, public safety is paramount. There are times that the duty of care to the community supersedes privacy rights.

FIPPA stipulates that the head of a public body (e.g., Chief Constable) must disclose information where disclosure is clearly in the public interest. The decision to disclose must be based on a contextual assessment and determination as to whether there is risk of significant harm (including future significant harm) to the safety of the public or a group of people.

FIPPA also establishes a narrowly-defined set of purposes under which a public body **may** disclose personal information. For police, the decision to disclose must be based on **compelling circumstances** that someone's health or safety may be affected or must be **consistent** with court-ordered conditions.

PURPOSE

- (1) To ensure that private information released by the Abbotsford Police Department ("AbbyPD") through public notification is disclosed in a responsible manner, balancing AbbyPD's responsibility to protect the community and the right to privacy of the individual.

SCOPE

- (2) This policy applies to public notifications made under the authority of FIPPA.

POLICY

- (3) Each public notification will be carefully considered. The AbbyPD employee (as authorized by the Chief Constable) responsible for the release of personal information will be mindful of the potential risks associated with the release, including the potential for harm to the victim if the release triggers retribution, and reputational harm to the subject if inaccurate information is released.
- (4) Any personal information disclosed will be limited to that which provides potential victims the opportunity to sufficiently mitigate their risk.
- (5) AbbyPD-issued public notifications will comply with all relevant legislation.

Paragraphs (3) through (5) constitute Policy, approved by the Police Board on November 23, 2022.