



SASKATOON POLICE SERVICE

TO: Shirley Greyeyes, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Cameron McBride
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2025 April 02

SUBJECT: Contact Interview Policy and Audit- 2024

FILE #: 2,001-1

ISSUE:

This audit report summarizes compliance with the Saskatoon Police Service’s (SPS) policy on contact interviews for 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report be received as information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

This report aligns with the SPS’ 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, specifically on its stated goals regarding:

- Crime & Safety, by maintaining core policing operations and addressing community concerns that affect public safety, and
- Communication, by ensuring accessibility and enhancing communications with the public, utilizing communication to maintain transparency and public trust.

BACKGROUND:

In late 2018, the Saskatchewan Police Commission disseminated new provincial policy regarding contact interviews accompanied by a training video from the Saskatchewan Police College; both were presented to SPS members in November and December 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. Further training (including a discussion of provincial legislation, definitions, prohibitions and authorizations) was delivered in-service to Patrol personnel in October of 2023.

Since early 2020, annual audits of contact interviews are conducted with results 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 not related to a specific incident or offence. For an interaction to meet the definition of a contact interview, the information sought must be more generic and common to the community rather than specific to an investigation.

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; rather, they must be conducted in a manner that respects and protects the public’s rights as defined by federal and provincial human rights legislation. A contact interview is considered prohibited if conducted solely on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, or national origin; colour; religion; age; gender, gender identity or sexual orientation; physical or intellectual disability or impairment; mental disorder; socio-economic circumstances; medical condition; any personal characteristics similar to those already listed, or any other grounds of discrimination prohibited by law.

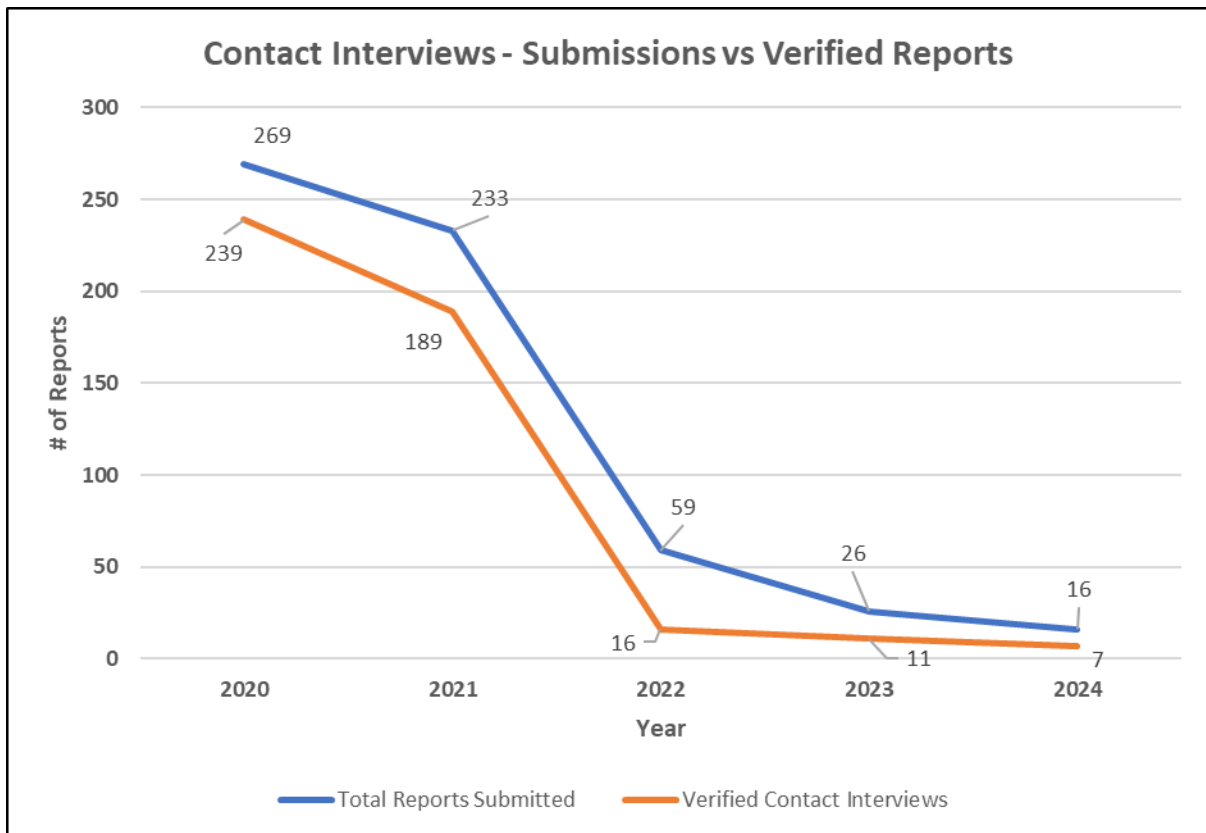
SPS Policy includes guidelines of how members should conduct contact interviews, emphasizing their voluntariness and need for legislative compliance, and describes contact interviews as “a valuable tool that can effectively prevent and solve crime and enhance community safety”. Members of the public are not obliged to participate in a contact interview and may withdraw at any point without consequence. Officer demeanor and communication style must convey professionalism and impartiality, be devoid of intimidation, and the contact interview must be reported to the SPS police database.

