

Decision Regarding Findings Report INV-24-25 Concerning Policing Provided by the Toronto Police Service

Decision By:

Joseph Maiorano, Deputy Inspector General of Policing

I. INTRODUCTION

- [1] This decision addresses a complaint received by the Inspector General of Policing against the Toronto Police Service (“TPS”), alleging that police call-taker engaged in discriminatory behaviour based on the complainant’s race by asking about prospective drug and alcohol use. An inspector with Ontario’s Inspectorate of Policing (“IoP”) investigated the complaint to determine whether the Toronto Police Service failed to comply with the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, SO 2019, c 1, Sch 1 (the “Act”) or its regulations.
- [2] Following a review of the inspector’s Findings Report,¹ which is attached to this Decision as Appendix A, and for the reasons that follow, I conclude that the TPS has complied with the Act and the regulations.

II. BACKGROUND

- [3] The complainant called the TPS non-emergency telephone number on four occasions in March and April 2024, requesting police attendance. The complainant’s neighbour was allegedly leaving soiled toilet paper at the complainant’s front door.
- [4] In two of the four calls, the police call-taker asked the complainant if he had consumed drugs or alcohol. In the remaining calls, the complainant was not asked those same questions.
- [5] The complainant felt humiliated and upset by the questions, which he felt were improper. The complainant reports that he does not use drugs or alcohol. He believes that he was asked certain questions owing to his residential address, race, appearance and accent.

¹ Section 123 of the Act requires an IoP inspector who completes an investigation of a complaint to report their findings to the Inspector General. This report is redacted to comply with the *Publication of Findings Reports and Directions under Sections 123 and 125 of the Act* Regulation, O Reg 317/24.

III. ISSUES

- [6] The sole issue here is whether the questions posed by the TPS call-taker to the complainant regarding drug or alcohol use represents a breach of the Act or its regulations.

IV. ANALYSIS

- [7] The inspection carefully reviewed the audio recordings and dispatch details of each of the complainant's calls to the TPS in March and April 2024, as well as examining the TPS Communications Services training, policies and procedures for police dispatchers and call-takers.
- [8] The TPS procedures require that inquiries about alcohol consumption, drug use, or mental health concerns form part of a standard list of questions that may be asked during calls such as neighbour disputes, disorderly conduct, or unwanted guests. These questions are also embedded into certain procedures for various situations such as Person-in-Crisis and Intimate Partner Violence calls for service.
- [9] Whether a specific question about drug or alcohol use is asked turns on the type of call for service as well as specific indicators presented by the caller, which can include unusually rapid or slurred speech, difficulty in forming incoherent sentences, jumping from topic to topic, hysteria, overly exaggerated emotions or an expression of paranoia.
- [10] Call takers are required by training and TPS policy to assess each call based on the individual circumstances present in any specific call. Here, the call takers in each call appeared to have assessed the circumstances in each situation according to the indicators presented by the complainant. This is consistent with the result the complainant was asked questions about drug or alcohol consumption in some calls, but not others.
- [11] There is no indication that the complainant's race, accent, or residential address played any role in the call-takers' decision to ask the impugned questions. Moreover, there is no evidence that TPS call-takers engaged in any discriminatory conduct. The impugned questions were only asked on the calls where the complainant presented possible indicators of a person-in-crisis.

V. CONCLUSION

[12] I find no evidence that the Toronto Police Service failed to comply with the Act or its regulations.

Date: August 27, 2026

Original Signed By

Joseph Maiorano
*Deputy Inspector General of
Policing*

FINDINGS REPORT

Toronto Police Service

**Section 107(1)(a) Policing
Complaint Investigation**
(INV-24-25)

Submitted to:
Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing of
Ontario

July 10, 2026

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ABOUT THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICING AND THE INSPECTORATE OF POLICING

The Inspector General of Policing drives improved performance and accountability in policing and police governance by overseeing the delivery of adequate and effective policing across Ontario. The Inspector General ensures compliance with the province's policing legislation and standards, and has the authority to issue progressive, risk-based and binding directions and measures to protect public safety. Ontario's Community Safety and Policing Act embeds protections to ensure the Inspector General's statutory duty is delivered independently from government.

