



# VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

## REPORT TO THE VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD

REPORT DATE: June 14, 2021  
BOARD MEETING DATE: June 24, 2021  
BOARD REPORT #: 2106C03  
*Regular*

TO: **Vancouver Police Board Service and Complaint Review Committee**  
FROM: Sergeant Valerie Spicer, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenous Relations Section  
SUBJECT: Service or Policy Complaint #2021-004 re: Hate Crime Incidents Online Reporting Form

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### RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT the Vancouver Police Board (VPB) Service and Policy Complaint Review Committee (Committee) conclude its review of the complaint based on information outlined in this report and given the actions taken by the VPD in response to the complaint.**

### SUMMARY:

This report relates to a Service or Policy Complaint, received on April 26, 2021 via an open letter posted online by the complainant (<https://fixpolicereporting.ca/home/#openletter>), regarding the limited online hate crime report forms available in British Columbia. The portion of the complainant's letter which was applicable to the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) is a request that online hate crime report forms be available in a variety of languages other than the two forms that are available at VPD.ca in traditional and simplified Chinese.

Since receiving this complaint, the VPD has added forms in the following languages to VPD.ca: English, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Tagalog and Vietnamese. Therefore, the VPD recommends that the Committee conclude its review of this complaint based on the information outlined in this report and given the actions taken by the VPD in response to the complaint.

### BACKGROUND:

In April of 2020, the VPD identified a significant and concerning trend of anti-East Asian hate crime. Several incidents of note within the Chinatown neighbourhood created significant community concern. The VPD met with Chinatown community agencies, business representatives, and City of Vancouver (CoV) representatives to discuss these concerns. At the request of the community, the VPD produced a handout for Chinatown businesses detailing how to report hate crimes and other policing matters to the VPD, and how to report disorder concerns to the CoV. The CoV facilitated the translation of this handout into simplified Chinese

and printed copies for distribution. These handouts were delivered to businesses in the Chinatown neighbourhood by the Chinese Community Policing Centre Neighbourhood Police Officer.

Dialogue with the community continued in May 2020 and further language-based reporting barriers were identified. In response to requests from the community, the VPD Public Affairs Section was engaged to produce hate crime report forms in simplified and traditional Chinese to supplement the E-COMM non-emergency reporting process. These forms were made available in May 2020 at VPD.ca and in printed form at community agencies such as SUCCESS, the Chinese Community Policing Centre and through the VPD Public Service Unit.

Over the remainder of 2020 there was a continued increase in anti-East Asian sentiment with incidents motivated by bias, hate, or prejudice being reported at a disproportionality higher level than any other motive. This was an extremely unusual and persistent shift in both motivation and level of violence. In response, the VPD formed the Hate Crime Project team to provide investigative support to the Hate Crime Investigator. By the end of 2020, there was a significant increase in reported incidents targeting people of East Asian descent (98) as compared to 2019 (12). The VPD is aware that these crimes are under-reported and that people can be reluctant to report. Making the hate crime report forms available online and notifying the public of these crimes was intended to encourage reporting by victims and witnesses alike.

On April 15, 2021, the complainant initiating this policy complaint submitted a hate crime report form to the VPD Diversity Mail Box. The complainant initially attempted to report via the E-COMM non-emergency telephone line, but after waiting for 30 minutes decided to look for an online option. Unable to find an English version of the hate crime report form, the complainant completed and submitted the traditional Chinese form. On April 26, 2021, the complainant posted an open letter (<https://fixpolicereporting.ca/home/#openletter>) regarding the limited availability of hate crime report forms. Citizens subsequently contacted the VPD in support of this open letter.

The VPD subsequently met with the complainant to discuss their concerns and work on potential solutions. The VPD also met with the other citizens who contacted the VPD in relation to this matter. The hate crime report forms in English, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Tagalog and Vietnamese have been made available at VPD.ca. The Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations Section is continuing to liaise with the complainant and other community members to improve hate crime reference materials, translate these materials into various languages, and further clarify reporting options.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The VPD acknowledges that there are many barriers to reporting crimes and incidents to the police. Specifically, access to police service through language translation is essential for equitable policing. The VPD has a long history of commitment to community policing and engagement with the express purpose of building trust and encouraging reporting.

To facilitate equitable access to public safety in emergent situations, the E-COMM 9-1-1 system has timely and easily accessible translation services in 170 languages. Unfortunately, providing the same level of translation services through the E-COMM non-emergency reporting line is cost prohibitive for E-COMM. To meet the needs of diverse communities, the VPD aims to provide the broadest language service possible through its frontline members, who speak 51

different languages. They also have access to translation services so victims and witnesses can write their statements in the language they are most comfortable with.

The VPD recently enhanced protocols for online reporting after reviewing the practices of other agencies across the country, reviewing pre-existing VPD practices, and consulting with E-COMM. The VPD's online reporting portal sets a number of decision points which redirects citizens to either E-COMM 9-1-1 or the E-COMM non-emergency number if appropriate. The decision points are based on public safety considerations to ensure that only property offences are reported through the online portal. While these decision points were under development, the Hate Crime Unit was consulted specifically with respect to mischiefs motivated by hate, prejudice, or bias. These crimes were not included in the online portal because a delay in investigation could result in the loss of critical evidence or the prevention of more serious offences. Similarly, incidents such as suspicious persons or circumstances are not included because of possible links to more serious offences.

In January, the VPD initiated a website redesign. This redesign will allow all information on the VPD's website to be viewed in over 100 different languages via Google translate. The VPD has also advocated for more accessible and equitable hate incident reporting mechanisms through other government agencies. The hate crime report form was created as an interim initiative, specifically for those community stakeholders requesting it, while other long-term solutions were developed and implemented.

In recognition of the barriers presented by the limited number of languages the hate crime report form was available in, the VPD undertook the following initiatives prior to the present complaint being lodged:

- 1- Secured funding and initiated a translated video explaining how to report a crime;
- 2- Initiated a translated video of what constitutes a hate crime;
- 3- Ongoing consultation with the BC Government regarding hate crime reporting; and
- 4- Ongoing consultation with the community regarding hate crime reporting.

Since the complaint was lodged, the VPD has taken the following steps:

- 5- Met with the complainant who brought this issue forward to hear concerns and develop appropriate responses;
- 6- Met with other citizens who contacted the VPD in support of the complainant's open letter;
- 7- Offered hate crime report forms translated into the languages<sup>1</sup> that are represented on the BC Government webpage: Report a hate crime<sup>2</sup>;
- 8- Started developing fillable PDF versions of the forms;
- 9- Continued community consultation to improve accessibility in reporting hate crimes; and
- 10- Consulted with the BC Government regarding the development of a new hate crime portal through an established, monitored and translated 24/7 reporting system such as 2-1-1, with referral capacity into the E-COMM 9-1-1/non-emergency system.

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<sup>1</sup> Completed: Chinese (simplified and traditional) – English – Japanese – Korean – Punjabi – Tagalog – Vietnamese. In process: Arabic – Farsi – French – Hindi – Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/anti-racism/reporthatocrime>

## **CONCLUSION:**

It is recommended that the Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations Section continue community outreach and dialogue to identify and reduce barriers to reporting hate crimes and incidents. The VPD recommends that the Committee conclude its review of the complaint based on the information outlined in this report and given the actions taken by the VPD in response to the complaint.

Author: Sergeant Valerie Spicer

Date: June 14, 2021

Submitting Executive Member:

Deputy Chief Constable Howard Chow

Date: June 14, 2021