



# SASKATOON POLICE SERVICE

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

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

**DATE:** 2023 May 05

**SUBJECT:** Contact Interview Policy & Audit- 2022

**FILE #:** 2,001-1

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## **ISSUE:**

This audit report summarizes compliance with the Saskatoon Police Service's policy on contact interviews for 2022.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

This report be received as information.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**

This initiative assists the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) in meeting its goals to;

- Ensure accessibility and enhance communication with the public to maintain transparency and public trust, and
- Enrich the relationships between the SPS and the many diverse communities it serves, as stated in the Strategic and Business Plans.

## **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, 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:**

Contact interviews are defined as a contact with the public that has been initiated by a member of the SPS for the purpose of obtaining information. During a contact interview the purpose of obtaining the information is not related to a specific incident or offence and must be more than general information common to the community.

### **Contact Interview Authorization**

SPS Policy provides three authorized reasons for initiating a contact interview.

1. The lack of any apparent reason for the person to be in a particular area.
2. The person’s actions, behavior or demeanor raise a concern regarding his/her purpose or safety.
3. The person appears lost, confused, frightened or in need of assistance.

### **Contact Interview Prohibition**

SPS Policy prohibits the initiation of a contact interview solely based on a person’s presence in an area known to experience high levels of criminal activity and/or victimization. Contact interviews may not be conducted on a random or arbitrary basis.

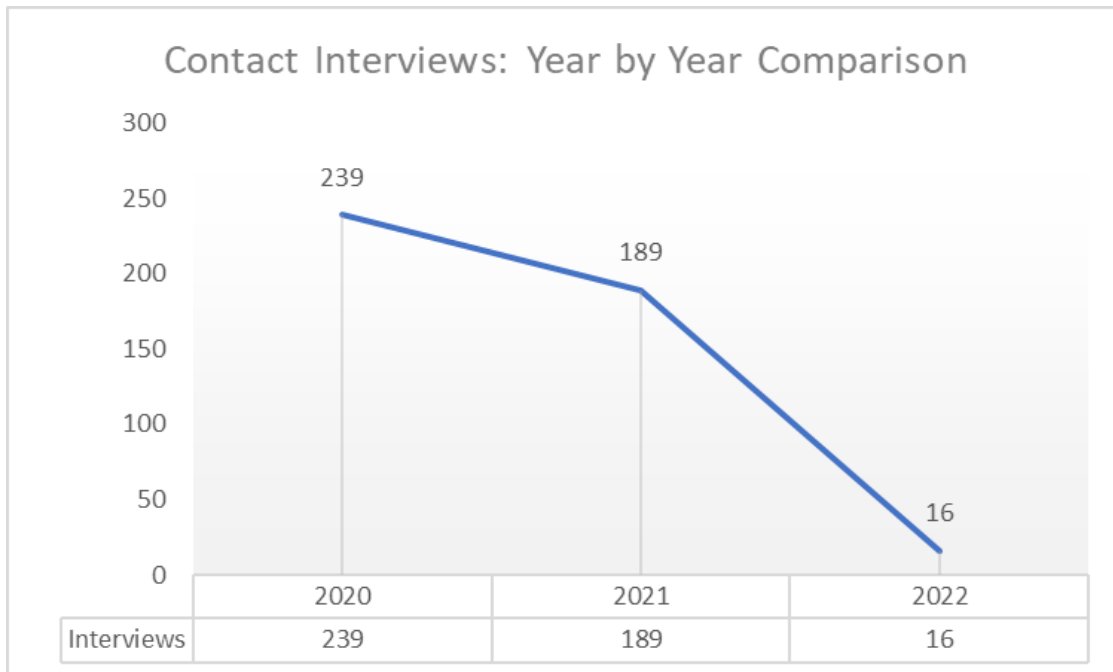
Contact interviews may only be conducted in a manner that respects and protects the rights of the public as defined by Canadian and Provincial human rights legislation. These include but are not limited to a person’s race, colour, religion, gender, gender identity, physical disability, mental disability or socio-economic status.

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, and the information gathered.

**Statistical Review / 2022 Submitted Contact Interviews**

Total Contact Interview Submissions	
59	Reports Submitted as Contact Interviews
16	Reports Verified to be Contact Interviews
43	Reports Not Deemed to be Contact Interviews