The Inspector General of Policing leads the Inspectorate of Policing (IoP). The IoP provides operational support to inspect, investigate, monitor, and advise Ontario's police services, boards and special constable employers. By leveraging independent research and data intelligence, the IoP promotes leading practices and identifies areas for improvement, ensuring that high-quality policing and police governance is delivered to make everyone in Ontario safer.

In March 2023, Ryan Teschner was appointed as Ontario's first Inspector General of Policing with duties and authorities under the Community Safety and Policing Act. Mr. Teschner is a recognized expert in public administration, policing and police governance.

For more information about the Inspector General of Policing or the IoP, please visit www.iopontario.ca.

INTRODUCTION

This is a report to the Inspector General of Policing by an inspector appointed by the Inspector General, who has completed an investigation under Part VII of the [Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019](#) (CSPA).

OVERVIEW OF INVESTIGATION

The Complaint

A written complaint was forwarded by the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA) to the Inspector General under the provisions of section 108 of the CSPA. This complaint alleges that, during a call to the Toronto Police Service (TPS) non-emergency line on April 3, 2024, the call taker asked the complainant about alcohol or drug use. The complainant also reported being asked the same question during a previous call to the non-emergency line on March 3, 2024. The complainant feels that TPS Communications engaged in discriminatory behaviour based on his race by asking about alcohol or drug use.

The Subject Police Service

Name of Police Service: Toronto Police Service

Service Headquarters: 40 College St, Toronto, ON M5G 2J3

Chief of Police: Myron Demkiw

Chief of Police since December 2022

Service Total Strength: (Actual & Authorized)

- Number of sworn members:
Actual: 5340
Authorized: 5542
- Number of civilian members:
Actual: 2587
Authorized: 2665

Geographic Service Area

- 635.3 Square Kilometers
- Community Population of approximately 3,179,225

Applicable Legislative and Regulatory Provisions

[Section 11\(1\)](#) of the CSPA provides that adequate and effective policing means all of the following functions provided in accordance with the standards set out in the regulations, including the standards with respect to the avoidance of conflicts of interest, and with the requirements of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Human Rights Code*:

1. Crime prevention.
2. Law enforcement.
3. Maintaining the public peace.
4. Emergency response.
5. Assistance to victims of crime.

6. Any other prescribed policing functions.

Ontario Regulation 392/23: ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE POLICING (GENERAL)

was reviewed having regard to the allegations made in the complaint.

Ontario Regulation 125/24: TRANSITIONAL MATTERS

The event under investigation began on March 3, 2024, prior to the coming into force of the CSPA on April 1, 2024, and continued to April 3, 2024, after the transition date.

In accordance with section 3 of Ontario Regulation 125/24, where an event forms part of a series that spans both before and after the transition date, the Inspector General may exercise authority under the CSPA in respect of the entire series.

SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED

Toronto Police Service Records

The complainant had called TPS four times between March 3 and April 3, 2024. All four calls were in relation to an ongoing complaint regarding another resident living on the same floor as the complainant.

March 3, 2024 Call

The computer aided dispatch (CAD) records for March 3, 2024 indicate that the call was categorized as a Check Well-Being (Priority 4). The transcript notes that the address is a Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) building and includes a phone number for security. Several times throughout the transcript, the call taker indicated that the complainant is rambling. The call taker also wrote that the complainant sounded like a person in crisis (PIC).

The complainant reported that a neighbour from his floor has been throwing dirty toilet paper in the hallway daily since February 2, 2024. The call taker noted that there was no physical violence, there had been yelling and the neighbour had said derogatory things to the complainant in the past. The transcript then reads: "No weapons seen, no injuries, unknown if the neighbour has been drinking or taking drugs, and the complainant has not been drinking or taking drugs." The call taker wrote that the complainant became very agitated with questions. Finally, the complainant provided a description of the neighbour, and officers were dispatched to the call.

