

Western Cape Provincial
Community Police Board

Community Police Forum

Introductory Welcome

v.022025



**civilian secretariat
for police**

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**Western Cape
Government**

FOR YOU

Police Oversight and
Community Safety



Western Cape Provincial Community Police Board
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Community Police Forum Operational Guide

1. Introduction

The Community Police Forum ('CPF') serves as a vital bridge between the police service and the local community. Its primary role is to foster collaboration, enhance communication, and promote joint efforts in addressing social crime prevention and fostering safer neighbourhoods. This guide outlines the high-level operational responsibilities, functions, attitudes and best practices for civilian CPF members at each police precinct.

The CPF plays a critical role in fostering safe communities through collaboration, accountability, and proactive engagement. By familiarizing yourself with this document, CPF members will be better equipped to support both the police and the communities they serve, ensuring a united front against crime and public safety challenges.

2. Aims and Objectives

- a) The Forums and Boards shall:
- b) Accomplish all the objectives set out in section 18(1) of the Act;
- c) Establish and maintain a partnership between the community and SAPS;
- d) Promote communication between SAPS and the community;
- e) Promote co-operation between SAPS and the community in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing;
- f) Improve the rendering of Services to the community at National, Provincial, District and Sub-District and Local levels;
- g) Promote transparency and accountability of the Service to the community; and
- h) Promote joint problem-identification and solving with the SAPS and the community;
- i) Be subject to oversight and held accountable by its higher-level forum and board, and will exercise oversight and hold accountable forums and boards under its mandate;
- j) Promote co-operation between the South African Police Service, the local community, other Law Enforcement Agencies, Community Safety Structures, Victim Support Structures, Community-based Organisations and Institutions and the Municipal Police Service;

- k) Promote respect for human rights within the ranks of the SAPS, the local community, other Law Enforcement Agencies, Community Safety Structures, Victim Support Structures, Community-based Organisations and Institutions and the Municipal Police Service;
- l) Negotiate and co-operate with other Institutions at Local, District, Sub-District, Provincial and National Level in order to promote the aims and objectives of the Forums and Boards;
- m) Mobilise the community and organisations in the community to join the Forums, Sub-Forums, Community Safety Structures and Support Structures;
- n) Assist with the initiation and co-ordination of social crime prevention programs and projects in conjunction with SAPS, other State Departments, Law Enforcement Agencies, Municipal Police Service and other CPF Structures;
- o) Request the Service to account on the achievement of the objectives in terms of section 205(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

3. Integrity, Risk & Personal Safety

a) Respect the Uniform Constitution & the Institution at Large:

CPF members uphold the CPF Uniform Constitution and Code of Conduct because they recognize the gravity and potential risks associated with their roles in social crime prevention and community safety. Their actions can influence public trust, foster cooperation, and contribute to the well-being of entire neighbourhoods. Adhering strictly to ethical guidelines not only protects the integrity of the CPF but also safeguards individual members, community residents, and law enforcement partners.

b) Safety is Serious Business:

Dealing with crime and social issues places CPF members in sensitive and potentially dangerous situations. Without adherence to establish protocols, CPF Uniform Constitution and Code of Conduct, actions may inadvertently escalate tensions or jeopardize community safety.

c) Risk of Personal Harm

CPF members often engage with sensitive information and interact in untrusted environments (as a natural course of duty), which can place them in harm's way. It is essential to handle confidential information with discretion, ensuring that sensitive or privileged details are not displayed, discussed publicly, or shared inappropriately. CPF members should always transfer crime-related information directly to the relevant SAPS officers without oversharing, even within the police service.

Additionally, CPF members must avoid deliberately provoking or confronting troublesome individuals. Acting with calmness and restraint reduces the risk of escalating tensions. Engaging aggressively can not only compromise personal safety but also hinder long-term trust between the CPF and the community. By maintaining professionalism and adhering to protocols, CPF members can mitigate personal risk and ensure safer, more effective community interactions.

d) Legal and Criminal Repercussions

CPF members who disregard protocols may face legal action, not only for personal misconduct but also for any actions that violate constitutional rights, criminal procedure acts or community policing frameworks.

e) Safeguarding the CPF's Reputation

CPF members represent not only their precinct but the broader CPF structure. Ethical lapses by one member can tarnish the credibility of the entire CPF, diminishing its influence, compromising safety partnerships and relationships with the community at large.

