

**Vancouver Police Acknowledgement:**

The Vancouver Police regrets that the positive changes outlined below were not in place at the time of the original complaint. And we apologize to the 52 complainants that their complaints did not have the benefit of these changes. The improvements in policies and procedures resulting from this review have already marked a new era in police relations with the Downtown Eastside community marked by increased sensitivity, accountability and responsiveness. Overall, while the processes associated to the Police Act investigations are lengthy, onerous and often difficult for both complainants and the officers involved, the Vancouver Police acknowledge that it is only through the investigation of these complaints that we have been able to evaluate the manner in which we deliver our service and make the positive changes noted here. The Department is committed to providing quality police service and encourages all citizens to come forward when issues arise so that we can continue to improve.

In addition to the policy changes that follow, the complaints lodged by the Pivot Legal Society (PLS) have led the Vancouver Police to undertake training within the Department. Training is now offered to recruits, in-service officers and supervisors, educating them on their obligations and rights under the Police Act, as well as providing information about the activities that often result in complaints, means of avoiding complaints, and the importance of notes and documentation in resolving complaints. Further, the Department undertakes to design and provide training and decision making models to ensure investigators and Discipline Authorities objectively assess and weigh evidence in Police Act complaints.

As important as any of the policy changes and training that have resulted from the PLS complaints, is the improved relationship between the police and the people of the Downtown Eastside. The Vancouver Police have made themselves more available to people who have concerns about the police, as evident by the detached location of the Professional Standards Office, and partner community agencies to assist with lodging complaints, and have made changes that ensure all complaints are dealt with, and where ever possible complainants are advised of the outcome of their complaints.

A list of the changes undertaken by the Department between 2004 and 2006 is provided below.

1. **Training** – Professional Standards (PSS) now meets with recruits during their first week as an employee and explains their rights and responsibilities, as well there is an additional session during JI Training. PSS also meets with officers at least once a year during regular cycle training to identify problems and offer solutions to prevent misconduct or potential complaints from the public. This includes training supervisors as to issues relating to complaints and officer conduct.

2. **Searching** – policy was changed to properly identify when searches are appropriate, both while in custody and out of custody. There have been very few complaints since this policy was implemented and all officers received training.
3. **Premises searches** – as a result of complaints about members’ searches of citizens’ rooms in the DTES without authority, the practice was stopped immediately and all members were given training as to when they can enter a dwelling house, even when it is a rooming house or hotel.
4. **Note taking** – policy was reviewed and modified, all members received notice that note taking is required and members receive discipline if they do not comply with the policy.
5. **Duty reports and statements** – new policy was implemented that now clearly explains when members must provide statements, duty reports, and when they must participate in an interview. This has not only improved the Police Act investigation process but also when officers use deadly force, it is understood that witness officers must participate immediately.
6. **Breaches** – policy amended to ensure that officers had the proper authority when breaching people out of an area. Breaching occurs far more infrequently than before.
7. **VPD Regulation & Procedure Manual** is on the VPD website allowing members of the public to question VPD policies and procedures if they disagree.
8. **Location of PSS office** – moved from within the police headquarters building to a storefront that is easily accessible to the public, making the complaint process easier and more accessible without barriers or intimidation.
9. **Access to Complaint Process enhanced** – VPD Professional Standards has engaged with community agencies that can assist citizens with the complaint process, and these agencies are noted on the VPD pamphlet “If you Have A Complaint”.
10. **Telephone complaints** are all documented and investigated with the complainant notified of the results.
11. **Better documentation of non police act complaints** – all complaints that are not on a Form 1 are still thoroughly investigated and recorded on the VPD electronic record management system known as PRIME. This ensures proper accountability and accessibility to information.
12. **Jail 8 booking forms changed** - to include far more information about the health and condition of prisoners to ensure that PSS can access information after the fact. Photos are also taken of intoxicated prisoners or prisoners with injuries in case they are required in a future investigation.

13. **More accountability for wagon drivers** - to search and report the condition of prisoner, they must make certain that the prisoner has been thoroughly searched and is quickly and safely transported to the Jail with all property accounted for.
14. **Seizure of property** – Clear policy on the seizure and retention or destruction of seized property, the use of form 5.2 Report to a Justice and the implementation of a new position called Station NCO. This is a Sergeant position put in place to ensure proper reporting and compliance with policies and procedures.
15. **Management direction given to several officers as a result of the review** – several officers received management advice for the unnecessary delay in submitting reports or attending for interviews as requested.
16. **Burden of proof for Police Act investigations** - Meeting with OPCC around PLS complaints clarified the burden of proof required under the civil standards and resulted in a greater number of substantiated complaints against VPD officers since then.