

BCPPS 5.2 Major Case Management

The purpose of the BC Provincial Policing Standards for Major Case Management is to help ensure that police response to a serious incident is appropriate to the needs of an investigation while maintaining substantive services to the community.

These Standards were developed in response to recommendations made by the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. The Commission recommended that the Provincial Government mandate the use of major case management for all major crimes, and that provincial standards be established. The Commission further recommended that the standards address multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency investigations, and called for the creation of a protocol or framework to support the timely and seamless implementation of multi-agency teams.

The Standards identify the minimum elements of the principles of major case management to be applied by all police forces in British Columbia to enhance consistency in investigations and to facilitate cooperation and coordination on multi-jurisdictional investigations. The Standards also provide a mechanism through which compliance with the principles of major case management can be assessed. The Standards are not a manual or procedural guide.

The underlying principles of these Standards are that:

- **Certain cases stand out from others in terms of the seriousness of the offence, the scope or complexity of the investigation, or the resources required to successfully carry out the investigation. These investigations must be effectively planned and managed from the earliest opportunity to make effective and efficient use of resources, and to protect the public from further risk.** Major case management is a methodology for achieving these outcomes:

[Major case management] structures an investigation by providing clear goals and objectives; establishing lines of responsibility and decision-making authority; and creating infrastructure for the recording, storage and sharing of information, and contributing to operational efficiencies.

Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry,
Executive Summary, p. 21

Early and disciplined application of the principles of major case management ensures that police can effectively and efficiently investigate crimes, identify suspects, eliminate the innocent from police scrutiny, and focus limited resources.

- **Investigative teams with clear roles and responsibilities, decision making authorities, and effective communication, are critical components of major case management.** The leadership of the Command Triangle, supported by an investigative team, is a cornerstone of major case

BCPPS 5.2 Major Case Management

management. The responsibilities of each member of the investigative team must be defined and members must have appropriate training and experience for their assigned role. Regular, open communication within the Command Triangle and with the rest of the investigative team is essential to the team's effectiveness.

- **Systems must be in place to support the effective implementation of major case management.** A robust infrastructure for information and evidence management and documentation of investigative tasks and decision making is essential. In addition to organizing and managing information, electronic systems also provide valuable investigative and analytical tools.
- **The power of any system is enhanced when used consistently within and across policing jurisdictions.** Common tools support collaboration on investigations and aid in the detection of links between cases to ensure the full extent of criminality is identified and acted upon.
- **Accountability mechanisms are critical for major case management.** Key among these is team structure. Accountability of team members in carrying out their responsibilities is assured through collaboration and communication with the Command Triangle, and other members of the team, as appropriate. While the Team Commander has overall responsibility for the speed, flow and direction of the investigation, oversight by and accountability to senior levels ensures investigations are being managed responsibly and resourced appropriately.
- **Critical analysis is a hallmark of effective major case management.** The Team Commander and Command Triangle must maintain an atmosphere that encourages critical reflection and open communication within the investigative team. External critical analysis is also important, for both individual investigations (e.g., having operational plans reviewed by someone who is not closely tied to the investigation) as well as the team or unit's general practices (e.g., through internal audit). At the individual case level, this helps to ensure that all reasonable investigative avenues are pursued, and provides an opportunity to identify and mitigate risks to the investigation or prosecution. At a general practice level, internal audits can inform continuous improvement.
- **Major case management involves a range of crime solving strategies to keep the investigation moving forward and avoid critical errors.** This means capitalizing not only on internal and external police resources, but also taking a multi-disciplinary approach, involving Crown counsel and other relevant experts who may be outside of policing.
- **Major cases may involve significant interest by victims, their families, the media, and the public in general.** Their potential contributions to an investigation must be considered, and the impact of investigative strategies and decisions on public trust and safety evaluated. In particular, the privacy interests of the victim or family must be considered when sharing information about an investigation with the media. Responsibility for media and victim/family liaison must be clear.

BCPPS 5.2 Major Case Management

- **Many investigations of serious crime will lead to a prosecution; this must be anticipated and planned for early.** It is essential that throughout the investigation, measures be in place to address the prosecution aspects that arise in any investigation, including early and ongoing communication with Crown counsel. Effective file management ensures that files are structured so that investigators can provide disclosure in a timely and complete fashion and that materials are organized and analyzed to provide Crown counsel with the materials needed to make the decision to prosecute.
- **Linked cases present additional case management needs.** Multi-jurisdictional investigations require timely, effective and unhindered cooperation and coordination between police forces; information sharing is essential. Tools must be in place to support the prompt establishment and management of joint investigations. Where joint investigations occur, overarching authority and responsibility must be clear. Where serial or predatory crime is suspected, or where it is reasonable to assume that a particular investigation could be enhanced through effective information sharing, that sharing is essential, even when joint investigations do not occur. Whether single- or multi-jurisdictional, linked investigations must serve the dual objective of preventing further crimes as well as identifying and convicting the offender.
- **Although the Standards identify certain types of investigations where major case management *must* be applied, there are many other circumstances where it may assist in structuring the investigation.** Many of the practices outlined in these standards are suitable for a wide range of investigations, not limited to major cases. Further, the ultimate scope or complexity of an investigation may not be apparent from the outset; what starts as a straightforward investigation may become significantly more complex. Compliance with these standards is encouraged for all types of criminal investigations, as and where appropriate.