Summary:

CPF members respect the Constitution and Code of Conduct because they recognize the vital role they play in fostering safer communities. By maintaining professionalism, upholding ethical standards, and reinforcing positive relationships, CPF members contribute to lasting community resilience and trust.

4. Newly Elected CPF

Congratulations on your election or re-election!

However, being elected does not automatically ensure the immediate effectiveness of a CPF. Success requires the combined effort of the CPF Chairperson & Executive, the Station Commander, SAPS Management, the Safety Structures, and the community. The true work begins now—building and nurturing relationships through patience, tolerance, and compromise.

a) **Introduce Yourself**

CPF members must clearly distinguish their roles to avoid confusion. Transparency builds trust and ensures the community understands the CPF's role as a civilian partner working alongside SAPS to enhance community safety. Never allow anyone to refer to you as a police official and never introduce yourself as a member of the police service. CPF members are elected community officials and the CPF as an organisation is established in the SAPS Act. You have a definite mandate to act in your designated capacity.

Approach:

- **Verbal Clarity:** “Good afternoon, I am Robin Harare, a member of the Community Police Forum. I work with SAPS as a volunteer to improve security and address community safety concerns.”
- **Body Language:** Maintain an open, non-intimidating posture to show approachability.
- **Visual Identification:** Wear CPF-branded clothing or ID badges that clearly indicate your civilian role (where possible).

Example:

During a community meeting in Atlantis, CPF members introduced themselves by clarifying that their goal is to strengthen collaboration between SAPS and residents. This prevented misunderstandings about CPF's role in police operations.

b) Greeting the Station Upon Entry

Simple courtesies such as greetings build mutual respect and create a positive working environment at the station. CPF members should demonstrate respect to the community present in the Service Center and SAPS staff, reinforcing partnerships and camaraderie. Always address SAPS members by their rank or designation at all times.

Approach:

- **Greeting Example 1:** “Good morning, Lansdowne. Good morning, Shift Members.”
- **Greeting Example 2:** “Good morning, Constable Sam, I hope you are well today.”
- **Greeting Example 3** (privately and only for the CPF Chairperson): “Good morning, CSC Commander, how has the community been today? Are there any matters I can assist in addressing?”
- **Consistency:** Greet the community present and station staff regularly to foster familiarity and goodwill.
- **Acknowledgment:** In the beginning, do not expect a greeting in return as this behaviour will eventually improve over time with persistence and patience. These positive behaviours may help improve the culture and mood of the station.

Example:

At Cape Town Central Police Station, a CPF member consistently greets officers and the community upon entry, creating a welcoming atmosphere that lifts the mood, encourages cooperation and strengthens the relationship between the CPF, SAPS and the Community.

c) Addressing Police Officers by Their Rank

Acknowledging police ranks reflects respect for SAPS protocols and affirms CPF’s recognition of the highly structured environment police operate within. This enhances mutual respect and reinforces the CPF’s role as a supportive partner.

Approach:

- **During Formal Interactions:** “Colonel Khumalo, may I have a moment to discuss some community concerns?”
- **Informal Settings:** Continue to use rank as a sign of respect even during community events or casual encounters.

Example:

At a crime awareness event in Grabouw, CPF members addressed all officers by their ranks, fostering a professional atmosphere. The next day at an informal event where SAPS officers were in attendance, CPF members again addressed all officers by their ranks building mutual respect.

d) Engaging with Community Members

CPF members must balance empathy with confidence when interacting with the community. They represent a critical link between residents and SAPS, fostering trust through positive, solution-driven communication.

Approach:

- **Tone and Language:** “Good evening, Ma’am. I hear your concerns about street robberies in your area, and I will ensure this is raised at our next CPF meeting.”
- **Confidence with Empathy:** Listen carefully and respond calmly, showing the community their voices matter.
- **Boundaries:** Clearly explain the CPF’s role in collaboration with SAPS and direct issues to the relevant station personnel when needed. Always be cool, calm and collected.

Example:

At a Langa neighbourhood gathering, a CPF member reassured a worried resident by attentively listening and assuring them their concerns would be presented to SAPS. This approach helped strengthen the community’s trust in both CPF and the police.

