

<b>POLICY TITLE: Legislation: Sudden &amp; Unexplained Deaths</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: LEG-006</b>
<b>DATE APPROVED: 18/03/2025</b>	
<b>DATE(s) REVIEWED:</b>	<b>DATE TO BE REVIEWED: 2027</b>
<b>DATE(s) AMENDED:</b>	
<b>LEGISLATION/GUIDELINES:</b> <i>Community Safety and Policing Act (2019);</i> <i>Ontario Regulation 395/23, Community Safety and Policing Act (2019)</i> <i>Ontario Regulation 394/23, Community Safety and Policing Act (2019)</i> <i>Ontario Regulation 87/24, Community Safety and Policing Act (2019)</i> <i>Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (2015)</i> <i>Ontario Major Case Management Manual (2015)</i>	
<b>RELATED PROCEDURES/POLICY: LEG-004: Assistance to Victims of Crime</b>	

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Thunder Bay Police Service Board (Board) is committed to ensuring that the Thunder Bay Police Service (Service) conducts thorough and professional investigations into sudden or unexplained deaths and the discovery of found human remains. The Board supports a standardized approach to these investigations to enhance public trust, ensure compliance with relevant legislation, and maintain investigative integrity.

## **PURPOSE**

This policy outlines the Boards expectations of the Service with respect to responsibilities in investigating sudden or unexplained deaths and found human remains. It is intended to ensure public safety, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency while defining investigative responsibilities and coordination requirements.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- All members of the Service involved in death investigations.
- Coordination between the Service and other agencies as necessary to ensure an effective response.
- The establishment and implementation of procedures governing death investigations.

## **POLICY**

### **a) Responsibilities**

The Chief will:

- Ensure the Service conducts thorough investigations into sudden or unexplained deaths and found human remains within its jurisdiction, treating all cases as suspicious until proven otherwise.
- Establish and maintain investigative procedures to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, best practices, and continuous improvement of investigative capabilities.
- Ensure there is a visible police presence in cases requiring investigation notwithstanding any covert operations.
- Ensure operational readiness through training, investigative protocols, and adherence to legislative standards.
- Collaborate with other agencies as required to ensure coordinated responses to incidents.
- Ensure that victims' families and individuals affected by investigations are provided with timely access to victim services and support resources as per policy LEG-004: Assistance to Victims of Crime.
- Ensure procedures include ongoing communication with the families of deceased individuals throughout the investigative process, providing timely and consistent updates, along with a designated point of contact for inquiries.

#### **b) Death Investigation Procedures**

The Chief will:

- Ensure investigative thoroughness while respecting privacy and dignity.
- Utilize forensic techniques for evidence collection, preservation, and analysis.
- Provide trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practices when dealing with families and communities.
- Ensure that individuals involved in investigations have access to victim services.
- Employ principles and procedures of the Ontario Major Case Management Manual to applicable investigations.
- Ensure that the Service conducts death investigations in compliance with Ontario Regulation 395/23 under the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA)*.

#### **c) Training and Development**

The Chief will:

- Provide training in investigative techniques, forensic procedures, and cultural awareness.
- Ensure that only officers who have received and passed the required training under Ontario Regulation 87/24 under the CSPA are assigned to sudden or unexplained death investigations, with mentorship opportunities for new investigators.
- Regularly update training to align with legislative changes and best practice.

**d) Member Well-Being**

The Chief will:

- Establish procedures to support the well-being of officers involved in death investigations.
- Provide access to peer support, mental health resources, and professional counseling.

**e) Monitoring, Reporting, and Compliance**

The Chief will:

- Ensure investigative compliance with Ontario Major Case Management Manual.
- Ensures that the Service conducts death investigations in compliance with Ontario Regulation 395/23 under the CSPA.
- Ensure that only officers who have received and passed the required training under Ontario Regulation 87/24 under the CSPA are assigned to sudden or unexplained death investigations, with mentorship opportunities to support investigative development.
- Develop procedures requiring that sudden or unexplained deaths and found human remains investigations are considered suspicious until proven otherwise.
- Regularly review and update investigative procedures to reflect developments in case law, inquest recommendations, and legislative amendments.
- **Maintain a 24-hour police response for all sudden death investigations.**
- Ensure Service members act with respect for human dignity, upholding professionalism, integrity, skill, and accountability.
- Report annually to the Board on investigative efforts, trends, and emerging concerns related to sudden or unexplained deaths, in compliance with relevant legislation.

**f) Measurement Methods and Systems**

The Chief will:

- Conduct ongoing statistical analysis and qualitative reviews of all sudden death investigations.
- Evaluate compliance with investigative procedures and identify areas for improvement.

**g) Reporting**

The Chief will:

- Provide a semi-annual report to the Board that includes:
  - **Statistical and Trend Analysis:**
    - Number of sudden and unexplained deaths.
    - Breakdown of investigative outcomes (e.g. homicide, accidental death, suicide, natural death, undetermined).
    - Identification of trends or patterns (e.g. demographic, geographic, or cause-related factors).
    - Comparative data with year-over-year analysis covering a 4-year period.

- Reporting on any cases referred to external oversight agencies (e.g., SIU).
- **Public and Community Safety Considerations:**
  - Identification of community concerns raised by advocacy groups or affected individuals.
- **Oversight and Policy Compliance:**
  - Reporting on any procedural considerations stemming from identified trends.
  - Providing recommendations on officer training or resources required.
- Promptly report to the Board any exceptional circumstances arising from a sudden or unexplained death investigation that may result in significant risks, harm, or liabilities to the Service or Board.
- Provide any additional briefings that may be requested by the Board in cases of significant public concern or operational impact.