

Ministry of Public Safety  
and Security

Ministère de la Sécurité  
et de la Sécurité publique

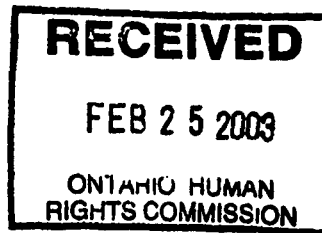


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CM03-00124

**FEB 24 2003**

Mr. Keith C. Norton  
Chief Commissioner  
Ontario Human Rights Commission  
180 Dundas Street West  
Toronto ON M7A 2R9

Dear Mr. Norton: *Keith*

Thank you for your letter inquiring about the practice of Ontario police services pertaining to the release of personal information.

The Law Enforcement and Records Managers' Network (LEARN) is administered by the Information Technology sub-committee of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP). This ministry has no direct involvement in the process, nor have we introduced legislation relating to the LEARN. The LEARN published "Guidelines for the Establishment of a Policy/Procedure for the Release of Information from Police Agency Files" dated April 1999, as a reference for police services.

These guidelines contain only recommendations to the Chief on the release of personal information. The Chief has absolute responsibility pertaining to the use and dissemination of personal information. Normally, police agencies would release information regarding mental illness only if this information was completely relevant to the type of clearance request that was being sought. For example, information regarding a subject's mental health would be pertinent to organizations responsible for the care of children, students seeking counsel or other vulnerable members of society.

A police service may record "cautions" based on a police officer's observations of a subject's demeanour while the subject is dealing with authority figures. Police agencies, however, do not normally collect information about a subject's mental health or condition. Nor are police officers trained to provide medical diagnosis.

I trust this information will assist you. Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Runciman, MPP  
Leeds-Grenville  
Minister