



# **SASKATOON** \_\_\_\_\_ **POLICE SERVICE**

**TO:** Jo Custead, Chairperson  
Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** Troy Cooper  
Office of the Chief

**DATE:** 2022 April 21

**SUBJECT:** Contact Interview Policy Audit- 2021

**FILE #:** 2,001

---

## **ISSUE:**

This audit report summarizes compliance with the Saskatoon Police Service's policy on contact interviews for 2021.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

This report be received as information.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**

This initiative assists the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) in meeting its goals to 1) ensure accessibility and enhance communication with the public to maintain transparency and public trust, and 2) enrich the relationships between the SPS and the many diverse communities it serves, as stated in the Strategic and Business Plans.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

SPS policy on contact interviews was established on March 19, 2019; all reports from that time forward have been reviewed for compliance. Reporting on compliance will be done on a yearly basis. The summary of findings for 2021 contact interviews are as follows:

- Approximately 17.5% of submitted reports are not actually contact interviews under the policy:
  - These contacts were part of active investigations/call responses, observation reports where no contact was made, authorized contact that was related to various statutes, or contacts initiated by the subject.

- Of actual contact interview reports:
  - Contact interviews were 100% compliant with policy.
  - There were no incidents where contact was initiated on specifically prohibited grounds.

**BACKGROUND:**

In late 2018, the Saskatchewan Police Commission disseminated new provincial policy regarding contact interviews, along with a training video from the Saskatchewan Police College, and these items were presented to SPS members in November and December of that year. Internal training was subsequently developed to explain the new policy and provide guidance on how contact interviews should be properly conducted. Members assigned to Patrol and Criminal Investigations units received this instruction during in-service training days in March and April of 2019.

In November 2019, an audit was conducted by the Staff Sergeant assigned to the Special Projects office in Patrol to review all contact interviews submitted between March 19, and December 31, 2019, and to determine the overall compliance with SPS policy.

It was determined that an annual audit of contact interviews would occur and the results would be prepared in a report for the Board of Police Commissioners.

**DISCUSSION:**

The parameters of the contact interview audit draw directly from the definitions and rules within SPS policy.

Contact interviews are defined as a contact with the public:

- initiated by a SPS member
- for the purpose of obtaining information
  - the information is not related to a specific incident or offense;
  - the information being sought must be more than general information common to the community.

Contact interviews do not include:

- Undercover activity;
- Visual observations where no actual contact is made with the public;
- Contact made under specific statutory authority, as long as the contact pertains to the statutory reason – when contact exceeds a statutory authorization, it is deemed a contact interview and is governed by this policy.

SPS policy lists authorized and prohibited reasons for initiating a contact interview.

- Authorized reasons can include
  - The lack of any apparent reason for the person to be in a particular area (such as a commercial or industrial area late at night when those premises are closed);
  - The person’s actions, behavior or demeanor raise a concern regarding his/her purpose or safety;
  - The person appears lost, confused, frightened or in need of assistance.
- Prohibited reasons are specific
  - The person’s location is in an area known to experience high levels of criminal activity and/or victimization;
  - And the remaining prohibited grounds are largely drawn from human rights legislation:
    - Actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin;
    - Colour;
    - Religion;
    - Age;
    - Gender, gender identity, sexual orientation;
    - Physical or intellectual disability or impairment;
    - Mental disorder;
    - Any other ground of discrimination prohibited at law;
    - Medical conditions;
    - Other personal characteristics of a similar nature.

Policy describes appropriate conduct of a contact interview, stressing the overall concern for Charter compliance, the voluntary nature of contact interviews, and the applicability of contact interviews to community safety. Policy also notes that officer demeanor and communication skills are highly related to the ability to appropriately conduct a contact interview, and that all such interviews must be noted and submitted to the police database, listing the required points of notation to include date and time, location, identity of the person, description, duration of contact, vehicle description and the information gathered.

#### Research methodology and Policy Audit Process

Every single contact interview from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 was reviewed. Each was examined to determine the following:

- Does the submitted report constitute a contact interview?
- If so, is the contact interview compliant with SPS Policy and Procedure?

- If not, what is the reason for the contact interview? Is it non-compliant? Is it some other form of report instead?
- Non-compliant contact interviews were further subdivided into two categories:
  - Prohibited Basis
    - The contact interview was conducted solely for a reason stipulated as prohibited in policy.
  - Insufficient Information
    - The submitted contact interview report does not contain sufficient information to justify the reason for the contact, but the circumstances do not indicate a prohibited basis.

