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BUILDING A **SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA**

Guidelines for a Community Consultative Group



Aboriginal Policing Directorate

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Cat. No.: PS4-177/2013E-PDF

ISBN: 978-1-100-21996-7

Printed in Canada

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Why Read these Guidelines?

These guidelines have been designed to help volunteers from First Nation and Inuit communities participate in and contribute to the delivery of dedicated and culturally responsive police services in communities across Canada. The information in this booklet will help you to establish a Community Consultative Group (CCG) so that your community can play a key role in advocating for effective police services.

By actively participating as a member of a CCG, you can play a key role in:

- Defining the working relationship between your community and police service provider.
- Organizing and participating in regular meetings to discuss and monitor your community's policing needs.
- Undertaking yearly reporting and evaluation activities in accordance with the policing agreements in place.

Using these guidelines can help you contribute to the delivery of dedicated and culturally responsive police services in your community.

Creating a Culturally Responsive Policing Environment

Regardless of where we live and work, we all want access to police services that are focused on our safety. However, for police services to be effective, they must reflect an understanding of the community in which they are delivered. The community plays a key role in helping police officers achieve this level of awareness.

In First Nation and Inuit communities, where culture, traditions, and local practices may vary from one place to another, community members are in the best position to identify what is needed to respond to their specific policing requirements. For example, what customs are practiced where you live? What do you want your police service provider to understand about your way of life and about what matters in your community? How would their knowledge and understanding of your culture help them to provide services that effectively respond to the needs of your environment?

Community involvement is key to the success of a community's safety and security. This booklet will demonstrate how you can strengthen the relationship between your community and your police service provider, playing a vital role in obtaining the services that support the practical needs of your community.

A Quick Look at Who is Involved and the Role They Play

First Nation or Inuit Community

- Establishes a Community Consultative Group (CCG) that acts as a liaison between the **First Nation or Inuit community** and the police officer(s) assigned to work within the community. *(See) Section 1 – What is a Community Consultative Group?*
- Undertakes specific activities that are designed to ensure the community receives police services that best meet its particular needs. *(See) Section 2 – Establishing a Community Consultative Group, Roles and Responsibilities*
- Defines the working relationship that will exist between the CCG, the police service provider and the community. *(See) Section 3 – Developing the Letter of Expectation*

Police Service Detachment and Officers

- Provides dedicated policing services to the First Nation or Inuit community.
- Collaborates with the CCG and works with members of the community to build a relationship that supports a culturally sensitive approach to policing.
- Provides support to the CCG.

SECTION 1

What is a Community Consultative Group?

The CCG is made up of members of the community. Its purpose is to identify and advocate for the community's policing priorities. Among other duties, it also promotes dialogue and good communication between the police service and members of the community.

A CCG ensures that the *policing interests of your community are well represented*.

What a Community Consultative Group Can Accomplish

The advantage of the CCG is that it can play a key role in setting objectives that will benefit the community. For example, it is encouraged to:

- Identify desirable attributes for police officers who could be assigned to work in the community.
- Identify the issues, projects, or events that may be occurring in the community.
- Provide suggestions, ideas or information that will help address issues or that will support upcoming projects or events.
- Bring the community's policing priorities to the attention of the police service and work with them to resolve such concerns.
- Share issues raised by the police service with the community's leadership, should the need arise.
- Assist in developing community policing objectives, priorities, and goals, and collaborating on special projects.
- Offer advice regarding gaps in policing services or identify specific policing requirements.
- Raise issues pertaining to other problems, complaints or priorities identified by the community.
- Enhance police officers' cultural sensitivity and awareness, thus fostering greater understanding between community members and police officers.

THE PUBLIC ROLE OF THE CCG

There are often two ways that calls for service and public safety priorities come to the attention of the RCMP: 1) the calls for emergency services that go directly to the RCMP, and 2) the calls that go to the CCG instead of the RCMP. Often, community members will approach members of the CCG before calling the police in non-emergency situations. Over time, this approach may change as trust is built between the police and members of the community. Until such time, the CCG may continue to play an intermediary role between the community and the RCMP to ensure the community is safe and the RCMP are aware of the safety priorities of the community members.

