



OFFICIAL: Sensitive

SAPOL Policy, Neighbourhood Watch SA (NHW) Volunteer Media Policy

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SA (NHW) VOLUNTEER MEDIA POLICY

Policy title	Neighbourhood Watch SA (NHW) Volunteer Media Policy
Date of operation	January 2025
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Review responsibility	NHW SA State Coordinator
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Associated General Order	Media and Social Media
Enquiries to	NHW SA Unit Telephone 7322 4043
Corporate Policy Sponsor	Officer in Charge, Communication and Engagement Branch

SAPOL employees must comply with Corporate Policy. Refer to General Order, **Corporate policy framework**.

CONTENTS

1. POLICY STATEMENT	3
Scope	3
Commentary	3
2. DEFINITIONS	3
3. RELEASING INFORMATION	4
4. SPOKESPERSONS	4
5. UNSATISFACTORY BEHAVIOUR	5
6. REFERENCES	5
7. FURTHER ENQUIRIES	5
8. DOCUMENT HISTORY	5

1. POLICY STATEMENT

South Australia Police (SAPOL) volunteers are fundamentally important to NHW and the ongoing development of the program, without volunteers the program would not function.

NHW volunteers may be contacted by the media regarding the NHW program or local crime matters. Conversely, NHW volunteers may consider contacting the media for promotional reasons.

This Policy provides support and information for NHW volunteers in relation to interacting with the media and must be followed to ensure a professional and consistent approach for the NHW program in these dealings.

Guidance can also be provided by the NHW State Coordinator. Contact information is included at the end of the document.

Scope

This Policy applies to all NHW volunteers.

Commentary

Policing attracts significant community and media interest. Traditional media and social platforms provide a powerful conduit for NHW and SAPOL to distribute key messages to the community.

However, interaction with the media should not be of such a nature that it:

- compromises the safety of the community or police
- is in contradiction to any law or binding government instruction or court order
- adversely impacts the rights of victims and suspects
- adversely impacts operational policing or any police investigations.

The media will publish what they are told, what they see and what they hear. Criticism cannot be levelled at the media if a SAPOL or NHW representative has provided wrong, inaccurate or inappropriate information.

2. DEFINITIONS

NHW volunteer - a police volunteer who is registered as an official NHW volunteer and undertakes defined activities, of their own free will and without payment. This includes Police Volunteer Program (PVP) volunteers who have gone through training and can sit on a NHW Area's committee, and NHW Supporter volunteers who deliver NHW newsletters.

Media - includes all mediums, such as newspaper, magazine, television, radio or publication, it also encompasses any digital media such as email, internet, social media, texting or similar.

Police Coordinator - a sworn SAPOL employee, who is assigned to a NHW area. They act as the conduit between the NHW area and SAPOL. They support the NHW area with various tasks and attend meetings. Each NHW area should have an assigned Police Coordinator and the NHW area's committee should know who it is as part of their role.

District Community Engagement Section (DCES) / Local Service Area (LSA) Crime Prevention Section (CPS) - local sections in SAPOL that are responsible for community engagement in their District or LSA. Through their community engagement responsibilities they support the NHW program. In instances where a NHW area does not have an assigned Police Coordinator, the area should contact their DCES/CPS.

Local Volunteer Coordinator – a trained SAPOL employee, who manages police volunteers in their District, LSA or section. The Local Volunteer Coordinator will provide ongoing training as required and will manage the administration of volunteers, including reviews and ensuring appropriate supervision. A PVP volunteer should know their Local Volunteer Coordinator as part of their role.

3. RELEASING INFORMATION

A NHW volunteer must refer all media enquiries to their usual SAPOL contact (Police Coordinator, DCES/CPS or Local Volunteer Coordinator) prior to responding, including:

- any request from the media for information or interview
- any interaction resulting in information possibly being provided to the media or posted to websites by an individual.

The Police Coordinator, DCES/CPS or Local Volunteer Coordinator will engage with the NHW volunteer to respond to the media enquiry and action it appropriately.

If a NHW volunteer or area would like to proactively engage the media regarding NHW activities, they must contact their usual SAPOL contact (Police Coordinator, DCES/CPS or Local Volunteer Coordinator) first. They must not contact the media prior to gaining approval from their Police Coordinator, DCES/CPS or Local Volunteer Coordinator.

A NHW volunteer must not provide information to the media which:

- is a statement of individual opinion
- is considered by the media outlet to be a statement made off the record
- may hinder or adversely affect ongoing investigations or other police operations
- aims to network or lobby with other organisations
- is political - NHW must remain politically neutral at all times
- speaks on behalf of SAPOL

- regarding SAPOL corporate matters or matters relating to the operation and administration of the NHW program. These types of comments will only be made by the President of the NHW Volunteers Association of SA Inc. Board of Management, the NHW State Coordinator, or an appropriate member of the SAPOL Media Unit
- is not related to their specific NHW area
- includes policing methods or local police administrative decisions. This is the responsibility of the SAPOL District and LSA managers
- is not approved by SAPOL.

4. SPOKESPERSONS

In some circumstances, a NHW volunteer may be nominated by SAPOL to speak to the media. The most appropriate spokesperson will be determined by their SAPOL contact (Police Coordinator, DCES/CPS or Local Volunteer Coordinator) in conjunction with the relevant NHW Area Coordinator.

5. UNSATISFACTORY BEHAVIOUR

If a NHW volunteer does not follow the standards set out in this Policy it may be necessary for a SAPOL representative to examine the circumstances. The SAPOL representative will exercise due diligence and procedural fairness at all times. A matter may be referred to the State Volunteer Coordinator and NHW State Coordinator for review as it may impact on the volunteer's ability to remain in the PVP.

6. REFERENCES

General Order, Media and social media

SAPOL Volunteer User Guide

7. FURTHER ENQUIRIES

Neighbourhood Watch SA State Coordinator

SAPOL.NeighbourhoodWatch@police.sa.gov.au

8. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Gazette reference (SAPG)	Date	Action (amendment/deletion/new/review/temporary variation)
Nil	23/08/2022	New Policy
Nil	11/12/2024	Updated Policy
Nil	8/1/2025	Signed by Officer in Charge Community Engagement Branch

APPROVED BY SAPOL BRANCH MANAGER

Supt Wendy Scarman PD03977
Officer in Charge
Communication & Engagement Branch

.....
Print Full Name ID Number
.....
Signature Date

[Handwritten Signature] *8/1/25*

APPROVED BY NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC PRESIDENT

BENJAMIN JOHN WILLIAMS
Print Full Name ID Number

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[Handwritten Signature]
Signature Date
PRESIDENT
NHW VASA INC.

9/1/25

Documentation certification and verification

Policy draft — prepared by: ASO5, Siobhan Eastham, Communications and Engagement Officer NHW (NHW State Coordinator), Community Engagement Section
Policy — verified by: Superintendent Christine Baulderstone, Officer in Charge, Communication and Engagement Branch
Policy — verified by: Phil Tavender, President, Neighbourhood Watch Volunteers Association of South Australia Inc.
Policy — updated by: ASO7, Kirsty Mudge, Communications and Engagement Manager, NHW (NHW State Coordinator) – 11 December 2024