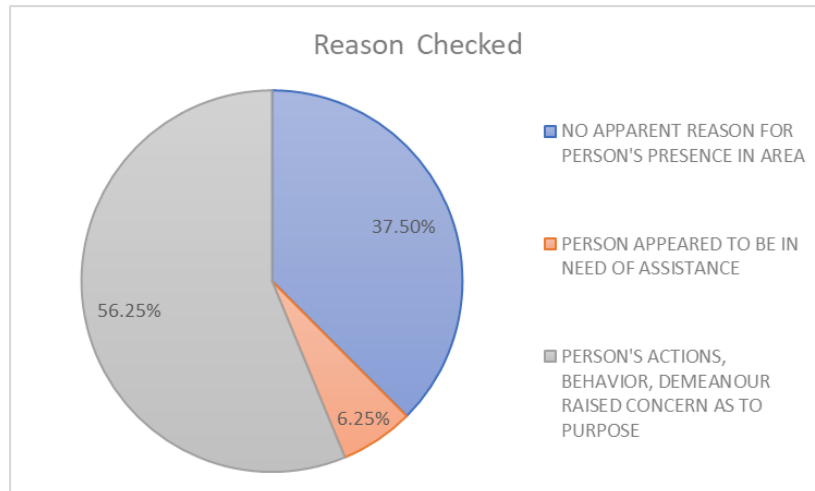
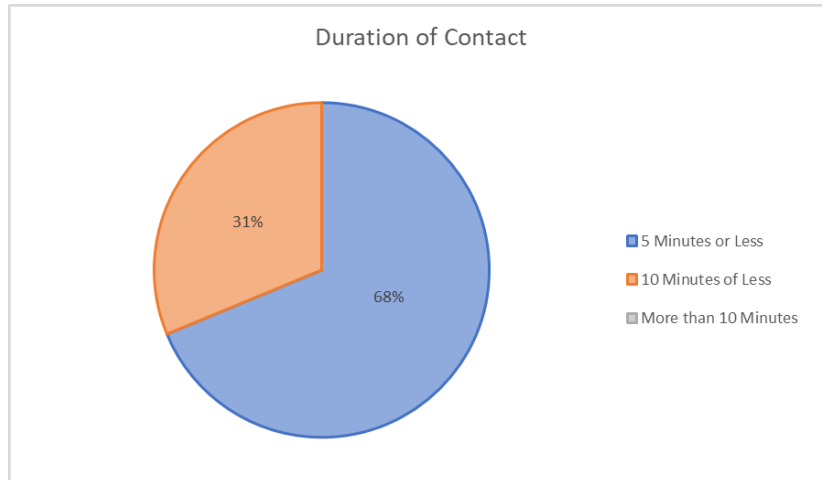
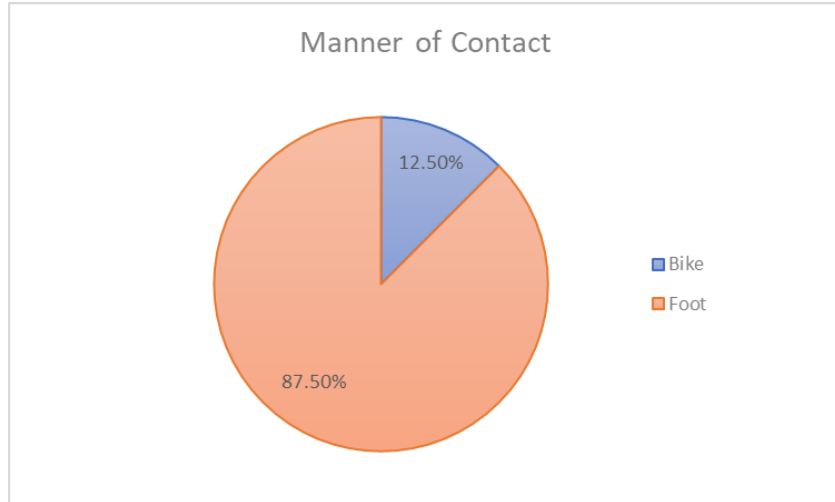
Reports Not Deemed to be Contact Interview	
4	No Contact Made with Subject
7	Clerical error
6	Active Investigation or Call Response
26	Statutory Authority to Contact the Subject



**Key Findings:**

- In 2022, members of the SPS conducted 16 verified contact interviews. This is a significant reduction from 2021(189 contact interviews).
- Approximately 73% of submitted reports did not constitute a contact interview.
- Clerical errors accounted for 12% of the total submissions. The majority of these errors were attributed to duplicate entries.
- Approximately 44% of submitted reports, the contact was initiated under a statutory authority, including but not limited to the Traffic Safety Act, Saskatoon Bylaw, and/or Criminal Code.
- Approximately 10% of submitted reports, the contact was made pursuant to a call from the public, or an active investigation, in which the reporting officer was involved.
- Approximately 7% of submitted reports there was no contact made with a person.

