



GREATER SUDBURY POLICE SERVICE BOARD POLICY

SUBJECT: RIGHT TO DISCONNECT	POLICY NUMBER: PSB031
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2, 2022	REVISED DATE: December 17, 2025
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: On an annual basis, February of each year, the Chief of Police shall review the procedure and ensure any changes are updated and reported to the Board.	

1.0 LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE / AUTHORITY

- 1.1 On December 2, 2021, the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* (the Act), was amended to create a new requirement for a “right to disconnect” policy. The Act was amended to create a new Part VII.0.1, which establishes a requirement for employers with 25 or more employees as of January 1 of the given year to have a written policy about employees disconnecting from work. “Disconnecting from work” is defined under section 21.1.1 of the Act to mean not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Greater Sudbury Police Service Board and the Greater Sudbury Police Service are committed to providing a work environment that promotes a healthy work-life balance for all employees.
- 2.2 This Policy supports police professional members of the Greater Sudbury Police Service (the “Service”) and Board Staff (collectively, “member” or “members”) in disconnecting from work outside of their normal working hours where appropriate. In recognition of the distinct statutory and common law duties of Police Officers employed by the Board, this Policy applies only to police professional members to whom Part VII.0.1 of the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* (the “ESA”) applies.
- 2.3 It is, therefore, the policy of the Board that the Chief of Police, in regards to Service Members, and the Board Administrator, in regards to Board Staff, will:

- a. Develop processes and/or procedures to ensure that Management and Service members are able to disconnect from the workplace at appropriate times in accordance with this Policy.
- b. Ensure that Management:
 - i. Take all reasonable steps to assist Service members under their management to disconnect from work outside of their normal hours of work as appropriate and in accordance with this Policy;
 - ii. Reasonably attempt to resolve any member concerns about this Policy; and,
 - iii. Advise members of instances in which they may be expected to perform work outside of their normal hours of work.

2.4 The Chief of Police will ensure that:

- a. Members make reasonable efforts to book internal meetings and calls during the attendees' Standard Hours of Work, with the understanding that certain meetings with external parties may be scheduled outside of the Standard Hours of Work;
- b. Work-related communications not be made or sent to or from members' personal mobile phones, personal e-mail addresses, personal telephone numbers or other personal devices, subject to the circumstances detailed in the Guiding Principles or an agreement to communicate in this manner; and,
- c. Recognizing that some members' Standard Hours of Work may differ within the Service, and, as a result, certain members may attend to work-related communications outside of other members' Standard Hours of Work, the sender will consider the timing of their communications and understand that the recipient is generally not expected to respond until their return to work at the earliest, subject to the circumstances detailed in the Guiding Principles.

2.5 The Chief of Police will ensure that no member is penalized or suffers any reprisal action as a result of raising questions regarding this Policy or expressing concerns with compliance (a legitimate and reasonable exercise of management rights is not a penalty or reprisal action).

2.6 The Chief of Police will ensure that:

- a. All new members are provided with a copy of this Policy within 30 days of a member's hire date;
- b. All existing Members are provided with a copy of this Policy, and any amended versions of this Policy, within 30 days of approval or amendment; and

- c. All Members are provided with information regarding their Standard Hours of Work given the nature of their work, and any other information required to assist Members with complying with this Policy.
- 2.8 The Chief of Police will promote efforts to maintain the health and wellbeing of members through the provision of relevant programs, information and/or training with respect to Disconnecting from Work when appropriate.
- 2.9 The Chief of Police will take steps to ensure that any programs, information and/or training related to Disconnecting from Work include:
 - a. Clearly articulated Standard Hours of Work for all members, including parameters and expectations for contact outside of their Standard Hours of Work;
 - b. Clear and specific obligations for the Service, its management, its members, and the Board and its staff to ensure that everyone will work together in order to Disconnect from Work where possible and appropriate, in accordance with the Guiding Principles of this Policy; and,
 - c. Tools, supports and resources to assist management and members in Disconnecting from Work at appropriate times, including through the use of available technology (e.g., out of office messaging on Service-issued phones and computers)

3.0 DEFINITIONS

STANDARD HOURS OF WORK

The schedule or start and end time for a unit/division as set by senior management, based on operational requirements and in accordance with a member's terms and conditions of employment, applicable collective agreements and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the *ESA*. This is generally considered Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., unless otherwise agreed upon.

