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Title	Covert Policing Standards Policy
Version	Version 3.0
Summary	This policy identifies the governance structure for all MPS covert policing standards. It also sets corporate standards that are designed to prevent the unauthorised exposure of covert policing techniques and the compromise of covert policing operations.
Branch / OCU	Covert Policing Standards Board
Author	SCD14 Covert Policing Standards Unit (CPSU)
Date created	September 2011
Review date	September 2015

Introduction

This revised policy identifies the governance structure for all MPS covert policing standards. It requires all policies, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and local working instructions that relate to the use of covert policing tactics and covert assets to be approved by the Covert Policing Standards Board.

This policy also sets corporate standards that are designed to prevent the unauthorised exposure of covert policing techniques and prevent the compromise of covert policing operations. Where these incidents still occur, instruction is given on how to report these incidents to the Covert Policing Standards Unit (CPSU).

Application

This policy becomes effective immediately.

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to the MPA must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant MPS policy and associated procedures.

However, this policy applies in particular to:

- All police officers and police staff engaged in covert operational policing
- All police officers and police staff working in support of covert policing operations
- All police officers and police staff engaged in the development of policies, procedures and local working practices relating to covert policing methods
- All members of the Covert Policing Standards Board

N.B. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Purpose

As criminals and criminal networks become ever more sophisticated so the vital importance of protecting effective policing techniques to combat their activity increases. Covert policing techniques are vital to the success of gathering intelligence and evidence in support of both pro-active operations and reactive investigations. Therefore any unauthorised exposure of covert policing methodology or equipment could have a detrimental effect on the capabilities of not only the MPS but also other Law Enforcement Agencies to tackle serious crime.

The purpose of the Covert Policing Standards Policy is to ensure that any use of covert policing tactics by the MPS is conducted in a way that will maximise the effectiveness of the tactic while minimising the risk of compromise to the operation and/or unauthorised exposure of covert techniques and equipment. This policy will support the Covert Policing Strategy to deliver covert policing professionally, legally, ethically and consistently on behalf of the MPS.

Scope

This policy applies to the development and use of any covert policing tactic. Policing tactics are covert if they relate to investigative and intelligence gathering operations that are carried out in a manner calculated to ensure that the persons subject to such activity

and the general public are unaware that it is, or may be, taking place. This includes safeguarding methodologies, intelligence/evidence gathered and equipment used for covert policing purposes.

Nothing in this policy is intended to detract from the Management of Policy Development in the MPS which is a corporate process overseen by the MPS Policy Co-ordination Unit. All covert policing standards will continue to adhere to the standards set in that policy when applicable.

Policy Statement

The development of all MPS policies, SOPs and local working instructions that relate to the use of covert policing tactics and covert assets by the MPS must be registered with the Covert Policing Standards Unit (CPSU). The CPSU will maintain the Covert Policing Corporate Standards Index (CPCSI) on behalf of the MPS Head of Profession Covert Policing. See link to Role of the CPSU in the process for adoption of Covert Policing Standards.

The Covert Policing Standards Board (CPSB) must approve all MPS policies, SOPs and local working instructions that relate to the use of covert policing tactics and covert assets by the MPS. The Terms of Reference and Governance Structure – Covert Policing explains the roles and responsibilities of Working Groups and individuals that support the Head of Professional Covert Policing in their role as Chair of the CPSB.

SCD14(1) Covert Operational Security Unit (COSU) has been developed as an MPS resource to provide advice and support to MPS personnel wishing to deploy covert tactics.

All covert policing deployments must be subjected to a risk assessment process that considers operational security. COSU have developed the PLAICE Model of risk which is bespoke to covert policing issues.

Compliance with the Management of Policy Development in the MPS will ensure that all covert policing work activities are subject to necessary Safety and Health risk assessments.

All technical covert assets being used by the MPS must be managed in accordance with the Covert Asset Registers SOP.

Any compromise of a covert policing tactic, operation or asset must be reported to the CPSU in accordance with the National Compromise Database SOP.

The SCD14(1) COSU and SCD14(2) Inspection and Review Team will conduct reviews of specific operational activity as well as MPS-wide thematic inspections to monitor compliance with covert policing standards, to establish whether a standard remains fit for purpose and identify areas of organisational learning.

Benefits

The identification and maintenance of corporate covert policing standards will ensure that covert tactics are deployed legally, ethically and consistently across the MPS.

Registration of the development of new or existing standards with the CPSU ensures activity is not duplicated across different parts of the organisation.

Increased use of the National Compromise Database will make better use of resources by preventing the deployment of inappropriate tactics.

The use of covert asset registers will allow the MPS to improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which it deploys technical covert assets.

Responsibilities

The Covert Policing Standards Board owns this policy.

The Head of Profession Covert Policing is responsible for implementing this policy.

The Covert Policing Standards Unit is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy.

Associated Documents and Policies

MPS Covert Policing Standards Policy SOPs:

- Inclusion process -SOP
- Covert Asset Registers -SOP
- National Compromise Database –SOP
- Mandatory Notification to the Office of Surveillance Commissioners SOP

Other Guidance relating to MPS Covert Policing Standards Policy:

- Terms of Reference and Governance Structure – Covert Policing v3.2
- Role of the CPSU in the process for adoption of Covert Policing Standards.
- PLAICE model of risk assessment

Other associated MPS Policies and SOPs:

- The MPS Security Code (METSEC)
- Management of Policy Development in the MPS

The following Notices are cancelled by this document

Item 3, Notices 03/2006, 25 January 2006

Item 3, Notices 08/2006, 01 March 2006

Item 4, Notices 45/06, 15 January 2006

Item 2, Notices 49/06, 13 December 2006

Item 2, Notices 18/08, 30 April 2008