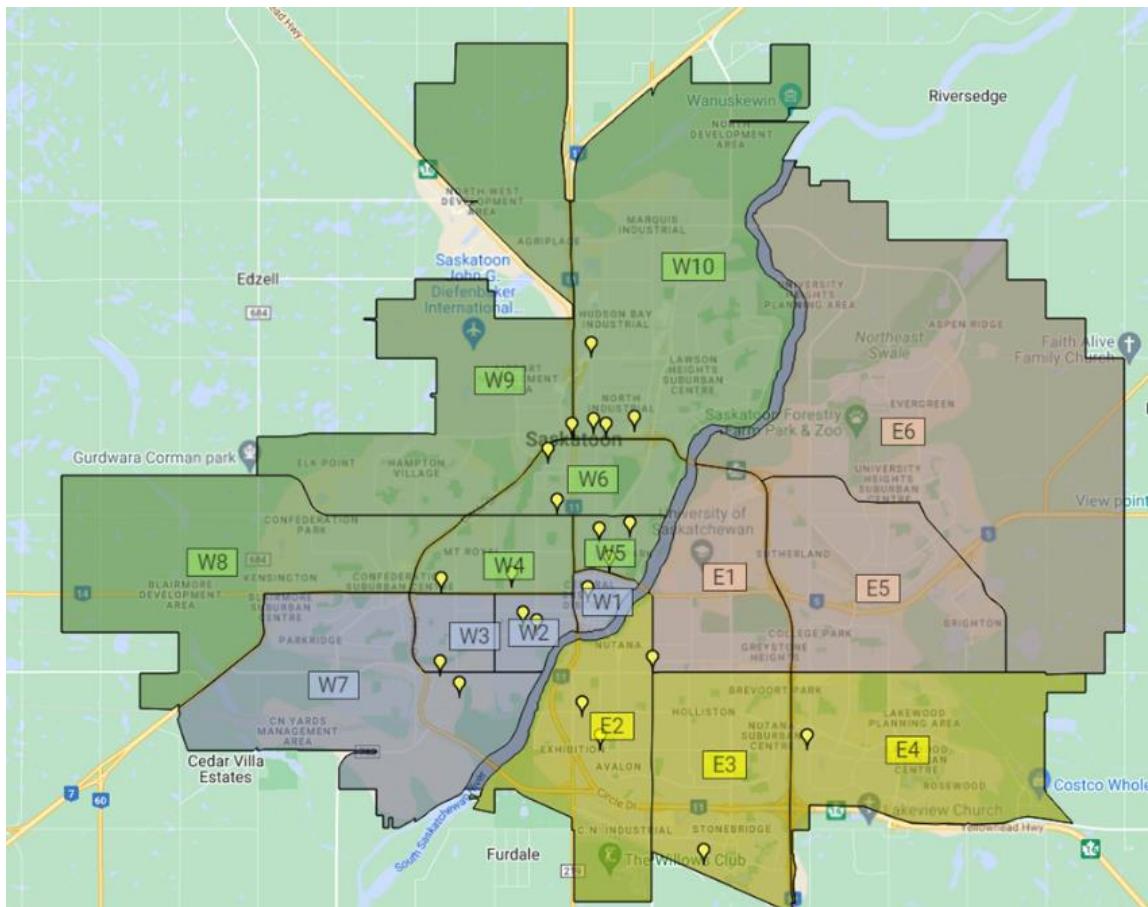
**Manner of Contact**

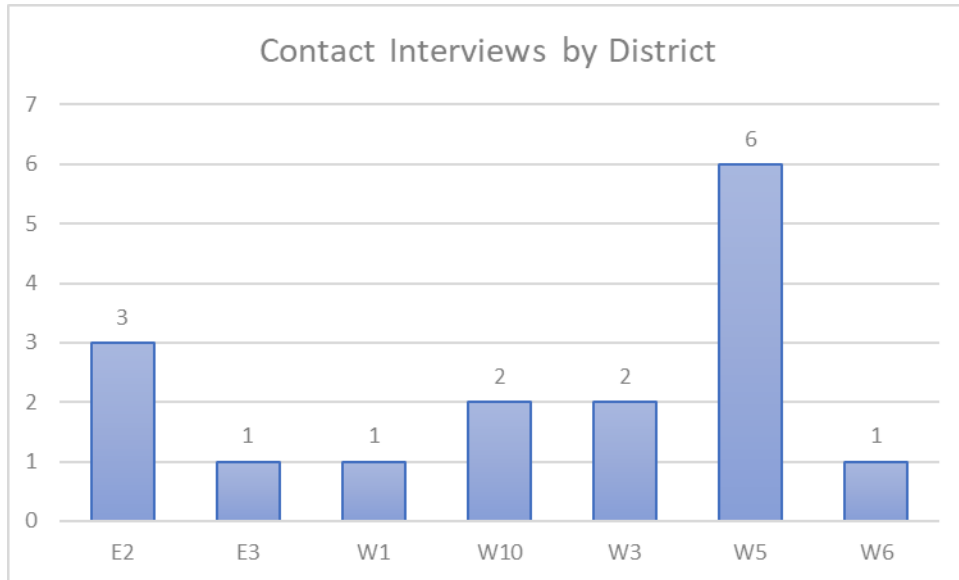


**Key Findings:**

- In the majority of contact interviews, the manner of contact consists of officer(s) speaking with a single individual, on foot and that the duration of this contact is less than 5 minutes.
- Approximately 56% of contact interviews were initiated as a result of a person’s actions, behavior that raised the concern of the officer.
- Approximately 38 % of contact interviews were initiated as a result of no apparent reason for a person’s presence in an area.
- Approximately 6.25% of contact interviews were initiated as a result of an officer’s concern as the person appeared to need assistance.