DISCONNECTING FROM WORK

Not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls, or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.

4.0 WORKING CONDITIONS

- 4.1 **HANDHELD AND REMOTE WORK DEVICES:** The Service may provide some Members with handheld devices, such as a mobile phone, laptop, tablet or other device to assist with working remotely, as determined by Service procedures. These devices are provided to members to encourage flexibility in completing their work. Possession of these devices does not mean that a member is expected to make themselves consistently available for work or work-related communications outside of their normal working hours, subject to the Service's operational needs

and the duties of a member's position and subject to any rights or entitlements the member may have under their terms and conditions of employment, applicable collective agreements, and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the *ESA*.

4.2 **EMAIL:** Members' Standard Hours of Work differ within the Service. As a result, some members may attend to work-related communications outside of other members' Standard Hours of Work. Where this is the case, the sender will consider the timing of their communications and understand that the recipient is generally not expected to respond until their return to work at the earliest, subject to the circumstances detailed above. The sender should also consider using technological measures as part of being mindful of other members' Standard Hours of Work, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Use the "Delay Delivery" function for e-mail messages in Microsoft Outlook so that their message is sent during regular working hours; and,
- b. Indicate in their message that the recipient is not expected to respond to it outside of their normal hours of work.

4.3 **AUTOMATIC REPLIES:** Members are required to activate an automatic e-mail response whenever taking vacation or a leave from work. The automatic response will be sent to all incoming e-mail communications and should advise the sender that the recipient is absent from work. The response will include the start and end date of the recipient's absence and provide an alternative contact's information. The automatic response will be active for at least the duration of the member's absence from work.

5.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.1 The Board commits to promote and support efforts to maintain the health and wellbeing of members through the provision of relevant programs, information and/or training with respect to Disconnecting from Work when appropriate.

5.2 A Member's ability to disconnect from work depends on the Board's or Service's operational needs, and the Board's legal responsibility for the provision of adequate and effective policing, as well as the duties and obligations of a member's position, subject to the terms and conditions of the member's employment with the Board, applicable collective agreements, and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the *ESA*.

5.3 This Policy does not preclude any member from contacting another member outside of what may be considered normal working hours or standard business hours, subject to any rights or entitlements the receiving member may have under the terms and conditions of their employment, applicable collective agreements, and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the *ESA*.

5.4 The Board recognizes that there are situations when it is necessary for members

to perform work or communicate with another member outside of their Standard Hours of Work, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

- a. Where emergency or exigent circumstances arise, with or without notice;
- b. To assist or fill in at short notice for a member;
- c. Where the nature of a member's duties requires work and/or work-related communications outside of their Standard Hours of Work;
- d. Unforeseeable business or operational reasons;
- e. A member's request or agreement to work certain hours or have flexible working hours; and
- f. Other unusual circumstances which are inherent to a member's position.

5.5 Members are expected to:

- a. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that they effectively manage their work and work-related communications during their Standard Hours of Work;
- b. Fully cooperate with any time recording methods which the Service uses to track hours of work;
- c. Be mindful of other members' Standard Hours of Work by not routinely expecting work-related contact outside of hours of work; and
- d. Notify their direct supervisor or another supervisor if they feel undue pressure to work or respond to work-related communications outside of their normal working hours, or if they are otherwise unable to comply with this Policy.

5.6 This Policy does not afford members a "right to disconnect" or a "greater right or benefit" beyond what is contained within the terms and conditions of their employment, applicable collective agreements, and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the *ESA*.

5.7 The Board, Service and Service members will work together to assist members in disconnecting from work outside of their Standard Hours of Work as appropriate and in accordance with this Policy.