

Table CR-XX – Policy Number CR-XX – Critical Points

CR-XX CRITICAL POINTS	
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE / AUTHORITY	<i>Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019</i> , ss. 37(1)(a) and (f); ss. 38(1)(a) and (b); ss. 39(1); and s. 40.
DATE APPROVED	XX xxxx 2025
DATE REVIEWED	N/A
DATES AMENDED	N/A
DATE TO BE REVIEWED	2027
REPORTING REQUIREMENT	As set out in the policy

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Effective information sharing between the Ottawa Police Service (the Service) and the Ottawa Police Service Board (the Board) is foundational to the Board’s ability to fulfill its statutory responsibilities under the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* (CSPA). In particular, timely and accurate information sharing is essential during periods of elevated organizational or public risk, including large-scale operations, complex events, or emerging crises that pose strategic risks to community safety, operational integrity, or public trust.

This Policy defines such circumstances as Critical Points and establishes a framework to guide the Chief of Police and the Board in identifying them and ensuring the timely and structured flow of information from the Service to the Board. The objective is to enable the Board to carry out its governance, oversight, and public accountability functions, such as setting objectives, monitoring risk, revising Board policies, providing lawful direction where appropriate, and providing non-binding advice in relation to operational matters.

The Board acknowledges that there are statutory limits to the direction that the Board may give to the Chief of Police, and the importance of respecting those limits. The Board is prohibited by law from directing the Chief with respect to specific investigations or the conduct of specific operations. Therefore, while the Board may set objectives and

priorities for the policing of a Critical Point, the Chief of Police has authority to determine the methods by which the objective, priority, or outcome will be achieved.

This Policy will not prevent or restrict the Service from exercising its duties in accordance with the Act and the regulations.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Define the term “Critical Point” and provide consistent assessment criteria for identifying such matters;
- Describe the type of information the Board requires from the Chief in order to assess potential Critical Points;
- Establish a clear and structured process for information sharing between the Chief and the Board;
- Strengthen the Board’s governance and oversight of the Service in alignment with its statutory responsibilities;
- Ensure the Chief of Police can discharge their duties according to the law while engaging appropriately with the Board.

BOARD POLICY

It is the Ottawa Police Service Board’s policy that:

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1. **Critical Point.** A matter of immediate strategic significance that rapidly elevates the Board’s operational, financial, reputational or other enterprise risk, and therefore calls for the Board’s immediate attention and/or preparedness to take action.

1.2. **Examples.** Examples of Critical Points include but are not limited to:

- a) Large scale operations or events for which advance planning and approval by Executive Command is required and/or which have been rated as very high or critical risk;
- b) Major incidents resulting in mass casualties;
- c) Major infrastructure or technology disruptions, such as communication system outages, cyberattacks, or physical damage to Service facilities that impair operational continuity or emergency response;

- d) Events or operations that are likely to have a material impact on the Service's relationship with, and service to the residents of Ottawa, particularly marginalized or vulnerable communities;
- e) Other events or operations that raise significant questions of public policy;
- f) Credible external or internal complaints, including complaints regarding workplace discrimination or harassment, against individual officers and the Service, and findings by other tribunals related to discrimination, where such complaints or findings raise significant systemic issues.

1.3. **Application of Criteria.** The examples listed above illustrate the type of matters that may constitute a Critical point. In determining whether any such matter requires reporting under this Policy, the criteria set out in the definition in subsection 1.1. shall guide the assessment. A matter fitting one of the examples does not, on its own, constitute a Critical Point unless its circumstances:

- a) Carry strategic significance;
- b) Elevate the Board's enterprise risk; and
- c) Warrant the Board's immediate attention or preparedness to take action.

2. REPORTING ON CRITICAL POINTS

2.1. **Initial report by Chief.** The Chief of Police will, without delay, inform the Chair and the Board's Executive Director of any situation in which the Chief of Police believes a Critical point has emerged or is likely to emerge and provide them, in writing, with further information regarding the Critical point, including, as appropriate:

- a) The general nature of the Critical Point;
- b) The elevated risk(s) posed by the Critical point;
- c) Relevant operational and other information necessary for the Board to understand the details of the Critical point, including an outline of the operational plan, and continuity of service plans;
- d) Any plans to involve other organizations, including but not limited to other law enforcement agencies;
- e) An estimate of the financial implications, if known;
- f) Legal or regulatory issues relevant to the matter;

