Victoria Police Manual
General Category – Operations
Topic – Aids to Investigation
VPM Instruction
111–3   Human Sources   Originally Issued   7/5/07 Last Updated Update History

1.   Policy

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

- Human Sources must always be registered, supervised, properly briefed and clear about the legal and ethical boundaries of their activity.

- Human Sources must not be recruited if there are insufficient Handlers, Controllers or other resources available to manage them safely.

2.   References

- Human Source forms – available from HSMU.
- Human Source Risk Assessment Manual – available from HSMU.

3.   Definitions

Central Source Registrar – is the Detective Superintendent, State Intelligence Division, Intelligence & Covert Support Department, who has responsibility for policy, training and coordination of all source registrations.

Co-Handler – a police member who may assist a handler or assume management of a source where the Handler is unavailable.

Confidential Source – a non-covert Human Source who provides information of interest with an expectation that their identity will be protected. Confidential Sources must not actively seek further intelligence or information on direction, request or tasking of police. Confidential Sources are generally community minded citizens who provide information obtained through the course of their day to day activities.

Controller – a Sergeant or above, who has direct supervision of a Handler.

Covert Source – a Human Source who provides information of interest with an expectation that their identity will be protected, and:

- who actively seek out further intelligence or information on direction, request or tasking of police

- receive reward, reimbursement or any other benefit

or

- there is a threat or potential of danger or harm to a person as a result of the relationship between the Human Source and Victoria Police.

Deputy Central Source Registrar – OIC, HSMU who is a deputy to the Central Source Registrar.

Handler – member who has primary responsibility for contact with the Human Source and for the initial evaluation of information supplied by that source.

Human Source – includes Confidential and Covert Sources.

Human Source Management Unit (HSMU) – Central Source Registry, located within the State Intelligence Division, Intelligence and Covert Support Department.

Juvenile source – a Human Source who is a 'child' as defined in the *Children Youth and Families Act* 2005.

Letter of assistance – a document that may inform a court about assistance provided to Victoria Police by a Human Source. A letter of assistance is a reward and must be signed by the OIC HSMU following approval by the Human Source Rewards Committee.

Local Source Registrar – Superintendents or other Managers nominated by Department Managers to have responsibility for the approval of Human Source registrations at a local level and supervision of Source related operations.

Also refer to the general VPM Dictionary for definitions and acronyms.

4.   Application

This policy does not apply to source management procedures within Crime Stoppers, Ethical Standards Department, or to internal sources who are employees of Victoria Police providing information alleging corruption, criminality or serious misconduct (see VPM 210-3).

5.   Identification of potential Sources

5.1   General

Members have an obligation to identify potential Human Sources. When a potential source is identified, the identifying member must:

- conduct a preliminary risk assessment

- advise their supervisor and seek any necessary assistance from management or HSMU

- complete the Source Registration/Reactivation Application and submit to their Supervisor/OIC if deemed a suitable Human Source.

5.2   Juvenile sources

- Juvenile Sources must only be used where circumstances specifically warrant it. 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.
- clearly explain the possible risks involved.

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

6. Registration

6.1 Confidential Sources

A Confidential Source is a person who provides information only, with no further involvement. When dealing with a Confidential Source all information should be recorded on a Human Source Contact Report. The identifying member must submit a Source registration application to their OIC/Supervisor, however it is not necessary to complete a risk assessment or Acknowledgement of Responsibilities Form.

On receipt of the Source Registration/Reactivation Application the OIC/Supervisor must:

- assess and approve or reject the application. If the status of the Source meets the definition of a Covert Source, ensure the Covert Source registration process is initiated.

- forward the approved application to the HSMU and a copy to the Local Source Registrar for recording

- allocate a suitable Handler and Co-Handler

- ensure a Confidential Source Code is allocated.

- ensure all future documentation refers to the source by the code

- commence an activity log

- monitor the source relationship and ensure the status of the Confidential Source does not change to a Covert Source. If a Confidential Source is to be tasked or receive a reward or benefit they must be de-activated and re-activated as a Covert Source.

