

<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>POISONING</b>		
<b>Policy #:</b>	OP 4.41	<b>Last Updated:</b>	2022-05-12
<b>Issued By:</b>	COMMUNITY POLICING BUREAU	<b>Approved By:</b>	SURREY POLICE BOARD
		<b>Review Frequency:</b>	AS REQUIRED

**RELATED POLICIES**

- OP 4.13 *Crime Scene Management*
- OP 4.24 *Food and Drug Product Tampering*
- OP 4.46 *Sudden Death Investigations*
- OP 4.39 *Overdose Policy*
- OP 5.1.3 *Exhibits Requiring Forensic Examination*

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1. To provide Surrey Police Service (SPS) Members direction to ensure a standardized response and investigation of poisoning incidents under existing law, policies, standards and best practices.

**2. SCOPE**

2.1. This policy applies to all Members.

**3. POLICY**

- 3.1. SPS Community Policing Bureau – Frontline Policing will provide the initial response and conduct the preliminary investigation of incidents involving a suspected poisoning of a person.
- 3.2. In the event of a person’s death because of a suspected poisoning, SPS will work in cooperation with the British Columbia Coroners Service.

## 4. PROCEDURE

### Member

- 4.1. The Investigation of sudden deaths involving poisoning will be conducted by SPS in cooperation with the British Columbia Coroners Service (see OP 4.46 *Sudden Death Investigations*).
- 4.2. When a Member attends the scene of a suspected poisoning or poisoning death, the Member must immediately notify their Supervisor.
- 4.3. Members must exercise caution and use proper personal protective equipment while conducting a thorough investigation (see OP 4.13 *Crime Scene Management*). In situations where known or suspected opioids are seized and/or processed, Members must take necessary precautions with appropriate personal protective equipment, including the use of gloves, eye protection, a mask and long-sleeved shirt. Caution should be used where there is a risk of exposure to Fentanyl, Carfentanil (a.k.a Carfantanyl), and other high potency drugs and substances (see OP 4.39 *Overdose Policy*).
- 4.4. Members should avoid touching their own eyes, nose and mouth and avoid smelling unknown substances that may contain toxic and harmful vapours.
- 4.5. In cases of a suspected poisoning death, the suspected toxic substance or poison must be seized by the investigating Member and, if necessary, the packaging or container it was in processed for fingerprint examination and the substance submitted for analysis (see OP 5.1.3 *Exhibits Requiring Forensic Examination*).
- 4.6. If the suspected toxic substance or poison is to be sent to the National Forensic Laboratory Service for analysis:
  - i. consult the Forensic Assessment Centre at S. 15, or by email at S. 15, for guidance on how to process/package the evidence;
  - ii. submit in glass vials or bottles with Teflon-lined screw caps closures (e.g., wide-mouth sample containers);
  - iii. submit the entire sample unless it exceeds 250 grams (about 1 cup) of solid material or 500 ml (about 2 cups) of liquid;
  - iv. decontaminate the outside of the sample container after filling it and before packaging it for shipping by wiping it with a towel moistened with water or rubbing alcohol; and
  - v. seal all samples in a tamper-proof evidence bag before shipping.
- 4.7. In cases where the suspected poisoning victim is seriously injured, where practicable, the suspected poisonous material must be sealed in a container and turned over to British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) personnel to be transported with the patient to hospital. This will assist hospital staff in determining the nature of the poisoning and treatment for the patient.

4.8. The seizure and forwarding procedure applies in all cases of poisoning, including overdoses of narcotics or barbiturates, regardless of whether the act is believed to be accidental or intentional.

4.9. Information concerning poison – antidotes and treatment – may be obtained from Lower Mainland Poison Control Centre (604-682-5050 / 800-567-8911).

**Supervisor**

4.10. The Supervisor must notify the Duty Officer in the event of a suspected poisoning death, there are multiple victims, or the poisoning is suspected to be an intentional act.

4.11. If the poisoning is suspected to be an intentional act, the Supervisor will contact the on-duty Frontline Investigative Support Team Supervisor.

## **APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS**

“Member” means a sworn Police Officer appointed by the Surrey Police Board.

“SPS” means Surrey Police Service.

“Supervisor” means a Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Inspector, Superintendent, Deputy Chief Constable, Chief Constable, and any other person acting in a Supervisory capacity who is accountable for a particular area or shift on behalf of SPS.

**APPENDIX B: REFERENCES**

*Coroners Act, S.B.C. 2007, c. 15*