**Geographic Distribution**

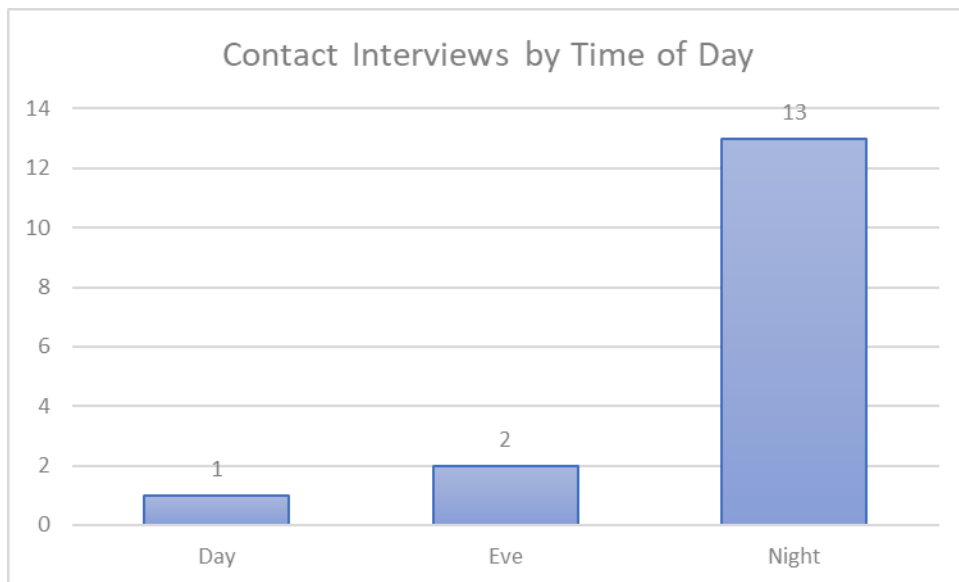




**Key Findings:**

- Approximately 38% of contact interviews were conducted in District W5 which is comprised of City Park and Central Industrial neighborhoods.
- Approximately 19% of contact interviews were conducted in District E2 which is comprised Exhibition, Avalon and CN Industrial.
- Approximately 31% of contact interviews were conducted in industrial neighborhoods with low residential populations.

**Temporal Distribution**





**Key Findings:**

- For the purpose of this report the time of day that contact interviews occur was compared against three distinct time frames.
  - **Daytime** (between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm) when a large percentage of the population are waking up, leaving their residence and returning home.
  - **Evening** (between 5:00 pm and 11:00 pm).
  - **Late Night** (between 11:00 pm and 8:00 am) when the majority of the population is sleeping.
- The majority (81%) of all contact interviews took place in the late night between the hours of 11:00 pm and 8:00 am.
- March and October were found to be peak months for contact interviews.

**Bias Assessment & Policy Audit Process**

Each contact interview submitted from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022 was reviewed to ensure the submission constituted a contact interview. As previously noted, 43 submissions were deemed to not constitute a contact interview due to clerical errors, instances where officers had statutory authority to have contact or that the officer’s involvement was a result of a call from the public, or were engaged in an active investigation.

Those submissions verified as contact interviews were further reviewed to ensure the reports were compliant with SPS Policy and Procedure and the interaction were consistent with the three types of approved contacts and that details were provided to support those contacts.

**Key Findings:**

- One instance was noted where insufficient information on the reason for the contact was provided.

- One instance contact appeared to be initiated as a result of the previous history of person involved in criminal activity.
- None of the contact interviews were conducted on prohibited grounds.

**Bias Assessment**

Contact Interviews were reviewed to ensure compliance relating to any apparent explicit or implicit bias, exclusive language or offensive terms. None of the Contact Interviews were conducted on prohibited grounds.

**CONCLUSION:**

Saskatoon police officers remain active in conducting contact interviews and compliance to policy remains high. However, the total numbers of contact interviews being conducted has continued to decline following the implementation of current policy.

Through the review process we continue to find inconsistency relating to officers submitting contact interviews when they have statutory authority, or are involved in an active investigation. This inconsistency can be attributed to the complexity of the policy will be addressed in 2023 through an education component.

With the policy now firmly established, ongoing contact interview activities can be expected to continue at the new moderate levels but with very high policy compliance.

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