6.2 Covert Sources

6.2.1 OIC/Supervisor's responsibilities

On receipt of the Source Registration/Reactivation Application the OIC/Supervisor must:

- assess the suitability of the Human Source and allocate a Controller, Handler and Co-Handler

- evaluate any risks identified in the initial preliminary risk assessment and consider risk management strategies

- consider operational priorities and duty of care issues

- determine if the person is to be registered as a Covert Source or a Confidential Source

- forward completed Registration/Reactivation Application and identity documents to the Local Source Registrar.

6.2.2   *Local Source Registrar Responsibilities*

- On receipt of the Covert Source Registration/Reactivation Application Form the Local Source Registrar must:
  - create a local source management file
  - assess the suitability of the Source
  - evaluate potential and identified risks and ensure management strategies are in place
  - ensure that the allocated Handler, Controller and OIC/Supervisor are appropriate
  - approve or reject the application.

- If an application is rejected the Local Source Registrar must:
  - advise HSMU
  - record the reason for rejection and action taken by the Handler, Controller and Supervisor on the local source management file
  - forward advice of the application and rejection to HSMU.

- If an application is approved the Local Source Registrar must:
  - authorise the Source Registration/Reactivation Application and the allocation of Handler, Co-Handler and Controller
  - contact the HSMU for allocation of a Source code, notify the OIC/Supervisor, Controller and Handler of the code and record it on the Source Registration Form
  - forward the Source Registration/Reactivation Application Form to HSMU
  - Complete the risk assessment and Acknowledgement of Responsibilities and forward to HSMU
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6.2.3   *Responsibilities of Controller on approval of registration*

Once registration has been approved and a source code allocated to the Source the Controller must:

- create a source management file and record the code in the file

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- ensure the Acknowledgement of Responsibilities Form and any recordings are forwarded to the HSMU within 48 hours of the meeting, unless exceptional circumstances exist.

6.2.4   *Responsibilities of HSMU*

When a request for a source code is received from the Local Source Registrar HSMU must:

- ensure there is no duplication of registration. If a duplication is detected and confirmed HSMU must:
  - advise the Local Source Registrar responsible for the first registration of the duplicate and provide the contact details of the Local Source Registrar attempting the secondary registration
  - advise the Local Source Registrar attempting to register of any previous assessments of the Source as unsuitable
  - record details of the registration attempt in the Central Source Database
- generate a code and record it along with the name of the Source in the Central Source Database

7. Risk assessment

7.1 Overview

- A risk assessment must be completed by the Handler or Controller for all Covert Human Sources in line with the Human Source Risk Assessment Manual.

- The risks attached to the management of Human Sources can be categorised into five areas:
  - risk of source being compromised
  - risk of Handler(s)/Controller being jeopardised
  - risk to the integrity of the information
  - risk to Victoria Police of corruption or exposure
  - risk of public harm.

- If a risk assessment identifies a Source as high risk, the HSMU must be contacted for operational advice and assistance.

7.2 Covert Sources

- A full risk assessment must be provided to the Local Source Registrar for approval and must be forwarded to the HSMU [PII ████████████████]

- If the risk assessment is not provided [PII ████████] the registration will be cancelled, and the Local Source Registrar advised that the Source must not be used until a further application has been submitted and approved.

- Controllers must update the risk assessment monthly and more frequently where required

7.3 Confidential Sources

A full risk assessment is not required however the controller must consider the risks involved in dealing with the source, and notify the OIC/Supervisor of all identified risks.

7.4 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.

8. Contact with Covert Sources

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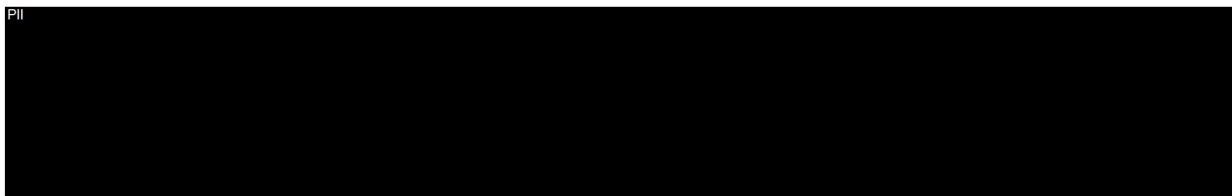
8.2 Providing information to Human Sources

8.2.1 Overview

Handlers must carefully consider what information is to be given to a Human Source, and be aware of the potential for Sources to operate against Victoria Police interests.

