

Our File/N/Réf.  
Your File/V/Réf.

<b>Information Previously Distributed To Be Listed on Community Services Committee Agenda</b>	<b>15 Jan 98</b>
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DATE 9 December 1997

TO/DEST. Chair and Members of Council

FROM/EXP. Commissioner Social Services

SUBJECT/OBJET **SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT DISCLOSURE POLICY**

I would like to take this opportunity to advise new members of Council and returning members of the issues surrounding inquiries made by constituents to you or your staff, related to social assistance payments.

In strict terms the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* would require that your office obtain written consent from your constituent in order for staff in our Department to release any of your constituent's personal information to you. Our practice has been to operate on the principle of verbal consent in order to expedite you office's ability to assist the constituent.

We must do our utmost to protect our client's privacy, while at the same time ensuring that your office can assist constituents in a timely manner. We would request that when asked by a constituent to make an inquiry to the Department on his/her behalf, **that you or your staff specifically ask the constituent if they are explicitly giving their permission for our Department to disclose personal information and that you so advise departmental staff.** On occasion, the information requested may be of a particularly sensitive nature, in these rare circumstances we may request that you obtain written consent from the constituent.

This action will not only ensure our clients confidentiality but it will also ensure that your office and our staff are carrying out their obligations under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation*.

*Approved by  
Dick Stewart*