Statistical Review / 2024 Submitted Contact Interviews

Overall Report Submissions

Total Contact Interview Submissions		
7	Submitted Reports Verified As Contact Interviews	44%
9	Submitted Reports Deemed As Not Contact Interviews	56%
16	Total Contact Interview Reports Submitted	100%

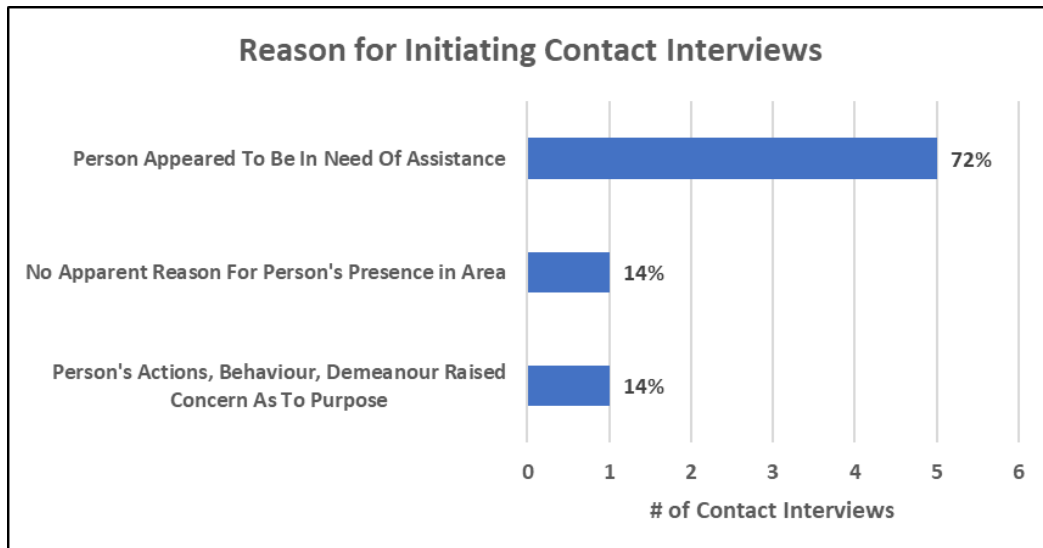
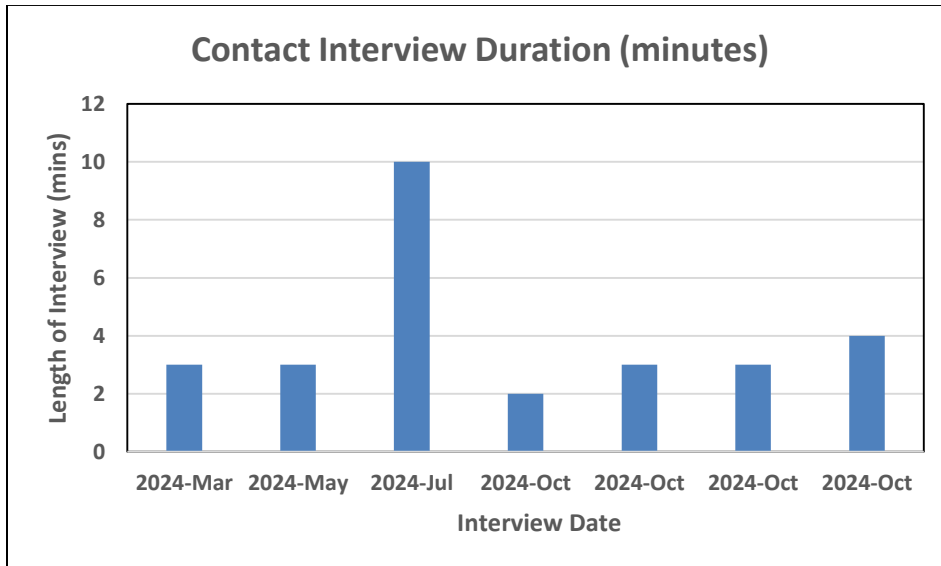
Reasons re: Submitted Reports Deemed As Not Contact Interviews		
1	Statutory Authority to Contact the Subject	11%
1	No Contact Made with Subject	11%
7	Contact Relates To An Active Investigation or Call Response	78%
9	Total Reports Deemed As Not Contact Interviews	100%