The audio recording of the call on March 3, 2024 is 8 minutes 29 seconds in duration. The complainant reported his concern with the neighbour which had been ongoing since February 2, 2024. He referenced prior police involvement, providing dates and badge numbers. The call taker asked clarifying questions about the neighbour's identity, apartment number, history of violence, and whether the incident occurred that day or earlier. The call taker advised that officers will be dispatched but explained that certain questions need to be asked that are "typically yes, no, or I don't know" answers. The complainant inquired why these questions need to be asked and the call taker explained they are standard questions that need to be asked of both parties for officer safety.

The call taker asked the complainant whether he had seen the neighbour with a weapon, he was injured or required an ambulance, and if there were any mental health concerns involving either the neighbour or himself. The call taker inquired about possible alcohol or drug use by the neighbour. In response the complainant asked, "who is providing this questionnaire" and "how would I know that?" The call taker explained that "I don't know" is an acceptable answer, but they are obliged to ask for officer safety. The call taker then asked the complainant, "Is there any drinking or drugs for yourself?" The complainant replied that he already stated he does not drink alcohol and that he [redacted – s 1(1)2 – O Reg 317/24]. The call taker responded, "That's fine sir," and clarified that "no" is an okay answer but the questions must still be asked. The call concluded with the call taker requesting a description of the neighbour.

March 6 Call

The March 6 call (3 minutes 29 seconds duration) was categorized as a dispute (Priority 4) and was a continuation of the March 3 complaint. The transcript notes that the address is a Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) building and includes a phone number for security. The transcript does not indicate that the complainant sounded like a person in crisis, nor were there any questions about alcohol or drug use. The complainant does not reference this date in his complaint.

April 2 Call

The April 2 call (6 minutes 49 seconds duration) was categorized as a harassment (Priority 6) and was in relation to the same concern regarding the neighbour. The transcript notes that the address is a Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) building and includes a phone number for security. The transcript does not indicate that the complainant sounded like a person in crisis, nor were there any questions about alcohol or drug use. The complainant does not reference this date in his complaint.

The audio recordings of the complainant's calls to TPS on March 6 and April 2, 2024 follow similar patterns. In both calls, the complainant requested the call taker's badge number, revealed that his call monitoring was active, and reported ongoing issues with a neighbour dating back to February. The complainant attempted to describe previous incidents and officers involved. The complainant was not asked about alcohol or drug use in these calls.

April 3 Call

The CAD details for April 3, 2024, indicated that the event type is harassment (Priority 6). The transcript notes that the address is a Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) building and includes a phone number for security. The complainant complained that a resident had left used toilet paper in front and on the complainant's apartment door. This had allegedly been ongoing since February. The complainant reportedly had spoken with TCHC who were not helping, and no ambulance was required. The call taker noted the complainant refused to answer any questions. The call taker indicated that the complainant sounds like a person in crisis.

In the April 3, 2024 call, the complainant referenced the event number from April 2, 2024 when officers had not been available to attend. The call taker asked the complainant to confirm his name, address, date of birth, phone number along with apartment number of the neighbour. The call taker advised that standard questions will be asked and questioned the complainant about alcohol or drug use. The complainant objected, refused to answer, and requested a supervisor. The call taker explained they are asking questions to set up a call for service and if he did not want to answer the line would be disconnected. The complainant declined to answer, and the call taker advised that a call for service would be created when officers were available, then disconnected the call.

Toronto Police Service Training Material

The training material provided by TPS Communications Services training unit emphasizes the importance of clarity and consistency in the text that call takers provide when speaking with callers. It is the call taker's responsibility to provide as accurate a call as possible through the text. The text from the call taker is valuable to responding officers, as it offers insight into the nature of the incident and the emotional state of the parties involved.

Including observations about the caller's apparent emotional state can assist both the dispatcher and attending officers in responding effectively to the situation. Call takers should never assume information nor let personal opinions affect their assessment of a situation. If a caller sounds intoxicated, the call taker should ask directly, "Have you been drinking?"

