New Westminster Police Department

New Westminster Police Department Guidelines on the City of New Westminster Sanctuary City Policy

The intent of these guidelines is to support the City of New Westminster's Sanctuary City Policy which is intended to provide safe access to City facilities, programs and services for community members with uncertain, precarious, undocumented, refugee or no immigration status, while at the same time acknowledging the unique position the New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) holds as the law enforcement agency responsible for public safety.

The NWPD is mindful of the challenges community members with uncertain, precarious, undocumented, refugee or no immigration status have. Public safety is without question the central objective of the NWPD, one which applies equally to all members of the community regardless of their immigration status. Public trust is also in important factor in the community-police relationship and persons needing police assistance should feel safe in doing so and confident that their immigration status will not be requested or inquired into unless a legal reason exists to do so.

The NWPD remains committed to its compassionate and empathetic approach to anyone who requires our help, and ensuring public safety services are accessible to all members of the community. In support of the "spirit and objectives" of the City of New Westminster's Sanctuary City policy, and to address the concerns of those with uncertain, precarious, undocumented, refugee or no immigration status, NWPD members will adhere to the following principles:

1. NWPD members should not inquire about the immigration or residency status of a complainant, victim or witness, nor communicate with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) regarding their immigration or residency status during the course of a police investigation unless a legal reason exists to do so.

2. The NWPD will not engage in planned or proactive operations or investigations wherein the primary purpose or intention is the enforcement of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).

3. NWPD members will continue to use all of their lawful authorities when dealing with persons who are the subject of a lawful police investigation under Federal, Provincial or Municipal laws. This will include the discretion to enforce all applicable laws (including IRPA), powers of arrest and search, the use of police databases and communication with other law enforcement organizations (including CBSA) where necessary and appropriate.

4. Nothing in these guidelines should be construed as prohibiting NWPD members from fulfilling their common law or statutory duties, including but not limited to the execution of warrants, written orders or the use of police database queries where appropriate.

These guidelines will enable the NWPD to continue to meet its public safety obligations while supporting the Sanctuary City policy and addressing the concerns of complainants, victims and witnesses with uncertain, precarious, undocumented, refugee or no immigration status, who are seeking our help.