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News Release

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Commissioner welcomes changes to employment-related record checks in B.C.

VICTORIA—B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham is welcoming a new province-wide policy for employment-related record checks that includes an end to the disclosure of mental health information by police.

The provincial government developed the new policy in consultation with the BC Association of Chiefs of Police and the BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police. The changes were [announced by the Ministry of Justice](#) on Dec. 19, 2014 and have been endorsed by all municipal police departments and the B.C. RCMP.

Key changes include a prohibition against the disclosure of mental health information, including suicide attempts, in all police information checks. In addition, when individuals apply for positions that do not involve work with children or vulnerable adults, police agencies will no longer disclose non-conviction information, such as investigations that do not result in charges, and charges that did not result in convictions. Police agencies will continue to disclose outstanding charges and convictions for all checks.

The new policy follows an April 2014 [investigation report](#) from Commissioner Elizabeth Denham outlining the privacy concerns arising from the use of police information checks as a hiring tool, which she has described as her most important report to date.

“The new [model policy](#) strikes a more appropriate balance between an individual’s right to privacy and an employer’s need to obtain relevant background information on potential employees,” said Commissioner Denham.

“The removal of mental health information from all checks was the single biggest issue for citizens who contacted my office with concerns about the former provincial policy. There is no reason why mental health information, including past suicide attempts, should be included in an employment-related record check.

“I wish to acknowledge the work of government and police agencies to implement these important policy changes that will make a difference in the lives of British Columbians seeking work or volunteer opportunities. I will be monitoring the implementation of this policy and I remain committed to working with government to develop a legislative framework for record checks as is being done in Ontario,” said Denham.

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