The directive regarding viewing the "Location of Interest Information (LOI)" states that call takers/dispatchers shall view LOI as soon as it becomes available. LOI data includes information in relation to previous visits by police, details regarding any special circumstances and any relevant information from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) for a given location.

The LOI should be checked by both the call taker after confirming the address and by the dispatcher when dispatching the call to responding officers. If the initial call indicates the caller may be a person-in-crisis, TPS policy requires the call taker to ask about alcohol and drug use and treat the call as potentially PIC-related. All the questions asked are intended to ensure public and officer safety, in addition to gathering initial details about the reported incident.

Toronto Police Service Procedure

The TPS "Person-in-Crisis" policy for its Communications Services unit defines a person-in-crisis as a member of the public whose behaviour brings them into contact with emergency services, either because of an apparent need for urgent care within the mental health system, or because they are otherwise experiencing a mental, emotional or substance use crisis involving behaviour that is sufficiently erratic, threatening or dangerous that emergency services are called in order to protect the person or those around them. This includes persons who may require assessment under the *Mental Health Act*.

The policy states that when a call taker receives information indicating a person may be experiencing a mental, emotional or substance use crisis, the call taker shall determine whether medical attention is required. The call taker should create an event that includes as much information as possible, including the location, type of premise, name, age, and description of the individual. Additionally, the call taker must inquire about the presence and history of weapons and violence, involvement of drugs and alcohol, and any medications the individual may be taking.

Complainant Interview

The complainant used his call monitoring system to record his calls to the TPS dispatch on March 3, and April 3, 2024.

The complainant advised that a neighbour in his building had been repeatedly throwing used toilet paper in front of his door and he wanted police to attend and investigate. The complainant was asked by the call takers whether he had consumed any drugs or alcohol that day. The complainant felt “humiliated”, “appalled” and “bewildered” by the question. They told him they were asking that question for the safety of the police officers, but he found this shocking and curious, as he had never been asked that question in previous calls to the non-emergency line. He noted that this line of questioning is happening more regularly.

The complainant informed the call taker that [redacted – s 1(1)2 – O Reg 317/24]. He asked to speak with a supervisor to share his concerns, who explained that questions about alcohol or drug use are standard procedure prescribed by upper management within TPS Communications Services.

The complainant described himself as [redacted – s 1(1)2 – O Reg 317/24].

The complainant has been residing in his Toronto Community Housing apartment for over twenty years. He explained that, due to the ongoing difficulties with individuals in his building, he often calls the non-emergency line to request assistance with certain behaviours. He feels his frequent interactions with the TPS have involved discriminatory treatment based on where he lives. He provided an analogy to illustrate his point: like trying to insure a car, your treatment depends on what area you live in. You can be marginalized for the area that you live in.

The complainant believes he is being asked certain questions due to his residence, race, appearance, and accent. He questioned whether staff are adequately trained to understand diverse backgrounds and accents, noting Toronto’s multicultural population. He expressed concern that his accent and skin tone lead to assumptions about alcohol or drug use, despite not being involved in illegal activity. He described himself as a [redacted – s 1(1)2 – O Reg 317/24] and questioned whether his words sounded slurred when calling the police. He feels the TPS Communications Services unit is discriminating against him based on race, location, and accent.

Toronto Police Service Interview

A meeting was held with staff from the TPS Communications Services unit to seek further clarity on procedures. Present at the meeting were the Acting Unit Commander, the Training Coordinator, and the Acting Assistant Manager of Operations. TPS advised that questions regarding alcohol or drug use may be asked during any call for service where police are attending, particularly when entering a residence or interacting with one or more individuals. These questions are asked to ensure the safety of both citizens and officers, by helping responders understand the situation they are attending.

TPS stated that inquiries about alcohol consumption, drug use, or mental health concerns, are part of a standard list of questions typically asked during calls such as neighbour disputes, disorderly conduct, or unwanted guest. These questions are also embedded into certain policies for various situations such as Person in Crisis and Intimate Partner Violence cases.