5. Operational Relationships

a) With the Police Services (SAPS)

- **Regular Meetings:** Attend operational meetings with station management to discuss CPF activities and ongoing projects. See Uniform Constitution for more information.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Develop a formal reporting process for sharing community concerns and feedback.
- **Joint Planning:** Work alongside police to plan community policing strategies and interventions.
- **Accountability Forums:** Facilitate accountability meetings between police leadership and the community.

b) With the Community

- **Representation:** Act as community representatives during police forums, ensuring community voices are heard.
- **Feedback Channels:** Establish mechanisms to invite the community to suggest improvements for service delivery and create platforms to share updates with the community.
- **Volunteer Mobilization:** Recruit and manage community volunteers for CPF initiatives.
- **Transparency:** Share relevant information regarding crime trends and CPF activities with the community.
- **Listening and Mediation:** Listen objectively to complaints about SAPS from the community, as well as feedback from SAPS about the community. Strive to bring about just, equitable solutions in community-based disputes.

c) With the Safety Structures

- **Representation:** Act in support of community safety structures. These structures do not report to the CPF, except for Community in Blue (CIB) and CPF Sector Sub-Forums and structures exclusively established by the CPF Forum and Sub-Forum. The CPF should respect inherent autonomy and create an environment that fosters collaboration, inclusion and respect for all forum participants.

- **CPF Sector Sub-Forums:** Station CPF Forums together with Station Commanders are responsible for setting up CPF Sector Sub-Forums in conjunction with SAPS Sector Managers. These Sector Sub-Forums take their direction from the higher-level CPF forum and are under the Forum's oversight.
- **Community in Blue (CIB):** CIB patrollers are directed by the SAPS during operations. CIB patrollers are selected, and may be deselected, by the local CPF and are also managed by, and accountable to, the local CPF. The local CPF should refrain from managing CIB patrollers during active operations while they are being directed by SAPS.
- **Victim Empowerment (VEP):** VEP and Victim Friendly Rooms are operated and managed by the SAPS. Volunteers are managed directly by the SAPS. CPFs' are encouraged to support the program where-ever possible.
- **Neighbourhood Watch (NHW):** NHWs and similar safety structures that are elected directly by the community are independent structures and do not report to the CPF. However, CPFs need to provide oversight over these structures in terms of vetting and screening of members, registration with the CPF/SAPS to comply with expectations for transparency and accountability in terms of their safety patrols.
- **Ward Councillors / Community Safety Plan (CSP):** Ward Councillors are ex-Officio members of the CPF. They cannot serve as Exco Members. See Uniform Constitution for more information. CPFs must engage with Ward/Proportional Councillors and should also participate in regional councils and Community Safety Forums established to promote and prioritize safety projects and funding for initiatives for social crime prevention.

6. Operational Functions

a) Jointly with the Community & the Police Service

- **Community Safety Plan:** A 5-year Community Safety Plan ('CSP') must be developed with inputs from the Community, the Police, local Safety Structures and the CPF. This plan must be presented to; and adopted by the Forum at a Special or General Meeting. The CSP must be updated and reviewed regularly and must be presented by the CPF Chairperson at every annual AGM meeting in order for the CPF/SAPS to account to the community.
- **Calendar of Events:** An annual calendar must be drawn up jointly with the SAPS in order to plan ahead for projects and events needing resources and participation.
- **Projects:** A list of projects must be drawn up and maintained in order to give effect to the Community Safety Plan. Additional Social Crime Prevention initiatives should be included as mini-projects and also captured in the CSP and on the Calendar of Events.

b) Within the Police Service

- **Information Desk Support:** Assist at public reception areas, providing community members with guidance on reporting crime and accessing police services and referrals to victim support.
- **Feedback Collection:** Collect community feedback on police service delivery and relay concerns to station management.
- **Liaison Role:** Act as a liaison between community members and police members, ensuring clear communication and fostering positive engagement between them.
- **Administrative Support:** Assist with administrative tasks related to community projects and crime prevention programs.
- **Training Participation:** Attend relevant workshops and training sessions to stay updated on legislation, policing initiatives and CPF functions.