A Community Consultative Group is an effective way to achieve these and other policing goals you may identify. (See) Section 2 – Establishing a Community Consultative Group

Bridging Cultures to Support Effective Policing

Consider some ways that you can help the police officers you work with to understand your culture and environment. This will allow them to deliver police services that best meet the needs of your community. For example:

- What do police officers need to know and understand about your community's culture and traditions?
- What policing priorities should they be aware of?
- Are there community or cultural events that they would benefit from attending?
- Could you introduce them to other service providers in your community to encourage a more collaborative approach to the community's policing needs? These might include health care and family support agencies, other justice-related programs or organizations, as well as business owners or other individuals.

An effective CCG supports good governance and accountability between the community and the police service.

THE COMMUNITY AND POLICE SERVICE WORKING TOGETHER

Community-based policing is centred on a shared responsibility between the police and the community, enabling the delivery of culturally sensitive and responsive police services. When various members of the community work together as partners to support police programs and services, they can powerfully influence and support initiatives to prevent crime, enforce the law, support victims, and educate members of the community regarding current policing initiatives.

Members of the CCG, along with the police service, can forge strong working relationships with local residents, business owners, and other public sector or community service agencies at all levels of government. Forging strong bonds with other service providers and members of the community can support policing objectives and cement a community's resolve to enhance the safety and security of its members.

There are a number of opportunities to build these relationships. Members of the community can be invited to attend CCG meetings; the CCG can work with various organizations to organize and/or attend community events and support police-related programs, etc. What relationships can you cultivate to support the goals of the Community Consultative Group and that of the community itself?

Governance and Accountability – What it Means

In the case of community policing, good governance (or management) relies on a collaborative approach towards achieving the safety and security objectives of the community. Both the police service and the community – represented by the CCG – are accountable (or responsible) to do their part in supporting a successful community policing program.

While the delivery of police services falls under the jurisdiction of the province, the CCG plays an important role in helping to define how those services can best support and respect the community's needs.

The CCG is entrusted with the responsibility of helping police officers understand their culture and tradition. In doing so, it offers insight into the community's policing priorities. This enables officers to provide culturally sensitive and responsive police services within each community.

When the police and the community act as partners, then their focus can be directed to resolving issues that result in a safer and more resilient community.

- ✿ To represent your community's interests, you will need to establish a Community Consultative Group. (See) *Section 2 – Establishing a Community Consultative Group*

SECTION 2

Establishing a Community Consultative Group

The process of establishing a CCG is an important first step towards supporting your community's policing priorities.

To establish a CCG, it will be necessary to:

- Create the Terms of Reference.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities assigned to CCG members.

Selecting Members

Certain details may differ from community to community; however, the following are guiding questions to help you develop your membership.

- **How many members are required?**
Generally, the minimum and maximum number of members for your Community Consultative Group (CCG) can include anywhere from three (3) to ten (10) members.
- **Who elects the Chairperson (if required)?**
A Chairperson, if required, will be appointed by the Chief and Council or elected by CCG members (generally at the first CCG meeting).
- **How are CCG members selected?**
Initial CCG members may be appointed by the Chief and Council or may be elected by the community and then approved by the Chief and Council. Once the CCG has been established, it may choose to create procedures for how it will recruit new members and whether new members must be elected, appointed, screened and/or approved for membership.
- **Who makes up CCG membership?**
Members should include Elders, men, women, and youth so that the CCG is representative of the community's interests. In some cases, a member of the police service may be appointed as a member, although he/she would never hold the position of Chairperson. A member could also include a liaison representative of the Chief and Council, although their involvement must be free of political influence.
- **What qualities should CCG members possess?**
CCG members should be community-oriented. They must also be willing and able to commit their time to attend regular meetings of the CCG.

