

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

23 November 2020 / 23 novembre 2020

Submitted by / Soumis par:

Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa

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**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-20-20: MASK POLICY IN LIGHT OF
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À LA DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS I-20-20:
POLITIQUE RELATIVE AU PORT DU MASQUE DANS LE CONTEXTE
DES PRATIQUES RELIGIEUSES**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receives this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

INQUIRY

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic what is the mask policy for the frontline officers, especially for the members from Sikh, Muslim faiths and those who leave their hair unshorn for religious reasons? Have any complaints or concerns filed by any members on account of discrimination on this account to date?

RESPONSE

The health and safety of the Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) members is paramount to ensure that we can effectively continue to maintain capacity during the ongoing COVID

19 pandemic. Equally important is ensuring the safety of the residents we serve and protect. Throughout the pandemic we have supported best-practices as advocated by our partners at Ottawa Public Health (OPH).

We take the individual needs of our members seriously, and respect limitations that may happen due to religious or other reasons. It is our duty to ensure their safety so that they can continue to protect and serve.

It was the role of supervising officers to determine whether a staff member needed special equipment based on either health or religious reasons. They worked closely with the Pandemic Team to determine the number of Air Purifying Respirators (APRs) were needed.

An APR is a specialized personal protective equipment (PPE) mask that goes over the head with a hood and is connected to a power supply to create positive pressure within the hood and filtering out any harmful materials. It specifically provides secure PPE measures for those with long beards or long hair.

APRs are more costly than regular gas masks and other PPE, at a price point of \$408.77 per unit. In total, two members were identified as requiring these devices.

Because of backlog, we only just received the required APRs in early October; they were ordered in late May after determining the number needed. Those members are now being fit tested and trained on how to use the device.

Those members who had to wait for a specialized mask were reassigned to other duties or tasks, internally in a controlled environment to ensure safety.

There have been no formal complaints related to redeployment or the wait for the APRs to-date.