8.2.2   *Approval for release of information*

Any release of information to a Human Source must be approved by the Controller and documented in a Contact Report. In addition to this the Local Source Registrar must approve the release of specific information regarding:

8.3   Planned meetings

8.3.1   *Planning*

Meetings with Human Sources must only be held when operationally necessary and must be as short as possible. In planning a meeting the Handler (in consultation with the Controller and/or OIC/Supervisor), must consider:

- the purpose of the contact (operational or personal) and motivation of the Source

- attendance (see section 8.4.3)

- risks associated with the contact and the location of the contact (see section 8.4.4)

- the anticipated outcomes of the contact and the need for electronic recording

8.3.2   *Approval*

The OIC/Supervisor and/or Controller must approve any planned meeting between a Handler and a Human Source.

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8.4   Chance meetings

Handlers and Sources must formulate and practice a cover story for a meeting in the event of a chance encounter with a person known to either party. The cover story must account for the possibility that the person interrupting the meeting knows the Handler as a police member

8.5   Telephone contacts

- Handlers must not make or receive calls from Sources from a personal phone. Any calls to or from a Source must be made/received on a Victoria Police mobile or station/office landline.

- Handlers must obtain a mobile telephone number and/or a landline contact number for the Source

- All telephone numbers provided to and by a Source must be recorded on the Activity Log and Contact Report.

9.   Recording contact

9.1   Record of contact

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- If a chance meeting occurs the Handler or Co-handler must advise the Controller and/or supervisor as soon as practicable.

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9.2   Briefing Controller

As soon as practicable after contact with a Source, and completion of the Contact Report, the Handler or Co-handler must brief the Controller on the report. Following this briefing the Controller must:

- attach the report to the Source Management File and complete the Activity Log

- forward an electronic copy of the report to the HSMU within 48 hours unless exceptional circumstances exist

- circulate the sanitised Information Report, ensuring it does not contain any information that could identify the Source, and forward an electronic copy to HSMU.

10. Confidentiality, disclosure and protection of Human Sources

10.1 Document security

- All Human Source documentation must be kept securely in lockable storage facilities with restricted access. Local Source Registrars are responsible for providing and maintaining secure lockable storage facilities for keeping local source management files. Lockable storage facilities must be provided by OIC/Supervisors to Handlers/Controllers who are managing a Source

- Documents must be managed in accordance with VPM 206-2.

10.2 Disclosure of information supplied by a Human Source

- Local Source Registrars and the 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 Activity Log 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 will make the final decision.

10.3 Protection of Human Source's identity

10.3.1 Records

Care must be taken to avoid associating the true identity of the Source with the Source code in member's diaries, notebooks or Patrol Duty Returns.

10.3.3 Service of process or FOI applications

- HSMU and the Legal Adviser's Office 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.

11. Payments

11.1 Requirements

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

- The Human Source Rewards Committee must approve all payments as rewards.

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- Members should consider alternative sources of funds and schemes available to them from external organisations, which are approachable for rewards. See VPM 111-2 in relation to Government and private rewards. HSRC approval is required for such payments.

- Members must not give any undertaking to a Source about a proposed reward prior to Human Source Rewards Committee approval.

11.2 Applications for payment

11.2.1 Process

- The Request for Source Reward Form must be completed by the Handler and submitted to the Controller. The Controller must update the source management file and forward the request to the OIC/Supervisor.

- The OIC/Supervisor must assess the request, provide a written recommendation and forward all documentation to the Local Source Registrar.

- The Local Source Registrar must forward the request and supporting documentation to the HSMU for consideration by the Human Source Rewards Committee.

- The HSMU is responsible for coordinating all requests to the Human Source Rewards Committee. All letters of Assistance will be prepared by the HSMU from the information provided in the reward application.

