

FAQ: What should I do when the police ask for information about our clients?

From time to time, law enforcement officials may come into your Ministry Unit asking to see your client list, to enter your shelter to look around, or for other information about clients and their whereabouts. Deciding whether or not to allow entry or disclose this information requires that The Salvation Army balance its need for **both client and police trust**, as well as consider issues related **public safety** and **individual privacy**.

These decisions must be taken carefully and should therefore be directed to the **Chief Privacy Officer** in each Ministry Unit, which is usually the Executive Director or designate.

Ensuring that responsibility for these decisions is taken by management—who will in turn ensure that requests are supported by appropriate procedures and documentation—will **prevent frontline workers from being in a position to share client lists or other information upon informal request**.

The Ministry Unit should have a policy in place which protects client information from disclosure to third parties without consent and is otherwise in line with the **Territorial Privacy Manual** (See Operating Policy 7920).

If the police turn up at your Ministry Unit **seeking entrance to the building** in order to look around, the Chief Privacy Officer or designate should be summoned to determine access. In the interest of client trust and ensuring that our shelters are safe client spaces, access should be granted to police only where the request is accompanied by appropriate court documents.

If the police turn up at your Ministry Unit, **asking for client information**, use this flowchart to determine your course of action:



POLICE DISCLOSURE REQUEST