- **What other eligibility criteria may apply?**

The community may also choose to include other criteria to identify or select members. These might include being a respected and long-term member of the community, or having some experience in matters related to justice and policing. While these may not be mandatory requirements that would be applicable in all cases, it may be beneficial for some members to have these qualifications.

- **How long do members serve on the CCG?**

There is no specific time limit for serving on the Community Consultative Group. The Chief and Council will likely determine the term for members. It may be that members of a smaller community serve a longer term than those from a more populated area. This could also depend on the resources available and the interest expressed by other members of the community who may wish to participate.

Creating the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (TOR) describe how the CCG will operate. They are developed by its members in consultation with the Chief and Council. The Terms of Reference document is used to:

- **Outline CCG membership criteria.**

This includes identifying the minimum and maximum number of required members, the designated Chairperson and Secretary (if applicable), and the required attendance – or quorum – for a CCG meeting. It will also include the length of time a member can serve, eligibility criteria, procedures for recruiting, appointing and approving new members, and how to handle resignations or dismissals.

- **Define the mandate of the CCG.**

This involves identifying the goals of the CCG, as well as its approach for managing its meetings, identifying the topics that it will address, outlining methods that will be used to orient police officers to the community, reporting on policing results and achievements, deciding how the CCG will review and respond to complaints and/or disputes, identifying events or special projects that will support CCG objectives, and creating a process for reviewing, amending and approving its Terms of Reference.

- **Assign responsibilities for supporting the CCG.**

This could include assigning individual or collective responsibility for coordinating meeting requirements, preparing and distributing meeting minutes, conducting other reporting or monitoring activities, and/or managing recordkeeping and other administrative tasks.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities assigned to each CCG allow you to make a powerful contribution towards the delivery of dedicated and culturally responsive police services in your community, as outlined below.

- **Identify your community’s policing priorities and work with the assigned police officers to seek solutions that will address those issues.**

Consider the particular problems that are being experienced in your community. Has there been an increase in family violence or substance abuse? Are gangs an issue in your community? The CCG will play an important role in helping the police officer(s) understand your particular concerns so he/she/they can be better prepared to support your needs.

- **Work with police officers, along with the Chief and Band Council, to develop your community’s policing objectives and priorities, and outline how you will achieve those goals.**

This is where you create your plan, or strategy, for addressing the specific issues you have identified. For example, how will you introduce the police officer(s) to the community? What events or special projects can help you to tackle some of the issues being experienced? Will you organize community- or police-sponsored events, such as pot-luck dinners, workshops or other get-togethers? The CCG is in the best position to know what type of activities will support the community’s ongoing policing objectives.

(See) Section 3 – Developing the Letter of Expectation

- **Hold regular meetings to discuss policing requirements, make decisions that will affect the community, and keep the lines of communication open between the community and the police officer.**

Generally, the minimum number of CCG members will need to attend meetings and, in most cases, the police officer will be there as well. These meetings can provide a model for maintaining good relationships within the community and with the police service. It is important to keep records (or minutes) of these meetings. *(See) Section 4 – Managing and Attending Regular CCG Meetings*

- **Manage other requirements in compliance with the terms and conditions of the FNPP Agreement.**

This includes developing a Letter of Expectation that will help lay out policing priorities and fulfilling other reporting requirements. *(See) Section 3 – Developing the Letter of Expectation*

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR MEETINGS AND OPEN DIALOGUE

Monthly meetings between the Chief-in-Council, RCMP Detachment Commander and CCG members serve to keep the lines of communication open and allow the parties to discuss any issues that may arise between the police and the community. While there is a specific process for police conduct complaints, issues relating to service levels are usually resolved through dialogue between the chair of the CCG and the Detachment Commander.

- * To support their ability to fulfill these responsibilities and achieve identified community policing objectives, the Community Consultative Group (CCG) and the police officer next undertake three key tasks:

- 1) Define working relationships. *(See) Section 3 – Developing the Letter of Expectation*
- 2) Create a forum for dialogue. *(See) Section 4 – Managing and Attending Regular CCG Meetings*
- 3) Report on achievements.