11.2.2 Human Source Rewards Committee

The Human Source Rewards Committee is responsible for the evaluation and authorisation of all Human Source reward requests. When a reward is authorised the committee will nominate the source of the funds and the payment method, and will then refer authorised requests to the relevant Local Source Registrar for funding and payment. If a reward is not authorised the committee will provide written explanation to the requesting Local Source Registrar.

11.3 **Making reward payments**

11.3.1 *Method of payment*

All reward payments to Sources must be made as directed by the Human Source Rewards Committee.
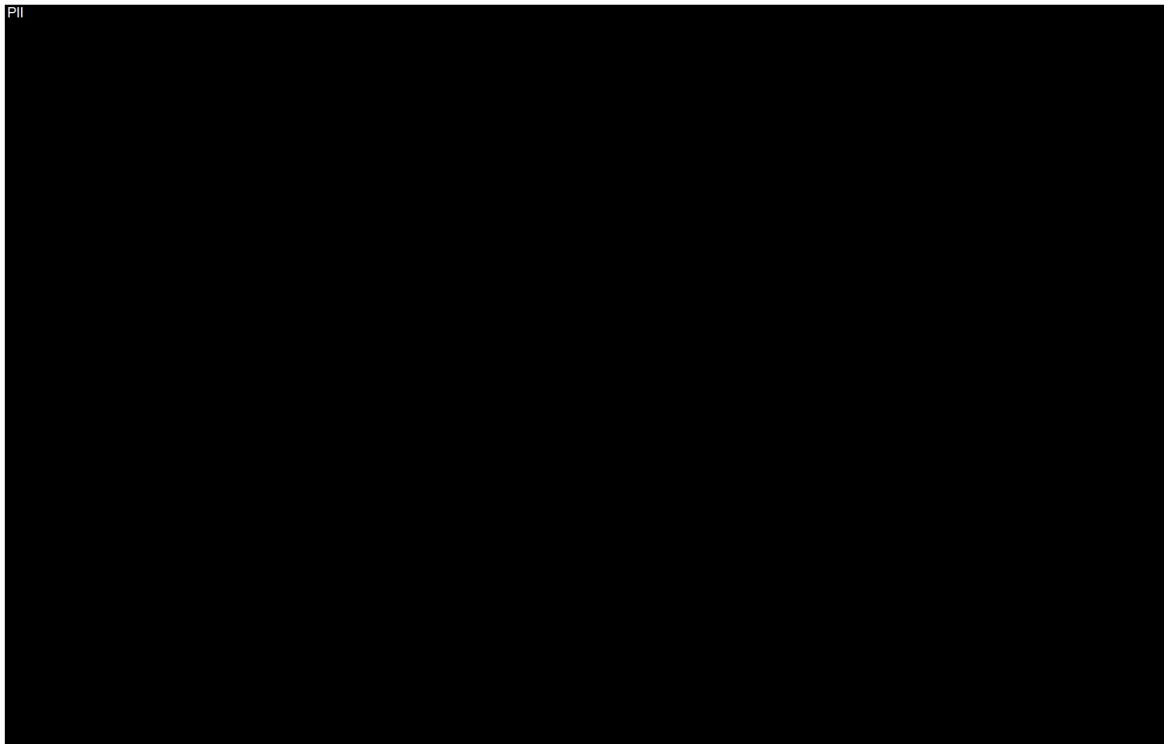
12. Reassigning Handlers, Controllers or Supervisors

12.1 Circumstances

Circumstances may arise where a Local Source Registrar, OIC/Supervisor or Controller may consider it necessary to re-assign the OIC/Supervisor, Controller, Handler or Co-Handler This may include instances where:

- advice to re-assign the OIC/Supervisor , Controller, Handler or Co-Handler has been received from the Central Source Registrar.