- g) Any ongoing or anticipated resource, policy, or public communications implications;
 - h) Potential impacts on public confidence, equity, or relations between the police and the community;
- 2.2. **Confidential Board sharing.** Upon receipt of notification of a Critical Point from the Chief, the Chair or the Board's Executive Director shall share the information provided by the Chief of Police, including any updates, with Board Members in strict confidence;
- 2.3. **Board response options.** The Chair, in consultation with the Board Members, and in accordance with the Board's Procedure By-law, will determine whether there is a need to obtain additional information, create or amend Board policies, and/or provide direction to the Chief in accordance with the Board's policies, duties, and responsibilities, including setting objectives and priorities, and if so, whether to call a Special Meeting of the Board, or to include the Critical Point as an item on the Agenda of the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting.
- 2.4. **Ongoing updates.** The Chief will continue to update the Board, through the Chair and Executive Director, on any significant developments, include once the Chief assesses that the Critical Point has concluded. In consultation with the Board Members, the Chair may call a Special Meeting of the Board at any time or include an item on the Agenda of a regularly scheduled Board Meeting, to discuss the Critical Point.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL POINTS BY THE BOARD

- 3.1. **Identification by the Board.** When the Chair believes, or is advised by one or more Members of the Board that they believe, that a matter may constitute a Critical Point, the Chair shall request the Chief of Police to consider whether, in their view, the matter may meet the definition of Critical Point, and either report to the Board in accordance with this Policy, or, alternatively, provide the Chair reasons that the event in question does not meet the definition of a Critical Point.
- 3.2. **Collaborative Assessment Process.** In identifying a Critical Point, the Chief's professional judgment shall be given due consideration. The Board retains its governance authority under section 40 of the CSPA and may, where it considers it necessary to fulfill its mandate, designate a matter as a Critical Point and require reporting in accordance with this Policy.

4. CHIEF'S AUTONOMY

- 4.1. **Execution of plans.** Once the Board has been given the opportunity to set objectives, ask questions, and provide non-binding advice in relation to operational matters, where applicable the Chief will maintain autonomy to finalize and execute the plans, subject to any lawful direction issued by the Board.
- 4.2. **Unmet objectives.** If, during the duration of a Critical Point, the Board concludes that, in its view, the objectives are not being achieved, the Board will inform the Chief of Police of its conclusion. However, the Chief of Police will remain autonomous in determining the appropriate execution of the plans in order to achieve the mission, objectives and priorities.

5. TRAINING

- 5.1. **Training within the Service.** The Chief shall provide training to ensure that all Command members and senior officers from the rank of Inspector and above, and any other members, sworn or civilian, the Chief deems appropriate, are trained to recognize the circumstances that may lead to a Critical Point, and to inform the Chief of Police and Command when a potential Critical Point is identified.
- 5.2. **Chief's procedure.** The Chief shall establish a procedure governing the flow of information within the Service related to the identification and escalation of Critical Points. The procedure shall ensure that matters meeting the definition of a Critical Point under this Policy are recognized and elevated without delay, and that the Chief promptly reports such matters to the Board in accordance with the reporting requirements set out herein.
- 5.3. **Board training.** The Board shall ensure that all Board Members receive training to understand the definition of a Critical Point, and effectively understand their responsibilities with regard to the consideration of Critical Points.

6. PUBLIC REPORTING

- 6.1. **Disclosure by the Board.** The Board shall determine, in consultation with the Chief of Police and subject to operational, safety, and legal considerations, whether public disclosure of a Critical Point is appropriate.
- 6.2. **Content of disclosure.** Where disclosure is warranted, it will include, at a minimum:
 - a) The general nature of the Critical Point; and
 - b) Any directions given to the Chief of Police related to a Critical Point.

6.3. **Disclosure process.** The decision to disclose, and the content of any disclosure, shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, documented accordingly, and guided by the Board's commitment to transparency, accountability, and public trust.

7. INTERIM APPLICATION AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES

7.1. **Transition.** Until the Board adopts a revised *Major Events Policy* as part of the modernization of its Major Events Policy Framework, this Policy shall operate in conjunction with Policy CR-17 Major Events, and Policy CR-28 Assistance in the Provision of Policing. In the event of any inconsistency between this Policy and Policy CR-17, the provisions of this Policy shall prevail only with respect to matters that meet the definition of a Critical Point under this Policy. All other provisions of Policy CR-17, including those which relate to mass demonstrations, arrest and detention, shall remain in full force and effect.