

**Ministry of the Attorney General**

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Our Reference # A-2019-306

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Marc Bedard, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Public Safety Division and Public Safety Training Division  
Ministry of the Solicitor General

**Date:** November 1, 2019

**FROM:** Sheila Bristo  
Assistant Deputy Attorney General  
Court Services Division

**SUBJECT:** **Search Warrant Tracking System – Control Number**

This memorandum is being sent to advise you that Court Services Division, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Justice of Ontario Court of Justice, will be implementing a new process to facilitate access requests for search warrants, effective November 12, 2019.

There is currently no consistent process throughout the province to track search warrants. A pilot project has been underway in Newmarket and Toronto courthouses that now assigns a “control number” (i.e. tracking number) to every search warrant prior to it being submitted for review by a judicial official. The pilot project has significantly improved our ability to track and locate search warrants in both of these locations.

Due to the success of the pilot project, and in order to implement a consistent process throughout the province, the judiciary have endorsed the following:

- When submitting a search warrant application, police officers will be asked to obtain a search warrant control number prior to the application being presented to a judicial official for review;
- Officers will obtain the control number from the local administrative office staff at each court location. Once generated by staff, the control number will be given to the submitting officer and written on the top righthand corner of the search warrant application;

- The search warrant application will then be submitted to the judicial official for consideration;
- When a report to justice is subsequently filed, the report must display the corresponding search warrant control number which will allow staff to easily retrieve the entry and update the search warrant tracking system as required. If the control number is not provided, the officer should contact the submitting officer to obtain that number;
- Where a police officer applies to unseal a search warrant, the application materials must include the search warrant control number. This will allow staff to quickly identify and locate the requested warrants; and
- When an access request is made by the media or the public in relation to a sealed warrant, and staff are unable to identify the correct one, the requestor will be directed to the local police office to obtain the search warrant control number.

#### Expected impact on Police Officers

Based on the current search warrant application process, it is anticipated that the province-wide expansion of the pilot project process will have minimal impact on police officers.

The process outlined above will assist officers as they will now possess a unique tracking number (i.e. the control number) which will allow them to reference and locate a warrant when they receive requests for access or when filing paperwork after the execution of the warrant.

We recognize that this process may increase requests for information by members of the media to their local police office. However, we will ensure that court staff take every step to identify the requested warrant prior to referring the media to the police.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



Sheila Bristo  
Assistant Deputy Attorney General  
Court Services Division

Ministry of the Solicitor General

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**MEMORANDUM TO:** All Chiefs of Police and  
Commissioner Thomas Carrique  
Chairs, Police Services Boards

**FROM:** Marc Bedard  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Public Safety Division and Public Safety Training Division

**SUBJECT:** Search Warrant Tracking System

<b>DATE OF ISSUE:</b>	<b>November 13, 2019</b>
<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	<b>General Information</b>
<b>RETENTION:</b>	<b>Indefinite</b>
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<b>PRIORITY:</b>	<b>Normal</b>

At the request of the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG), I am sharing a communication regarding a new process for search warrants, effective November 12, 2019.

Please review the attached memo from Assistant Deputy Minister Sheila Bristow, which provides details on the new search warrant control numbers and associated process. If you require further information, please contact Valerie Rizzo at [Valerie.Rizzo@ontario.ca](mailto:Valerie.Rizzo@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Bedard".

Marc Bedard  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Public Safety Division and Public Safety Training Division

Attachment