

## **GUIDELINE – COMMISSIONER-INITIATED INQUIRY**

### **Power of the Commissioner**

The Police Act grants the Commissioner the power to initiate an investigation on his own initiative in certain circumstances.

The Commissioner may decide to hold an inquiry when it is brought to his attention, or when he finds that the conduct of a police officer in the performance of his duties is likely to constitute a breach of the Code of Ethics of Québec Police Officers. This power will ensure better protection of the public, since he will be able to assess events that might not otherwise have been submitted to his scrutiny.

The time limit for the Commissioner to refer an event is one year from the date of the event or knowledge of it.

### **Media monitoring**

Media monitoring is carried out by all the Commissioner's staff to monitor and gather relevant information about events likely to attract his attention.

The following files are brought to his attention when :

- The Coroner questions the Commissioner directly when filing his report;
- The event is of public interest and involves, among other things, the death or serious injury of a person, situations where public confidence in the police may be seriously compromised, criminal offences, repeat offences or other serious matters;
- The event is covered by the media and, after a two-week period, no complaints or reports have been received;
- A problematic situation seems to be becoming more widespread and requires preventive action on the part of the Commissioner.

## **Watch Committee**

A Watch Committee is set up to analyze events that may be referred for investigation.

- If the Commissioner receives, a posteriori, a complaint about the same event, concerning a complainant who was present during the intervention or with regard to whom the conduct of a police officer is likely to constitute a derogatory act to the Code, the complaint file will be opened and a second investigation will be ordered;
- If the Commissioner subsequently receives a report about the same event, the file will, in principle, be closed to ensure responsible management of available resources and the ethics process. Thus, when a first ethics investigation is already underway, the Commissioner uses his discretionary power to determine whether it is necessary, taking into account all the circumstances, to hold a second investigation into the same event;
- However, if the person reporting is a close relative, or if the report contains information useful to the file, the situation will be evaluated by the Compliance Committee to determine the appropriate course of action.

## **Communication**

An announcement describing the event is published on the Commissioner's website to inform citizens of the investigation.

A follow-up press release is also published on the Commissioner's website to report on the work and follow-up.

*October 24th, 2024*

