



Hamilton Police Service Board Critical Points Policy P-029

Effective date: November 27, 2025

Reviewed:

Amended:

Applicable Legislation

Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, S.O. 2019, c.1, Sched.1 (the Act)

s.37(1)(a) and (f), and 38(1)(a) and (b)

Policy Statement

Information sharing between the Hamilton Police Service (Service) and the Hamilton Police Service Board (Board) is foundational to the Board's effective execution of its oversight responsibilities. In particular, information sharing is crucial during times of elevated organizational risk, such as when facing large-scale events.

This policy defines such critical points, and sets out a process to guide the Chief of Police and the Board in identifying them and ensuring the flow of relevant information from the Service to the Board, so the Board can most effectively carry out its oversight and governance role, including creating and amending Board policies, setting priorities, asking questions, and providing non-binding advice in relation to operational matters.

The Board acknowledges there are limits to the direction the Board may give to the Chief of Police, and the importance of respecting those limits. The Board is prohibited by law from directing the Chief of Police with respect to specific investigations, or the conduct of specific operations; therefore, while the Board may set objectives and priorities for the policing of a critical point, the Chief of Police has the authority to determine the methods by which the objective, priority, or outcome will be achieved.

This Policy will not prevent or restrict the Service from exercising its policing powers and authorities, in emergent circumstances, to protect community safety.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Define the term critical point and provide clear and consistent assessment criteria for use in identifying critical points as they arise;
- Describe the type of information the Board requires from the Chief in order to assess potential critical points;
- Describe the information sharing process between the Board and the Service when a critical point has been identified/confirmed;
- Strengthen oversight of the Service, consistent with the Board's legislative responsibilities;
- Ensure accountability of the Service to the Board; and
- Ensure the Chief of Police can discharge their duties according to law.

Policy Application

Definitions

1. Critical Point: A matter of strategic significance that is time-sensitive and which rapidly elevates the Board's operational, financial, reputational or other enterprise risk, and, therefore, calls for the Board's immediate attention and/or preparedness to take action.

For example:

- a. Large scale operations or events for which advance planning and approval by the Service's Command is required;
- b. Events or operations that are likely to have a material impact on the Service's relationship with, and service to, marginalized and vulnerable communities;
- c. Events or operations that raise significant questions of public policy; or
- d. Credible external or internal complaints, including complaints regarding workplace discrimination or harassment, against individual officers and the Service, and findings by other tribunals related to discrimination, where such

complaints or findings raise significant systemic issues.

For clarity, the above examples are not exhaustive.

Reporting on Critical Points

2. The Chief of Police will inform the Chair or their designate of any situation in which the Chief of Police believes a critical point has emerged or is likely to emerge and provide the Chair, in writing, with further information regarding the critical point, including, as appropriate:
 - i. The general nature of the critical point;
 - ii. The elevated risk(s) posed by the critical point;
 - iii. Relevant operational and other information necessary for the Board to understand the details of the critical point, including an outline of the operational plan, and continuity of service plans;
 - iv. Any plans to involve other organizations, including requests to chiefs of police for temporary assistance pursuant to section 19 of the *Community Safety and Policing Act*.
 - v. An estimate of the financial impact;
 - vi. Relevant legislation and other legal requirements that may apply including the need for additional authorities; and
 - vii. Any ongoing considerations, including resources needed, or policy impacts.
3. The Chair will share the information provided by the Chief of Police with Board Members and the Executive Director, all of which will be held in the strictest of confidence.
4. The Chair, in consultation with the Board Members and the Executive Director, and in accordance with the Board's Procedural Bylaw, will determine whether there is a need to obtain additional information, create or amend Board policies, and/or provide direction to the Chief in accordance with the Board's policies, duties and responsibilities, including setting objectives and priorities, and if so, whether to call a Special Meeting of the Board, or to include the critical point as an item on the Agenda of the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting.

5. The Chief will continue to update the Board, through the Chair, on any significant developments, including once the Chief of Police determines the critical point has concluded. In consultation with the Board Members and the Executive Director, the Chair may call a Special Meeting of the Board at any time or include an item on the agenda of a regularly scheduled Board Meeting, to discuss the critical point.

Identification of Critical Points by the Board

6. When the Chair believes, or is advised by a Board Member(s) or the Executive Director they believe a planned or anticipated event may constitute a critical point, the Chair shall request the Chief of Police to consider whether, in their view, the event may meet the definition of critical point, and either report to the Board in accordance with this policy, or, alternatively, provide to the Chair reasons the event in question does not meet the definition of a critical point.

Chief's Autonomy

7. Once the Board has been given the opportunity to set objectives, ask questions, and provide non-binding advice in relation to operational matters, where applicable the Chief will maintain the autonomy to finalize and execute the plans.
8. If during the duration of a critical point, the Board concludes, in its view, the Board's objectives are not being achieved, the Board, through the Chair, will inform the Chief of Police of its conclusion. The Chief will respond by informing the Board and Executive Director on corrective measures or the operational necessity of deviating from the Board's objectives; however, the Chief of Police will remain autonomous in determining the appropriate execution of the plans in order to achieve the mission, objectives and priorities.

Training

9. The Chief will provide training to ensure all Command and Service Members

from the rank of Inspector and above are trained to recognize the circumstances that may lead to a critical point, and to inform the Chief of Police and Command when a potential critical point is identified; and

10. The Board will ensure all new Board Members receive training to understand the definition of a critical point, and effectively understand their responsibilities with regards to the consideration of critical points.

Reporting

11. Subject to operational considerations and the advice of the Chief of Police, the Board will publicly disclose, where it is possible to do so without risking the effectiveness of the operation or any other operations, the safety of Service Members or members of the public, or any other operational considerations raised by the Chief:
 - a. The nature of the operational matter related to a critical point; and
 - b. Any directions given to the Chief of Police related to a critical point.