### Findings

For the period of January 1 to December 31, 2021:

Total Contact Interview Submissions:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1) Number of Reports submitted as Contact Interviews:                     | 233 |
| 2) Number of Reports submitted as clerical errors & reporting test cases: | 3   |
| 3) Number of Reports submitted that are not actually Contact Interviews:  | 41  |

Total Contact Interviews:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 4) Total number of Contact Interviews submitted in 2021:                 | 189 |
| 5) Number of Contact Interviews that comply with SPS Policy & Procedure: | 189 |

### Reports Not Deemed to be Contact Interviews

As noted above, there were 41 reports submitted that were found not to meet the policy definition of a contact interview. These reports included cases where:

- No actual contact was made with the subject.
  - Many reports were submitted for intelligence-gathering purposes to link items within the police database, such as a vehicle observed attending a known drug house.

- The contact should have been reported in another way.
  - The contact was made pursuant to a call for service from the public, or an active investigation, in which the reporting officer was involved;
  - The contact was initiated under a statutory authority, such as *The Traffic Safety Act*, and the officer was reporting observations without engaging in a contact interview that exceeded beyond the statutory authority for the initial contact.
  
- The subject was already in custody or initiated contact.
  - The contact was initiated by the subject, not by police;
  - The subject matter of the reported contact took place after the person was lawfully in police custody.

Mapping

The following is a summary for the 189 contact interviews by location and time of day. The data was downloaded from the SPS Records Management System (RMS) on April 12, 2022.

Spatial Distribution

Table 1 shows that 38% of contact interviews in 2021 occurred in Central Division which is down from 51% in 2020. East and Northwest Divisions make up 33% and 30% respectfully.

<b>Table 1: Contact Interview by Division, 2021</b>		
<b>Division/District</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Central</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>38%</b>
2-1	44	23%
2-2	27	14%
<b>East</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>33%</b>
3-1	43	23%
3-2	19	10%
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30%</b>
1-1	40	21%
1-2	16	8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>100%</b>

The distribution of contact interviews in 2021 is shown in Figure 1 below:

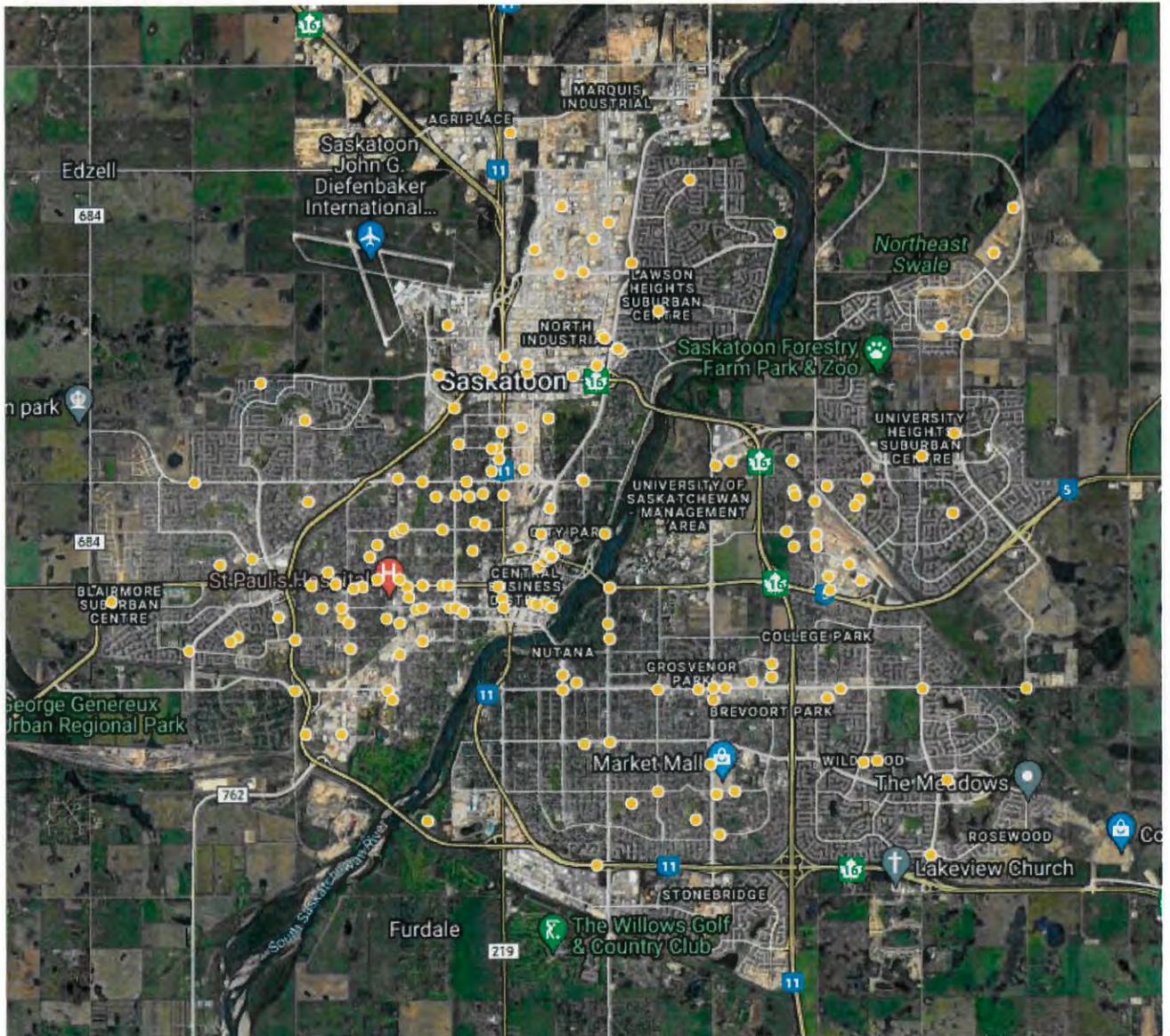


Figure 1 – Spatial distribution of contact interviews in Saskatoon, 2021

Figure 2 shows a heat map of the same locations shown in Figure 1:

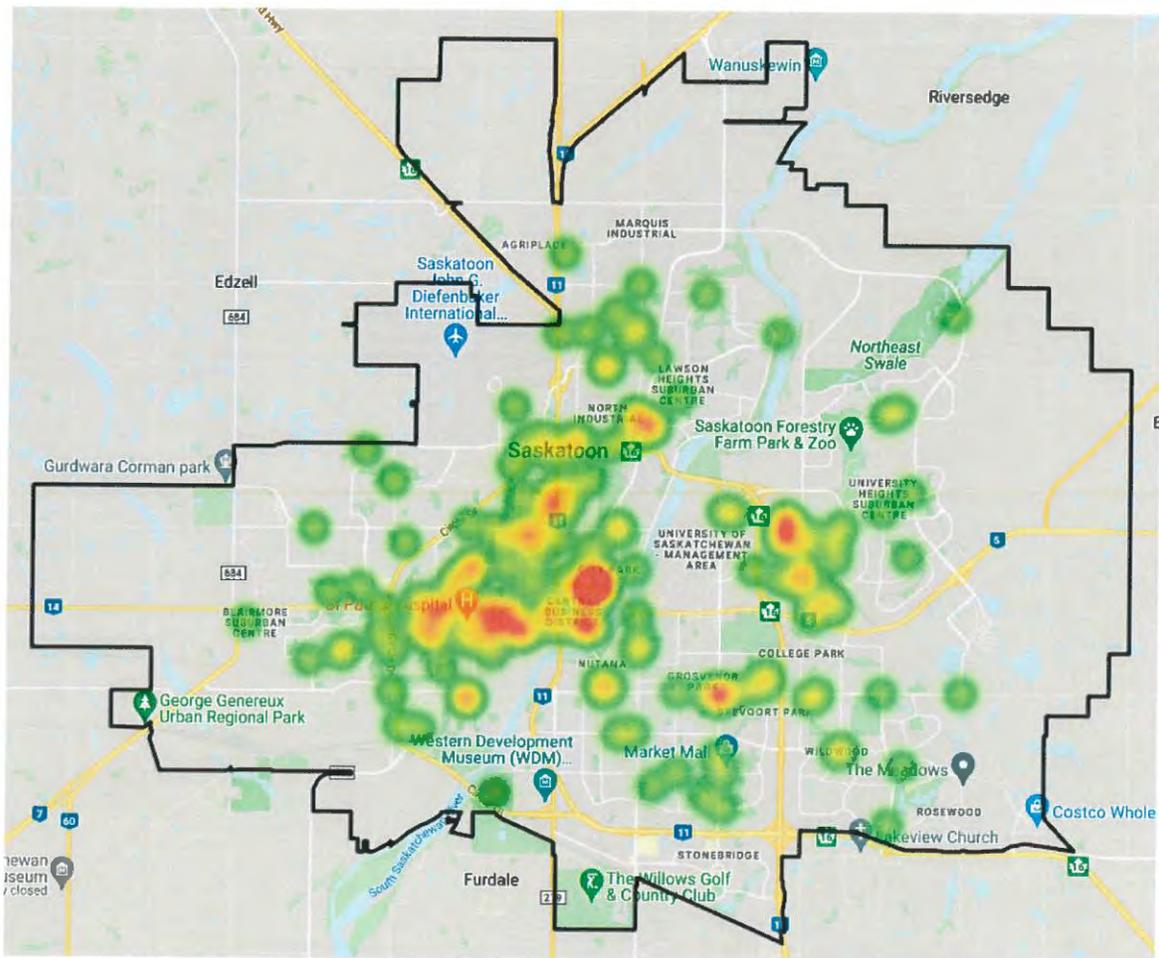


Figure 2 – Heat map of contact interviews in Saskatoon, 2021

## “PUBLIC AGENDA”

The following table and graph summarize the contact interviews, occurrences and dispatched calls for service in each division and district in 2021.

Table 2: Contact Interview, Occurrences and Dispatched Calls, in 2021 as a percentage of the totals

Division/District	Contact Interviews		Occurrences		Dispatched Calls	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
<b>Central</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>19,318</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>35,329</b>	<b>44%</b>
2-1	44	23%	9,247	20%	15,350	19%
2-2	27	14%	10,071	22%	19,979	25%
<b>East</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>12,631</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>21,493</b>	<b>27%</b>
3-1	43	23%	7,107	15%	11,856	15%
3-2	19	10%	5,524	12%	9,637	12%
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>10,495</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20,527</b>	<b>26%</b>
1-1	40	21%	6,398	14%	11,530	14%
1-2	16	8%	4,097	9%	8,997	11%
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3,560</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2,219</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>46,004</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>79,568</b>	<b>100%</b>

