

Report to / Rapport au:

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

26 July 2021 / 26 juillet 2021

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

**A/ Superintendent Rob Bernier / Surintendant par intérim Rob Bernier
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SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-21-18: PROVISION OF TRANSLATION SERVICES IN SCENARIOS REQUIRING USE OF FORCE AND DE-ESCALATION

OBJET: RÉPONSE À LA DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS I-21- 18: OFFRE DE SERVICES DE TRADUCTION DANS DES SITUATIONS EXIGEANT L'EMPLOI DE LA FORCE ET UNE DIMINUTION DES TENSIONS

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive 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

1. How significant to negotiations are language skills in a situation requiring de-escalation?
2. It was previously noted that the OPS rely on an ad-hoc policy to call in on-duty officers fluent in the language being spoken other than official languages, as needed, when an incident emerges. In considering how a more permanent and consistent policy could be implemented, does the OPS intend to adopt a language interpretation model based on Ontario legislation, or consult best practices? Is the current ad-hoc model representative of best practices?

RESPONSE

Communication is one of the key tools that Ottawa Police Service (OPS) officers employ when responding to any call for service. It is an integral part of training given each new recruit at Ontario Police College, in terms of de-escalation and resolution.

However, there are times when an officer arrives at a call to discover the person requiring help cannot speak either English or French.

The Ottawa Police Reporting Unit and Communications Centre/911 utilizes Language Line Solutions as their main provider in any situation in which phone translations services are required. Language Line Solutions is one the major North American Interpretation companies providing access to over 240 languages. When needed, callers are conferenced into a call with an operator and translations occur immediately.

Additionally, the OPS staffing directory has a list of each member and what languages they speak, that can be accessed immediately whether at a police station or on the road. This includes both civilian and sworn members who are routinely asked for their assistance in communication.

All Crisis Management Negotiators are fluent in both English and French.

Failing that, and depending on the urgency of the matter, technology can be deployed using a mobile translator app to assist officers so they can immediately understand the unfolding events and respond accordingly.

Officers can also employ non-verbal body language to convey any urgent requests until help arrives.

We have made a point of ensuring that key critical documents on our website, like those relating to elder abuse, hate-motivated incidents, have been translated into up to nine different languages so that information is there to help those who need it most.

Additionally we are working to convert older PDF documents into AODA format to meet the needs of those with disabilities; our current website meets full AODA compliance.

We are always looking to improve our level of service to the many diverse communities that call Ottawa home, and we will continue to monitor best practices to determine the best public outcomes. This includes working with Immigrant Women Services Ottawa to ensure victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence receive services in the language of their choice.