c) Within the Community

- **Crime Prevention Projects:** Develop and implement social crime prevention projects tailored to local needs (e.g., GBV awareness, crime watch programs, youth engagement activities).
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Organize and participate in campaigns to educate the public on crime prevention, domestic violence, substance abuse, and other key issues.
- **Community Patrols:** Collaborate with police on visible patrols during high-crime periods and community events.
- **Event Coordination:** Facilitate community gatherings and town hall meetings for open dialogue with police services.
- **Youth and School Engagement:** Develop partnerships with schools to promote safety awareness and discourage youth involvement in crime.
- **Business Forum Engagement:** Develop partnerships with area businesses to promote participation and safety awareness.
- **Spiritual Crime Prevention:** Develop partnerships with religious institutions and organisations to promote participation and safety awareness.
- **One-on-One Engagement:** Be available directly to the community for one-on-one engagement and collaboration. Be prepared to share contact numbers and email addresses for all CPF Executive members.
- **Victim Support:** Assist victims of crime with information on support structures and redirect them to services such as Trauma Counselling, SAPS Victim Empowerment, Social Workers, Medical Care, Shelters, Drug Rehabilitation Centers, etc.

d) Media and Social Media

- **Social Media Presence:** Maintain CPF social media pages to provide updates, safety tips, and promote community-police initiatives.
- **Public Statements:** Release statements on crime trends, project launches, and safety alerts in collaboration with the Station

Commander. Comply with guidance and directives from the sub/District and the Provincial Board regarding public statements.

- **Crisis Communication:** Assist in disseminating accurate information during crises to prevent misinformation in collaboration with the Station Commander.
- **Engagement:** Respond to media and community inquiries via email, social platforms and direct contact, reinforcing CPF accessibility, approachability and transparency.

7. Accountability and Reporting

a) Community Safety Plan: A 5-year Community Safety Plan ('CSP') must be developed with inputs from the Community, the Police, local Safety Structures and the CPF. This plan must be presented to; and adopted by the Forum at a Special or General Meeting. The CSP must be updated and reviewed regularly and must be presented by the CPF Chairperson at every annual AGM meeting in order for the CPF/SAPS to account to the community.

b) Annual Reports: Present an annual report detailing CPF financials, activities, projects, successes, vacancies, challenges, and future plans.

c) Performance Reviews: Conduct regular assessments to evaluate CPF effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

d) Conflict Management: Issues of concern and complaints against the CPF should be addressed promptly and fairly. Follow CPF Uniform Constitution procedures in this regard and for assessing conduct, addressing disputes, and disciplinary Steps. Hold sub-structures accountable via the Uniform Constitution, applying reprimands or stricter measures for criminal conduct, convictions, misconduct, violations of the Code of Conduct, unethical behaviour or any other behaviour that could bring the CPF into disrepute.

8. Personality & Qualities of CPF Members

a) Attitude & Ego

CPF members must exercise humility, integrity, and self-control. Acting as a bridge between the police and the community, they often have access to information, resources, police management and influential figures. This proximity can be intoxicating, and could foster an inflated sense of authority if not carefully managed. CPF members must remain grounded, avoiding any misuse of influence or power. A CPF member must always remember that their role is to serve, not to command. They must treat both police and community members with respect and fairness, avoiding favouritism or power plays.

- **Example 1:** *During a community conflict in Darling regarding informal traders and local businesses, a CPF member facilitated dialogue without showing bias. Instead of siding with business owners, the CPF ensured all voices were heard, leading to an equitable compromise that balanced economic interests with public safety.*
- **Example 2:** *In Goodwood, a CPF member was approached by a friend seeking 'special' intervention in a criminal case. Recognizing the ethical conflict, the CPF member redirected the case through formal channels, maintaining impartiality and integrity while explaining the importance of legal procedures.*

b) Influence vs Power

The success of CPF members depends on their ability to influence and guide, rather than impose authority. True leadership lies in the ability to build consensus, encourage cooperation, and find common ground. CPF members must resist the temptation to use 'power' or their position as leverage and instead act as genuine mediators and facilitators.

- **Example 1:** *In Ocean View, CPF members influenced local youth to join community safety patrols by working with school leaders and organizing sports programs. Rather than enforcing participation through threats and coercion, they created appealing alternatives to criminal activity through positive engagement.*

- **Example 2:** *In Athlone, during a serious conflict between NHWs and other Safety Structures, CPF members collaborated with community leaders to mediate peace talks. By leveraging existing trust networks and encouraging dialogue, CPF members facilitated a sustainable community-led resolution, without resorting to authoritative methods.*

c) Learning Curve - Community Policing

CPF members must continuously educate themselves about community policing practices, the criminal procedure act (CPA), police procedures and instructions, social crime prevention, and public safety laws. This not only enhances their ability to contribute meaningfully but also empowers them to explain processes clearly to community members. The learning process involves self-study, workshops, attending SAPS briefings, active involvement in safety campaigns and seeking clarity about matters directly from trusted knowledgeable individuals. Listen, listen, listen, then verify before speaking.