Key Findings:

- The SPS saw a sharp reduction in contact interviews in 2022, both in total reports submitted and contact interviews verified;
- Since 2022, increasingly minimal use of contact interviews by SPS personnel;
- Contact interview verifications closely track overall reports submitted (no significant deviation in 2024 indicating disparity between submissions and verifications that would suggest wide-ranging misunderstanding of policy by SPS personnel);
- In 2024, the majority of submitted reports (7 of 9 determinations) deemed to not be contact interviews were due to members’ involvement in investigative activity;
- During the entire 5-year period, no submitted reports were conducted on prohibited grounds.

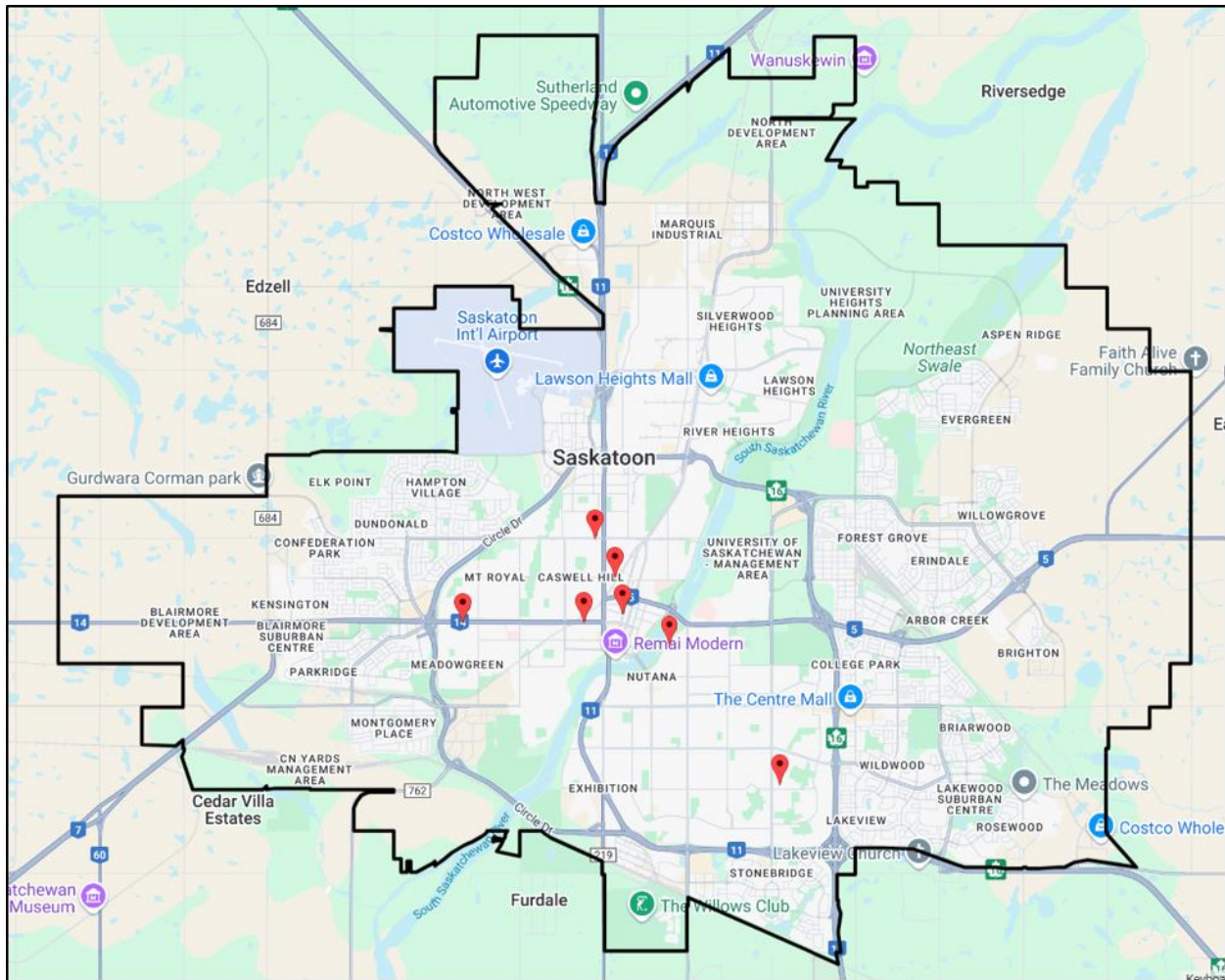
Details of Contact Interviews



Key Findings:

- With one exception, each contact interview was very brief, lasting four minutes or less:
 - The single extended contact interview in July involved a person who appeared, on initial observation, to require medical assistance. Ultimately, the person was found not to require assistance but the involved officers required several minutes to verify the person’s safe medical status and identity before departing.
- The majority of contact interviews were initiated out of concern for a person’s safety and well-being.

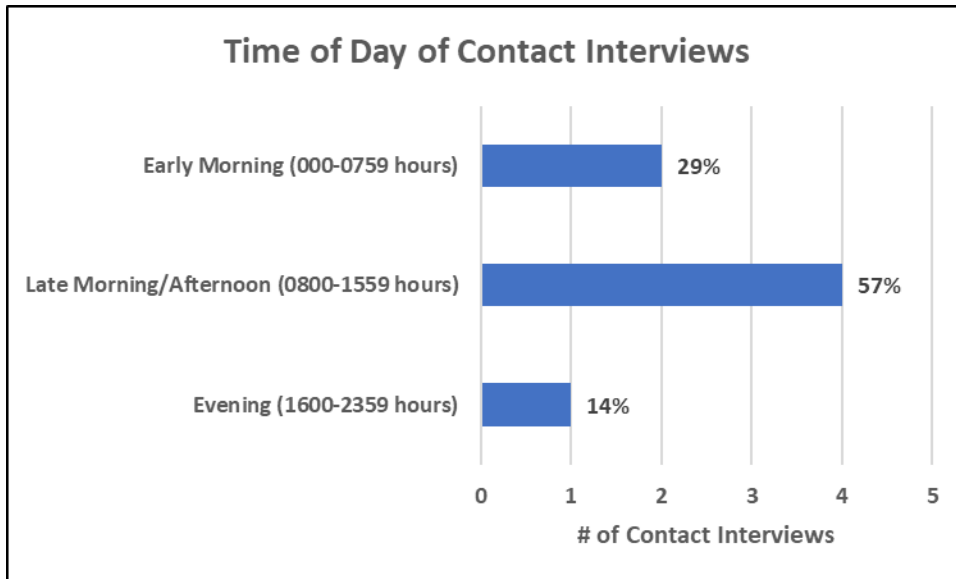
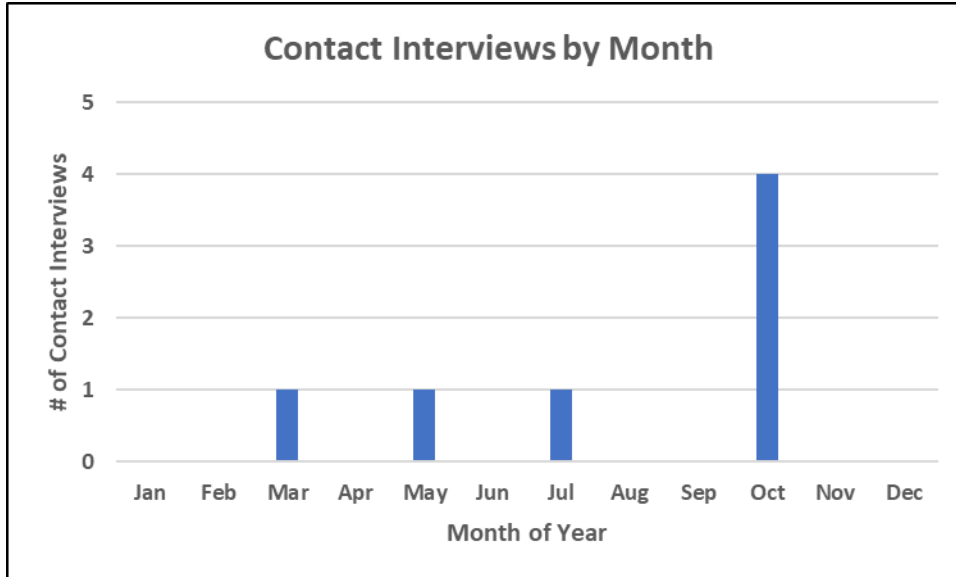
Geographic Distribution