SECTION 3

Developing the Letter of Expectation (LOE)

The next critical step is to create a Letter of Expectation (LOE). This allows you to put down, in writing, your expectations regarding the types of programming you will receive and the type of working relationship you will experience with the police officer assigned to your community.

The LOE is something you will create in collaboration with the police service provider. It will become an evolving document that reflects your community's particular priorities. As situations change or progress, it can be adapted to suit those needs. Consider, below, what the LOE can help you to accomplish. This will assist you in developing a good LOE.

- **Clarify community-police relationships.**

As a first step, the LOE acknowledges the importance of a positive working relationship between the community and the police service. Therefore, make this clear at the beginning of the LOE and identify the name of the community and the police detachment in order to recognize the parties that will be signing the LOE.

- **Outline the community's law enforcement priorities, as well as their relationship to traditional "laws" or practices for handling disputes.**

The LOE can identify the best way to approach effective policing by orienting the police officer to the community's culture and traditions, as well as the services available to help achieve policing objectives. Consider the priorities, programs and services that will enable the officer to better understand your community's actual needs and adapt a culturally sensitive approach to policing in the community.

- **Identify the agreed-upon commitments to promote and implement effective crime prevention strategies.**

Depending on the policing priorities for your community, there are a number of ways that you can work together to achieve those goals. For example:

- Include key items on the agenda for meetings of the CCG.
- Create a work plan that prioritizes your community's crime prevention initiatives including, for example: drug and alcohol awareness and prevention, Internet safety, suicide prevention, family violence initiatives. The work plan can list and schedule the various events or activities that will support the community's policing initiatives.
- Document decisions and activities that support your community's policing objectives.
- Establish open and transparent relationships with community leaders.

There may be other situations you would like to include in the LOE. For example, the policing agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of the police service. You may wish to re-iterate certain requirements, even if they are just for emphasis or confirmation, in the LOE. It all depends on the circumstances within your community.

- **Describe how police officers can actively participate in or be involved in the community.**

Consider ways that you can support the interaction of police officers with your community.

For example:

- Language and cultural sensitivity training.
- Involvement with school programs.
- Community, youth and sports programs.
- Career fairs in conjunction with crime prevention initiatives.
- Liaison with other police detachments, if applicable.
- Networking with related organizations or groups in the community.

The roles and responsibilities of police officers fully support their interaction within the community.

- **Specify the expected frequency and nature of meetings between the police officer and the CCG.**

Recording how often the CCG should meet to support the ongoing policing objectives of the community in the Letter of Expectation (LOE) will ensure that all parties are aware of meetings and their responsibility to attend. The LOE can also include the need to:

- Create and submit regular reports to the Chief and Council.
- Make commitments to inform the community's leadership about incidents that may attract media attention.
- Organize and attend additional meetings with the Chief and Council regarding any law enforcement, policing or social issues that require special attention.
- Identify when other meetings may be needed, for example, between the Detachment Commander and the Chief and Council.

The success of the CCG depends on regular and effective communication and decision-making processes. CCG meetings facilitate and promote that process.

- **Show how policing efforts are linked to community-based planning strategies.**

Effective community policing is based on understanding the community's objectives, as a whole, and keeping the lines of communication open among the police service, the CCG, the community, and its leadership. This can be accomplished, for example, by:

- Networking with other community-based agencies and sharing information or resources to support common goals.
- Ensuring that strategic policing plans integrate related community objectives so that everyone is working together to achieve effective policing objectives.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICALITY AND COLLABORATION

In addressing public safety concerns early intervention and breaking problems down into manageable pieces are key to making a difference. It is important for the CCG to be practical and work collaboratively with the police and the resources available in your community. It's important to be honest and sincere in building a plan together.

Each year, the CCG and the police service should meet to review the past year's accomplishments and objectives as set out in the Letter of Expectation. This also provides an opportunity to amend the LOE and/or to establish new objectives for the coming year.

