

Victoria Police Manual – Policy Rules

Human sources

Context

For the purposes of investigating crimes, police use a number of means to obtain information and intelligence. One source is the use of human sources (informers) or community contacts to obtain information. This policy has been developed in order to protect Victoria Police's reputation, protect the integrity and safety of members and sources when members deal with human sources and to ensure management of human sources is within legal and ethical boundaries.

For the purposes of this policy, a human source is an identified person, who develops or maintains a relationship with another person/s for the purpose of providing information to Victoria Police with an expectation that their identity will be protected, and:

- actively seek out further intelligence or information on direction, request or tasking of police;
- may receive reward, reimbursement or any other benefit;
- there exists a threat or potential of danger or harm to a person as a result of the relationship between the Human Source and Victoria Police or,
- are used as part of any approved undercover police operation.

A community contact is an identified person who, through the course of their day to day activities provides information to Victoria Police with an expectation that their identity will be protected. Community Contacts must not be requested or tasked to actively gather intelligence nor should be considered for reward or benefit. They are generally community minded citizens.

Application

Policy Rules are mandatory and provide the minimum standards that employees must apply. Non-compliance with or a departure from a Policy Rule may be subject to management or disciplinary action. Employees must use the **Professional and ethical standards** to inform the decisions they make to support compliance with Policy Rules.

These Policy Rules apply to:

- Operational members
- Operational supervisors

- Work Unit Managers

Rules and Responsibilities

1. Application

- This policy does not apply to source management procedures within Crime Stoppers, or to internal sources who are employees of Victoria Police providing information alleging corruption, criminality or serious misconduct.

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2. Use of sources

2.1 Human sources

- Human sources must only be used for the purposes of intelligence collection and investigative support in a manner in which the integrity of sources, the community, police members and Victoria Police is protected. PII

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- Human sources must be registered.
- Any interaction with a human source whether active or inactive must be documented on a Human Source Contact Report.
- Human sources must be properly supervised and clear about the legal and ethical boundaries of their activity. They must not be recruited if there are insufficient Handlers, Controllers or other resources available to manage them safely.

2.2 Juvenile sources

- Juvenile sources must only be used where circumstances specifically warrant it. A juvenile source is a human source who is a child as defined in the *Children Youth & Families Act 2005*.
- If a juvenile source is to be used:
 - authorisation of the juvenile source must be limited to one month and subsequent renewals restricted to one month
 - the Local Source Registrar must review the authorisation to register and use the juvenile source within 72 hours
 - a parent and or guardian must give consent unless exceptional circumstances exist. If consent is not obtained, the grounds for not doing so must be properly established and reported to the Local Source Registrar.

- Juvenile sources should only be used to supply information about members of their immediate family in exceptional circumstances.

2.3 *Community contacts*

- Must not be requested or tasked to actively gather intelligence nor should be considered for reward or benefit.
- May be registered in order to protect their confidentiality and ultimately the safety of those persons who assist the police. Refer to **VPMG Human sources** for the process of registration.
- When dealing with a Community Contact, all information must be recorded on a Human Source Contact Report.

3. Registration of human sources

- After establishing that a person is suitable and meets the requirements of registration, the identifying member must submit a Source Registration application to their Work Unit Manager/Supervisor for assessment in accordance **VPMG Human sources**.
- A Risk Assessment must also be completed **PII** of registration by the Handler or Controller in accordance **VPMG Human sources** and the **Human source risk assessment manual**. If a risk assessment identifies a source as high risk, the Source Development Unit (SDU), Intelligence and Covert Support Department, must be contacted for operational advice and assistance.

4. Managing and protecting human sources

4.1 *Requirements for managing*

Accountabilities - appropriate members must be appointed to manage human sources:

- Handler – member who has primary responsibility for contact with the human source and for the initial evaluation of information supplied by that source
- Co-Handler – is a police member who may assist a handler or assume management of a source where the Handler is unavailable
- Controller – a Sergeant or above, who has direct supervision of a Handler. They must maintain the Interpose source management file which contains:
 - All source interaction including contact reports, reward applications and regular management reviews
 - copy of Risk Assessment/s and the Acknowledgement of Responsibilities document
 - copies of all Contact reports.

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- Local Source Registrar - is the Superintendent nominated by the Department Head to have responsibility for the approval of human source registrations at a local level and supervision of source related operations. They must process and review all local source management files on Interpose, including:
 - the Source Registration/Reactivation application
 - the Risk Assessment
 - Update the Local Source Registrar (LSR) comments field in the Interpose file upon each review or new activity requiring their approval.

