

MEMORANDUM TO: All Chiefs of Police and
Commissioner Thomas Carrique
Chairs, Police Services Boards

FROM: Richard Stubbings
Assistant Deputy Minister
Public Safety Division

SUBJECT: **Audit of the First Responders COVID-19 Risk Look-Up
Tool Web Portal**

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Further to All Chiefs Memo 20-0064, I am writing to update you on the Ministry of the Solicitor General (ministry) audits on usage by police services of the First Responders COVID-19 Risk Look-Up Tool Web Portal (the portal).

As noted in All Chiefs Memo 20-0064, the ministry has instituted an audit logging function to track all user activity on the portal. The last audit captured historical data for the periods of April 17 to April 27 and from April 28 to May 29, 2020. The results of the audit are based solely on our review of the portal's authorized user activity records for the specified periods and the search parameters that each authorized user applied to access information from the portal.

The audit has discovered that many searches of the portal do not appear to be consistent with the ministry's instructions or the restrictions on the use of the information subject to [O. Reg. 120/20](#) set out in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (the Act). This audit took place prior to and after April 27, when All Chiefs Memo 20-0064 was distributed, and raises concerns that the portal is being used beyond the express purpose that the government intends and the limited purpose that the Act permits. The Act provides that information subject to the emergency order must *only* be used to prevent, respond to or alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 emergency.

I strongly urge police services boards and chiefs of police to ensure that access to this critical information is strictly for responding to a call for service to protect members of police services and the public and help stop the spread of COVID-19. As a reminder, the following examples of portal usage are not consistent with the ministry's instructions or the restrictions on the use of the portal:

- Conducting broad-based municipal searches without a specific address, including conducting broad-based searches using only postal codes. These types of municipal-wide searches have the potential to return a high number of responsive records. It is expected that authorized communications and dispatch personnel will only query the portal with other parameters in relation to an emergency call as opposed to searching an entire municipality.
- Conducting broad-based municipal searches of another municipality. It is unknown why a member would conduct a broad-based search of a municipality outside their service area, or even their mutual aid partners.
- Conducting searches of a specific name that is not related to an active call for service.

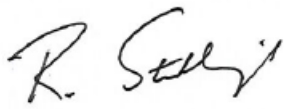
The ministry will continue to conduct audits of portal usage for the remainder of the operational life of the portal. If there are any search queries within a specific police service that need to be brought to your attention, I will be communicating directly with the respective chief of police. Following this, it would be up to police services boards and chiefs of police to determine what steps, if any, are taken with respect to these searches. However, the ministry could revoke access to the portal if its use is not aligned with our instructions. In addition, the ministry may report suspected inappropriate portal access, or use or disclosure of information from the portal, to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. The ministry may also refer any suspected misconduct to the Ontario Civilian Police Commission pursuant to section 25 of the *Police Services Act*.

You should be aware that the ministry has also received inquiries through the COVID-19 Enforcement Support Line from members of police services requesting the COVID-19 status information of specific individuals in their custody. **The ministry is not able to provide any information through the Support Line about an individual's COVID-19 status, including whether they have been tested.** In addition, the ministry asks that members of police services not disclose identifying information (e.g., name, date of birth, etc.) as part of inquiries directed to the ministry, including through the COVID-19 Enforcement Support Line.

We strongly encourage police services to ensure that members of their service are well-versed with the Emergency Order filed as [O. Reg. 120/20](#) and other relevant information communicated through this All Chiefs Memo and previous All Chiefs Memos that provide information on the purpose and the proper use of the portal. If you would like further information on specific audit results for your police service, please contact Savio Pereira at Savio.Pereira@ontario.ca.

I trust that this information will be of assistance. Thank you again for your continued efforts in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Stubbings". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard Stubbings
Assistant Deputy Minister
Public Safety Division