Key Findings:

- Contact interviews were distributed over varying neighborhoods and patrol districts;
- No individual neighborhood saw more than one contact interview conducted in 2024.

Temporal Distribution



Key Findings:

- While over half the contact interviews occurred in the month of October, the small number of total contact interviews (7) amplifies the otherwise minor statistical differences;
- Two of the four contact interviews conducted in October were due to the person’s apparent need for assistance; the remaining two were divided between the remaining valid causes for initiation;
- The majority of contact interviews (57%) occurred during daytime hours.

Policy Audit Process

Each contact interview submitted between January 1 and December 31, 2024, was reviewed to determine its validity as a contact interview. The results were tabulated to provide the data on the above charts and tables, recording the date, time, duration and location attached to each report and then determining validity with notations indicating the reason why a submitted report did not meet the threshold for being a contact interview.

After reviewing the submitted reports for compliance with SPS Policy, all reports were queried to determine if the submitting member was assigned a body-worn camera at the time. Of the 16 initially-submitted reports, two were submitted by a member equipped with a body-worn camera. Both body-worn camera recordings were reviewed to further ensure compliance with policy. (In both cases, the recordings confirmed the audit determination that the submitted report was not a contact interview but, rather, an investigative action by the officer or an interaction authorized by statute).

Bias Assessment

The contact interview audit for 2024 continues the trend since policy implementation and training adoption whereby no contact interview reports were submitted on prohibited grounds. None of the submitted reports, and none of the body-worn camera recordings, indicate explicit or implicit bias, exclusive language, offensive terminology, or otherwise indicate the initiation of a contact interview for a reason prohibited by SPS policy or human rights legislation.

CONCLUSION:

Policy compliance by SPS members regarding contact interviews remains very high, with members submitting no reports of contact interviews on prohibited grounds. All reports deemed not to be contact interviews were determined to be legitimate interactions based on statutory authority, investigative activity or by the involved person initiating contact with police. The overall number of contact interviews conducted has diminished to near-zero submissions since policy implementation, with the declining trend continuing in 2024.

Written by: Nolan Berg, Inspector, Patrol
Reviewed by: Tonya Gresty, Superintendent, Patrol Bureau
Darren Pringle, Deputy Chief, Operations
Approved and Submitted by: Cameron McBride, Chief of Police