While the LOE sets the tone for the working relationship that will exist between the community and the police service, this relationship must be developed and sustained. This is accomplished by regularly meeting together to discuss ongoing policing objectives and ensuring that the Letter of Expectation continues to reflect the community's requirements. (See) *Section 4 – Managing and Attending Regular CCG Meetings*

BALANCING ENFORCEMENT WITH PREVENTION

The Letter of Expectation (LOE) between the RCMP and the CCG is crucial for positive collaboration between the police and residents. The LOE plays two equally important roles. First, it is used as a way to review the enforcement priorities in the community, and second, it provides opportunities to work pro-actively for early intervention and to build trust between the RCMP and community members. To promote consistency and true collaboration, copies of the LOE are provided to everyone involved – the Chief-in-Council, the CCG, the RCMP detachment commander and federal and provincial officials.

SECTION 4

Managing and Attending Regular CCG Meetings

Meetings of the CCG are designed to achieve the following key objectives of the policing agreement:

- Provide a forum for identifying and discussing community policing needs.
- Make decisions about policing that will affect the community.
- Keep the lines of communication open between the community and the police service.
- Assess and plan for the success of identified policing priorities and strategies.
- Manage the working relationship between the community, its leadership and the police service.

The following guidelines can help you to conduct successful meetings.

- **Prepare the Agenda**

Consider the topics that need to be addressed. Check the Terms of Reference and Letter of Expectation to help you, if needed. Also, current policing-related issues being experienced in the community will help you to identify the topics that may need to be added to the agenda. Some topics that may form a regular part of your agenda could include:

- Crime prevention activities and strategies.
- Review of culturally responsive policing requirements.
- Policing priorities.
- Upcoming community events that will support policing initiatives.

It may be helpful to work with the police officer or request his/her assistance in preparing the agenda.

- **Identify Who will Attend the Meeting**

Develop a list of attendees. In most cases, this will include the Chairperson (if applicable), CCG members and the police officer(s). You may also choose to invite outside parties, based on your agenda. These might include other members of the community such as representatives from community service agencies or the Chief or members of the Band Council. It could also include provincial and/or federal representatives or other policing representatives.

- **Coordinate Meeting Requirements**

The Chairperson (if one has been appointed) is generally responsible for overseeing meeting requirements. He/she could also delegate this responsibility to another CCG member. If a Chairperson has not yet been selected, the Chief and Council will assign responsibility for coordinating meetings. There will be a need to set the date, time and location of the meeting. It will also be necessary to contact participants or send them an invitation, along with the agenda.

- **Summarize Meeting Results**

It is recommended that minutes of the meeting be recorded including the decisions that were made, and who will be responsible for carrying out those decisions and conducting any follow-up activities. This information, along with the notice of the next meeting, should be distributed to all CCG members following the meeting (based on an agreed-upon timeline). These records should be maintained for recordkeeping and audit purposes.

- ✿ The work accomplished through these meetings can have a very positive impact on the community's policing services. CCG meetings also provide an opportunity to build a strong relationship with the police officer(s) assigned to your community.

Acronyms and Definitions

CCG Community Consultative Group

LOE Letter of Expectation

TOR Terms of Reference

Community Consultative Group (CCG) A group, made up of members selected from the community, that ensures the policing interests of the community are well represented. Its role is to identify and advocate for the community's policing priorities. Among other duties, it promotes dialogue and good communication between the police service and the community.

Letter of Expectation (LOE) Documents expectations regarding the types of programming that will be received and the type of working relationship the community expects to have with the police officer assigned to the community. It is created in collaboration with the police service provider and reflects the community's policing priorities. It can be adapted to suit changing or evolving needs.

Terms of Reference (TOR) A document that describes how the Community Consultative Group (CCG) will operate. It is developed by its members in consultation with the Chief and Council. It outlines such details as the mandate of the CCG and membership criteria, as well as roles and responsibilities of the members of the CCG.