The Person in Crisis policy is written to address a wide range of situations, from minor to extreme. Call takers follow policy by using de-escalation techniques, and asking structured questions such as, “Where are you?”, “Who are you?”, and “What is the main problem?” Call takers then proceed with additional policy questions based on the situation, such as the presence of weapons, drinking or drugs, or prescribed medication.

TPS explained there are no specific criteria for identifying someone as a PIC, and each call presents differently. However, there are certain indicators such as talking rapidly, forming incoherent sentences, jumping from topic to topic, slurred speech, hysteria, overly exaggerated emotions, or expressing paranoia. Since assessments are made over the phone, call takers use language such as “sounds like” or “could be” to describe what they are hearing. Ultimately, the attending officers will assess and determine the situation upon arrival.

Labeling someone as a PIC reflects a moment of crisis, not necessarily a mental health concern. It can be used by call takers to convey the emotional state of the caller during the interaction. Call takers prioritize safety and efficiency, adapting questions based on the caller’s presentation and the nature of the call.

TPS explained that for any TCHC building, the system will automatically populate the phone number for TCHC security, who can deal with minor issues or neighbour disputes instead of police or attend a call with police. TPS advised that this does not factor into the call taker’s assessment of the call, which still needs to be addressed at face value.

When discussing why the four calls were managed differently, with alcohol and drug use asked about on two occasions, TPS advised that it speaks to how the caller presents to the call taker at the time and what the call taker is hearing in terms of what questions could be asked. If it takes a call taker some time to sort out the nature of the call, they may ask further questions, which could include those related to alcohol or drug use. It also depends on how the call taker perceives the emotional tone of the caller—questions about alcohol or drug use could be relevant to better understand the caller's emotional state. The calls were categorized differently: check well-being, dispute, and harassment. TPS noted that event types often overlap, and multiple classifications may apply depending on the situation.

TPS advised that on the non-emergency line, if a caller becomes escalated, refuses to answer questions, and does not de-escalate despite an explanation of why the questions are being asked, it may be appropriate to end the call. Continuing to press the caller with questions, they are unwilling to answer can further aggravate the situation and not be productive.

TPS advised that there is no record of the complainant speaking with a supervisor. If such a conversation had occurred, it would have been recorded. However, if provided with a timeline, they may be able to manually search through their system.

TPS call takers undergo eight weeks of classroom training, followed by 10 weeks of on-desk training. The curriculum covers a wide range of topics, including mental health awareness, de-escalation techniques, the Person in Crisis policy, general guidelines for call taking, and customer service, to name just a few. During the eight-week classroom portion, trainees also attend TPS college alongside all new hires and complete one week of Fair and Unbiased Policing training.

For the caller's emotional state, they are taught to ask direct questions to avoid assumptions and ensure first responders have a full understanding of the situation. Training includes scenario-based learning, real audio calls, and practical assessments to help trainees recognize effective communication and avoid language that could escalate a situation.

They complete modules on ethics, and diversity including topics like 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion, Indigenous experiences, and racial bias. A competency evaluation ensures they can respond appropriately and without bias to Toronto's diverse communities.

TPS explained that due to Toronto's cultural diversity, they do not provide training on every individual culture's language pattern or communications style. Rather, these nuances are addressed during on-desk training, where real time situations allow trainers to guide caller takers through culturally sensitive interactions. Interpreter services like "Can Talk" are also available to support communication. The on-desk trainer ensures that new call takers are meeting the competency standard of addressing each caller's concerns at face value, without making assumptions based on differences from their own background, experiences, or cultural understanding.