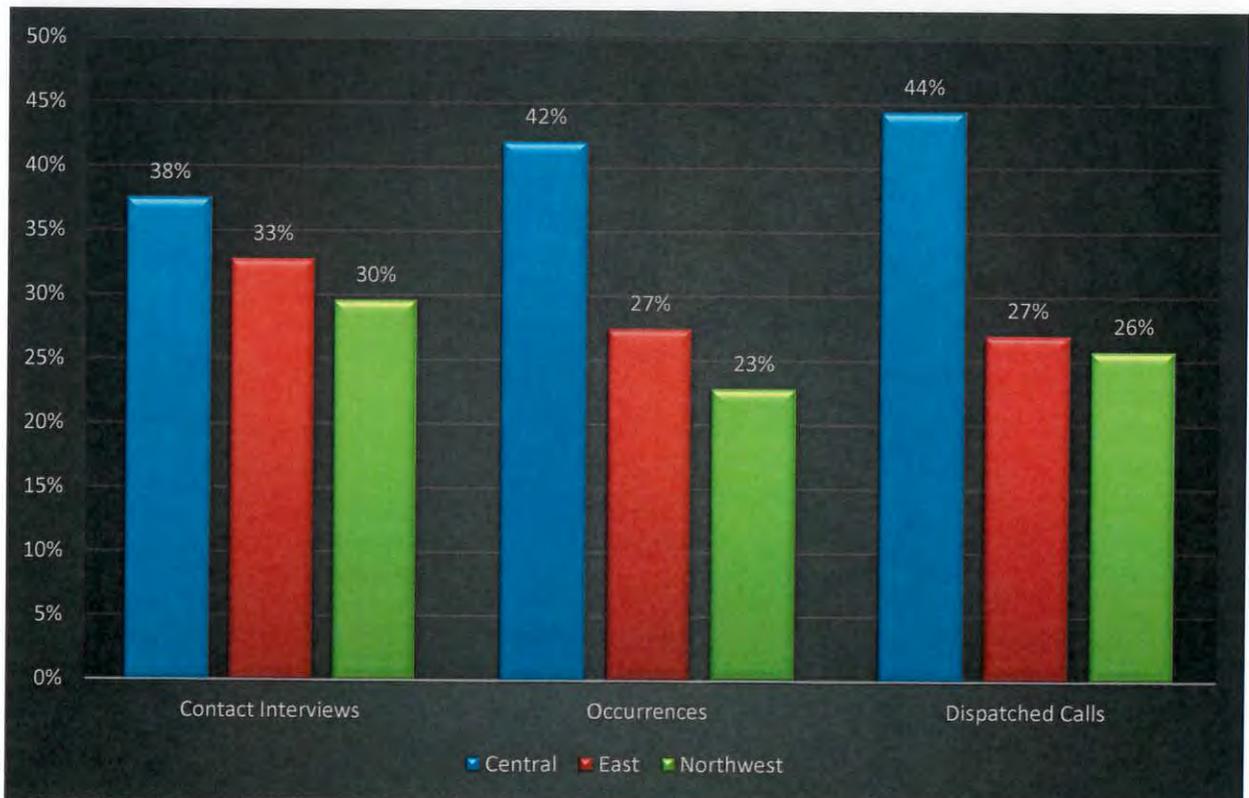


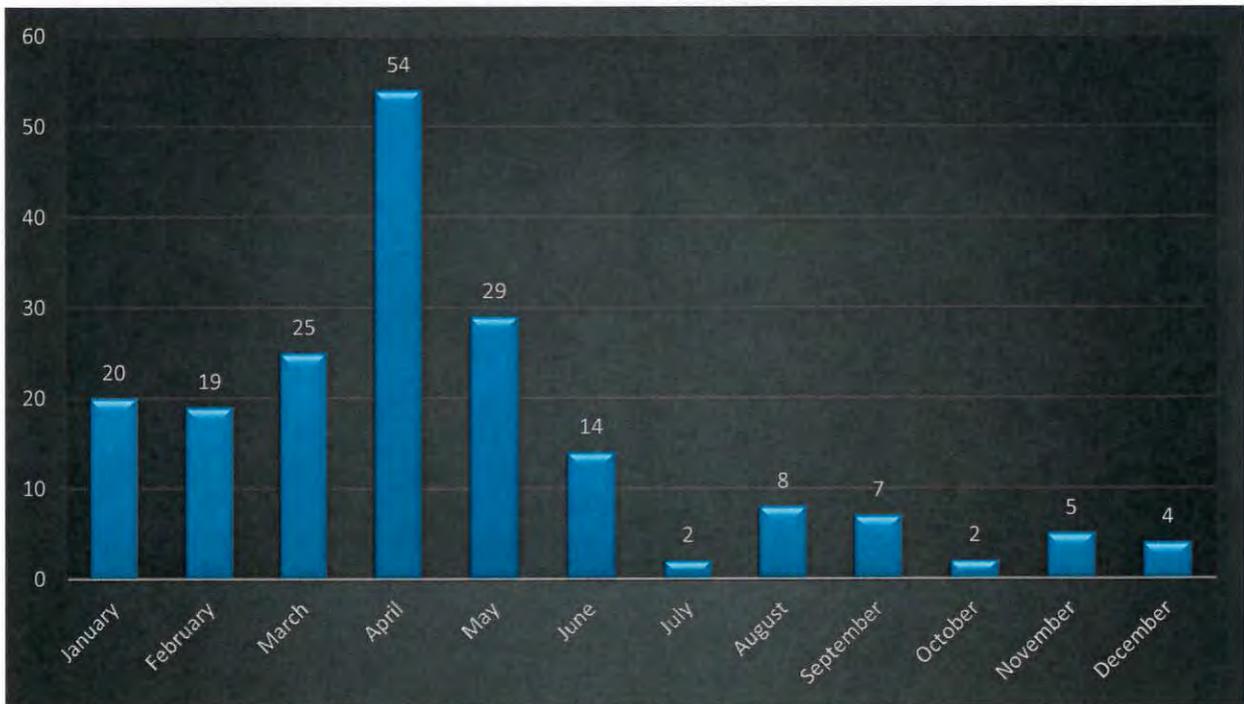
Figure 3: Percentages of Contact Interviews, Occurrences and Dispatched Calls for Service. Central Division had a higher proportion of contact interviews, occurrences and dispatched calls for service, however, the distribution of contact interviews among the divisions are closer than the occurrences or dispatched calls.

Temporal Distribution

Only 111 of the 189 confirmed contact interviews (59%) had an interview time recorded. The following tables detail the times in which contact interviews occurred:

**Table 3: Contact Interviews by Time Period, 2021**

Time Period	Contact Interviews	% of Total
00:00-05:59	49	44%
06:00-11:59	15	14%
12:00-17:59	19	17%
18:00-23:59	28	25%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 4: Contact Interviews by Month, Saskatoon, 2021**

An analysis of month-by-month totals since the new policy was implemented in March 2019 indicated an initial quick drop in the number of contact interviews. Once SPS members received training and support on the new policy and process for reporting, the number of contact interviews increased slightly. In 2020, there were 239 contact interviews and in 2021, there were 189 contact interviews.

Examining data prior to March 2019 would have limited value, as no training or policy existed to guide approved collection.

