



## Police Association of Ontario Commends Provincial Government for Amending COVID-19 Enforcement Orders

April 17, 2021 – While the Police Association of Ontario (PAO) acknowledges that the worsening COVID-19 public health crisis must be addressed, the greater enforcement authorities that were originally announced yesterday as part of the Ontario government’s enhanced emergency orders would have created a very challenging environment for both front-line police personnel and communities across the province.

Following Friday’s announcement, the PAO immediately reached out to the Ministry of the Solicitor General to provide extensive feedback on their decision to expand the emergency orders to include the ability for police to randomly stop individuals who may be in breach of them. “It is unrealistic and unnecessary for officers to stop people who are taking a walk, going for groceries or travelling to/from their essential service role. This was not a role our officers asked for or were interested in taking on within their communities,” said PAO President Bruce Chapman. “We have advocated strongly to the Ontario government for expanded clarity regarding their intentions for these new enforcement orders to ensure the policing profession and all Ontarians are accurately informed,” he continued.

The PAO commends the Ontario government for listening to the feedback of policing stakeholders, community groups and the public, and for amending the enforcement orders contained within the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) to remove the parameter for police and other provincial officers to randomly question individuals during this stay-at-home order. The PAO’s over 28,000 sworn and civilian police personnel members are dedicated to upholding public safety in their communities, and that will never waver. They will continue to take direction from their local police service and association regarding their roles in enforcing the orders of the EMCPA, such as responding to reports of large gatherings that blatantly violate the Act.

“Throughout this pandemic, our members have conducted themselves with a high level of professionalism. They have taken on expanded responsibilities and heightened levels of risk, and they have remained flexible to these changes,” said President Chapman. “Our members know, because they experience it firsthand every day, that the public is growing increasingly frustrated with the continued restrictions especially now that this health crisis has extended beyond a year, but we have to stay the course.”

The latest COVID-19 modelling numbers are extremely concerning, and more needs to be done to address the immense strain our health care system currently faces due to this virus and its variants. “Ontario’s police personnel are committed to doing their part to help stop the spread of COVID-19, and that includes engaging and educating the public on the rules of this stay-at-home order,” said Chapman. “We are asking everyone to please do their part and abide by the emergency measures to ensure the continued health and safety of yourselves, your loved ones, and the province’s invaluable essential service workers and first responders.”