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

I make the following findings, relying on the material and information collected during the inspection and now contained within this report:

- 1. The complainant contacted TPS Communication on March 3, March 6, April 2, and April 3, 2024, regarding the same ongoing neighbour complaint. During the calls on March 3 and April 3, he was questioned about the use of alcohol or drugs.**
 - a. The CAD reports and audio recordings for all 4 dates confirm that the complainant requested police assistance due to his neighbour's ongoing behaviour. The calls follow similar patterns, including requests for the call taker's badge numbers, reference to the issue being ongoing since February, and mentions of prior police involvement, including badge numbers.
 - b. The complainant indicated in his submission that during calls to TPS non-emergency line on March 3, and April 3, 2024, he was asked about drinking and drug use.
 - c. The CAD transcript from March 3, 2024, noted that it was unknown whether the neighbour had been drinking or using drugs, and there was no drinking or drugs for the complainant. It also noted the complainant sounded like a person in crisis.
 - d. The audio recording of the March 3, 2024, call confirmed that the call taker inquired about alcohol or drug use for both the neighbour and the complainant. The call also included questions about weapons, injuries, requiring an ambulance, mental health concerns and description of the neighbour.

- e. The CAD and audio recordings for March 6 and April 2, do not indicate that the complainant sounded like a person in crisis, and he was not asked about alcohol or drug use.
- f. The CAD report from April 3, 2024, indicated that the issue had been ongoing since February, and that the complainant refused to answer questions and sounded like a person in crisis.
- g. The April 3, 2024, audio recording confirmed that after the call taker verified the complainant's name, date of birth, address, and phone number, the complainant was asked twice about the use of alcohol or drugs, which the complainant refused to answer.
- h. During the complainant interview, he confirmed the dates indicated in his complaint submission and had reviewed the audio recordings prior to the interview.

2. The complainant feels that the TPS Communications Services unit is discriminating against him by asking about alcohol or drug use based on where he resides, his race, and accent.

- a. During his interview, the complainant stated that he felt "humiliated" and shocked when asked about alcohol and drug use, describing his reaction as one of being "appalled" and "bewildered."
- b. He described himself as [redacted – s 1(1)2 – O Reg 317/24].
- c. The complainant explained that he does not like to be asked questions regarding alcohol or drugs as [redacted – s 1(1)2 – O Reg 317/24].
- d. He believes that TPS is making assumptions about him based on his accent, leading to questions about alcohol or drug use.
- e. He also feels that these assumptions are influenced by his residence in a TCHC building.

3. TPS Communications Services unit indicated that all four calls placed by the complainant on March 3, March 6, April 2, and April 3, 2024, and all questions asked, including those about alcohol or drug use, were based on how the complainant presented to the caller takers at the time.

- a. TPS stated that questions about alcohol or drug use may be asked during any call for service where police are attending, especially when entering a residence or interacting with one or more individuals.
- b. Inquiries about alcohol consumption, drug use, or mental health concerns are part of a standard list of questions typically asked during calls involving neighbour disputes, disorderly conduct, or unwanted guest.
- c. These questions are intended to ensure the safety of both the public and responding officers, by helping responders understand the nature of the situation.
- d. The questions asked by call takers vary depending on the nature of the call and how the caller is presenting at the time.
- e. Questions regarding alcohol and drug use are also embedded into specific policies for various situations, such as Person in Crisis (PIC) and Intimate Partner Violence cases.
- f. If the caller may be a person in crisis, policy requires the call taker to ask about alcohol and drug use and treat the call accordingly.
- g. TPS clarified that for any TCHC building, the system will automatically populate the phone number for TCHC security, allowing them to attend calls where police may not be needed. They advised that the complainant's address does not influence whether questions about alcohol or drug use are asked.
- h. TPS stated that, the four calls made by the complainant were categorized and managed differently. The variation in questions and approach during each interaction was based solely on how the complainant presented at the time of each call.

- i. TPS's cultural competency training includes one week of Fair and Unbiased Policing, along with modules on ethics, human rights, and diversity, including 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion, Indigenous experiences, and racial bias. Cultural sensitivity is further developed through on-desk training. Call takers are expected to meet competency standards, treat all callers equitably, and avoid assumptions based on cultural differences.

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everyone in Ontario safer.

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