- **Example 1:** *In Strandfontein, CPF members attended SAPS-led workshops on gender-based violence (GBV). This training enabled them to organize awareness drives and guide victims toward appropriate victim support units, improving local GBV reporting rates.*
- **Example 2:** *In Moreesburg, CPF members learned about substance abuse intervention programs through collaboration with local NGOs. With this knowledge, they established a community outreach program that linked recovering addicts to rehabilitation centers, reducing crime linked to drug use.*

d) Know Yourself & Know Your Audience

CPF members must develop a deep understanding of both their personal strengths and the diverse personalities within the community. Whether dealing with harmonizers, assertive individuals, or skeptics, CPF members should tailor their communication styles to ensure productive engagement. Self-awareness allows members to approach situations without bias or emotional interference.

- **Example 1:** *In Mitchells Plain, CPF members encountered a local activist group frustrated by perceived police inaction. Understanding the group's assertive nature, CPF members approached them with transparency, inviting their leaders to precinct meetings, allowing for collaboration rather than confrontation.*
- **Example 2:** *In Nyanga, CPF members noticed that some elderly residents were hesitant to engage with police. Recognizing their preference for informal discussions, CPF members conducted listening sessions at community centers, building trust and slowly fostering greater involvement in safety initiatives.*

f) Types of People

i. The Harmonizer

Harmonizers strive to maintain peace and unity within the community. They are excellent mediators, often stepping in to defuse tense situations. Their calm demeanour helps foster dialogue and collaboration.

- a. **Example:** *In Phillipi, a CPF member recognized rising tensions between foreign-owned shops and local traders. By arranging a dialogue session where both sides expressed grievances and sought common solutions, the CPF member helped de-escalate the situation, leading to peaceful co-existence.*

ii. The Assertive Leader

Assertive leaders take charge during crises, confidently directing others toward solutions. They are decisive and able to mobilize resources quickly but must ensure their assertiveness does not alienate community members.

- a. **Example:** *In George, during a spike in burglaries, an assertive CPF member organized safety patrols within 48 hours. By coordinating with SAPS, NHW and private security, they restored a sense of safety without waiting for prolonged deliberations.*

iii. **The Skeptic**

Skeptics question processes and are cautious of authority. While they can sometimes challenge CPF initiatives, their critical thinking ensures accountability and prevents blind adherence to flawed policies.

- a. **Example:** *A CPF member in Khayelitsha questioned the allocation of resources to a specific area. By demanding greater transparency, they ensured crime prevention measures were distributed equitably, benefitting the entire precinct.*

iv. **The Activist**

Activists are passionate and driven, often representing marginalized voices. While their passion can sometimes lead to confrontations, they bring valuable insights into underrepresented issues.

- a. **Example:** *In the Central Karoo, a CPF activist pushed for stronger anti-gang measures. Although initially at odds with SAPS, the CPF member's persistence led to community safety forums being formed in high-risk areas.*

v. **The Strategist**

Strategists excel at long-term planning and data analysis. They prefer to take a methodical approach, using evidence and careful planning to implement crime prevention initiatives.

- a. **Example:** *In Grassy Park, a CPF member strategically used crime data to identify patterns of car theft. This led to targeted awareness campaigns in hotspots, significantly reducing incidents over six months.*

vi. **The Empathetic Listener**

Empathetic listeners are trusted confidants within the community. They excel at connecting with victims of crime and vulnerable groups, providing emotional support and directing them to resources.

- a. **Example:** *In Manenberg, an empathetic CPF member worked closely with domestic abuse survivors, assisting them with shelter placements and counselling referrals. Their gentle and patient approach earned the trust of many people in the community.*

vii. **The Connector**

Connectors are natural networkers, building bridges between the community, law enforcement, NGOs, and government agencies. They thrive on partnerships and ensure CPF initiatives have broad support.

- a. **Example:** *A CPF member in Wynberg linked SAPS with local youth centers and sports clubs, creating after-school programs that steered vulnerable youth away from gang recruitment.*

Effective CPF members recognize different personality types and adapt their approach accordingly. There are harmonizers who seek peace, assertive leaders who drive action, and analytical individuals who focus on details when necessary. CPF members must understand their own personality and biases, leveraging their strengths while addressing personal limitations. Recognizing and responding to community needs with emotional intelligence ensures effective communication and problem-solving.