Reassigning handlers, controllers or supervisors – follow the process in the VPMG Human sources.

4.2 Document security

- All Human Source documentation should be contained within the Interpose Human Source file, restricted to members of the current handling team, the LSR and Central Source Registrar (CSR).
- Documents must be managed in accordance with **VPMP Storage, disposal and destruction of information**.

4.3 Disclosure of information

- Local Source Registrars and the Human Source Management Unit (HSMU) must oversee any disclosure to ensure that the information obtained from a source is disseminated in a timely manner and in accordance with operational needs. Details of how information is disseminated must be recorded on the Interpose file and Contact Report.
- The Handler and Controller must ensure that the identity of the source cannot be deduced from the information disseminated. This means Information Reports must be accurately sanitised.
- In instances where disclosure for the purposes of investigation may place the source at risk, a record of this must be made on the Activity Log including a clear outline of the reasons for non-disclosure.
- If there is any dispute over the dissemination of information from a source, the Central Source Registrar (Superintendent, State Intelligence Division, Intelligence & Covert Support Department) will make the final decision.
- HSMU and the VGSO must be notified immediately if legal process is served to produce any record that may directly or indirectly identify a Source.
- Employees who are requested to provide information in response to an FOI application or subpoena and who become aware that such information may contain intelligence from a source must contact HSMU immediately.

5. Contact with human sources

5.1 Operational security

- Members responsible for handling any information from human sources must ensure that the identity of the source is not compromised.
- The human source must not have any knowledge of, or contact with the home address or private life of any member involved in the handling or managing of the Source.


5.2 Planned meetings

Approval - the Work Unit Manager/Supervisor and/or Controller must approve any planned meeting between a Handler and a human source.

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5.3 Recording and reporting contact

- As soon as practicable following contact with a source the Handler or Co-Handler must complete a Contact Report PII 
- If a chance meeting occurs the Handler or Co-handler must advise the Controller and/or supervisor as soon as practicable.
- Following contact brief the Controller and comply with **VPMG Human sources**.

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6. Paying human sources

6.1 Requirements

- Payments for expenses or reward must only be given to a human source that is registered, and then only where they provide important information or assistance.

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- The Human Source Rewards Committee (HSRC) must approve all reward payments.
- Members must not give any undertaking to a source about a proposed reward prior to HSRC approval.
- A reward payment is any cash, goods, judicial assistance or other like benefit given to a Human Source as reward for information provided to police. This includes letters of assistance which are documents informing a court about assistance provided to Victoria Police by a human source.
- An expense payment is a reimbursement given to a human source resulting from expenses incurred because of direct tasking requests from police.
- Where a human source becomes a witness, payments to meet the costs associated with the witness appearing in court must be made in accordance with **VPMG Court Processes**.

6.2 Applications for payment

Make application for payment in accordance with **VPMG Human sources**.

6.3 Making reward payments

- All reward payments must be made as directed by the HSRC.

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- Record details of payments in accordance with **VPMG Human sources**.

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8. Status of human sources

If a source becomes unsuitable or can no longer be used follow the procedure in **VPMG Human sources** to alter their status.

9. Audit and compliance

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- Controllers must complete a monthly review of the source relationship, risk assessment and information gained and record it in the Interpose source file. -
- The Local Source Registrar must conduct:
 - yearly audits of source management files
 - procedural, ethical and value audits for all active sources they have registration responsibility for.
- All source management reviews must be entered onto the relevant Source Management Module on Interpose. This review should include, but not be limited to Operational Security Issues, potential change to Risk Assessment and ongoing Human Source value to the organisation.
- Refer to the **Workplace inspections manual** for further details about conducting inspections and audits.

Quick Links

- **VPMG Human source**
- **Human sources practice guide**
- **Human source risk assessment manual**

Further Advice and Information

For further advice and assistance regarding these Policy Rules, contact Human Sources Register or your supervisor.

Update history

Date of first issue	22/02/10	
Date updated	Summary of change	Force File number
14/02/11	Section 6 amended to include requirement that payment of human source who becomes a witness must be in accordance with VPMG Court Processes	061937/10
28/4/11	Sections 4, 5 and 9 amended to reflect use of Interpose system for the management of Human Sources.	067083/11

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