- the member is –
  - on leave
  - no longer in the service of Victoria Police
  - assigned duties that preclude contact with the Source
  - found to be unsuitable
  - upgraded within their own office (i.e. cannot become Controller if were Handler)

12.2 Responsibilities of Local Source Registrar

In deciding to re-assign a member or receiving advice from the Central Source Registrar, the Local Source Registrar must:

- direct the responsibility for managing the source to a nominated new OIC/Supervisor, Controller,

Handler or Co-Handler, where the member is to be re-assigned immediately

- personally inform both the existing Controller, Handler and Co-Handler and new Controller, Handler and Co-Handler of the re-assignment

- notify HSMU of the change.

Where the reason for the re-assignment relates to deficiencies in the member's skills, the Local Source Registrar must inform the HSMU, who may assist with remedial training to correct the deficiencies.

12.3   Transfer or secondment of Handler or Controller

- If a Controller, Handler or Co-Handler is transferred or assigned to a position where the Local Source Registrar no longer has the opportunity to closely supervise the member, the Local Source Registrar must immediately notify the HSMU and consult with their counterpart in the Handler's new work location.

- If the member's new duties will prevent them from being able to manage a source, the Local Source Registrar must reallocate responsibility for management of the Source.

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14. Status of Human Sources and deactivation

14.1 Classifications

There are three Source classifications:

- active - currently providing reliable operational information

- inactive - currently not providing reliable operational information, however is able to resume doing so at any given point in time

- unsuitable - has in the past provided operational information, however, they have been assessed unusable. A source may be classified as unsuitable if they have become dangerous, unreliable, or an unacceptable high risk to themselves, Victoria Police or the public.

14.2 Deactivation of Covert Sources

14.2.1 Criteria

- A Covert Source must be de-activated to the status of 'inactive' if:
  - the Source requests de-activation
  - there is no current operational need for the Source
  - the Source moves out of the jurisdiction;
    or
  - the Source has not provided operationally reliable information for a period of at least three months

- If the HSMU does not receive any contact reports from the Handler/Controller for a period of six months, a report will be forwarded to the Local Source Registrar advising that the Source status is 'inactive'. Further use of the Source will require a reactivation application.

14.2.2 Requesting deactivation

Any member involved in the operational management of a Source may recommend the de-activation of a source to the Local Source Registrar. Members requesting de-activation of a Source must:

- consult the Handler, Controller and OIC/Supervisor

- complete a Human Source Contact Report detailing the reasons for de-activation

- complete a Source Deactivation Form and forward to Local Source Registrar for approval

- ensure all outstanding information and contact reports are submitted.

14.2.3 Deactivation

Once deactivation is approved the Controller must:

- ensure that the source management file is hand delivered to the Local Source Registrar

- attend the final meeting, to ensure the Source is fully de-briefed. If the Source is unavailable for a final meeting, submit a report to the Local Source Registrar for approval and forwarding to HSMU.

- where possible, advise the Source that they are no longer:
  – an active Source, or
  – entitled to any reward

14.2.4 Updating of records and filing of documentation

- On receipt of the source management file and Source De-activation Form the Local Source Registrar must:
  – update the Local Source Registry
  – ensure the safe hand delivery of the source management file, local source management file, deactivation interview, audio recordings and any other documents to the HSMU
  – ensure that no documents relating to the management of the Source are retained outside HSMU.

- The Central Source Registrar must ensure that all deactivated Sources are properly de-briefed and an assessment conducted and recorded on the Central Source Database as to:
  – the reasons for deactivation
  – any rewards or reimbursements provided
  – the accuracy of information reporting relevant to the Source
  – the integrity of the relationship between the Source and the Handler/Controller.

15. Audit and compliance

- Controllers must complete a:
  – monthly review of the Source relationship, risk assessment and information gained and record it in the local source management file
  – quarterly report assessing the status of the Source and forward it to the Local Source Registrar

- 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

- The Local Source Registrar or delegate may conduct audit meetings with Sources on an identified needs basis. These meetings will ensure the integrity of the Handler\Source relationship and ensure issues relating to sources providing information against police members have been properly reported

- The Local Source Registrar will audit all matters relating to rewards and benefits, and will notify ESD of any concerns

- Refer to the *Workplace Inspections Manual* for further details about conducting inspections and audits.