

Part 12 Police personnel working as Drug Investigators

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Introduction

Police employees working for extended periods on drug investigations are especially exposed to the risk of allegations of corruption coupled with the temptation to act outside policy guidelines or in breach of the law.

Careless procedures or substandard work can give rise to such allegations if drug investigations are not conducted in a professional manner.

Selection of personnel

A careful assessment of employees must be made before they are assigned to regular drug investigation. They should be or have the potential to be:

- thorough investigators
- good interviewers
- able to prepare quality prosecution cases
- professional in approaching or dealing with informants.

Operational principles for drug personnel

Police supervisors must at all times provide proper guidance and supervision to personnel deployed for extended periods on drug investigations. Supervisors must be alert to problems, thereby avoiding the necessity to implement belated remedial action.

Police employees should, where practicable, work in pairs for security and as a safeguard against allegations of corruption.

Information from informants and other sources should be pooled and discussed at regular meetings. Informants should be identified to supervisors so that information is properly assessed and to ensure that the same informant is not passing different information to other employees. See also '[Police human sources](#)' chapter for more information about managing human sources.

Where an allegation of corruption has been made against a Police employee (note, such an allegation is considered a [serious complaint](#) that is likely to generate public interest and significant media coverage), an urgent inquiry must be conducted and the matter must be immediately reported to the Commissioner via the District Command Centre and/or National Command and Coordination Centre (NCCC). A separate notification to the Director: Integrity and Conduct is also required.

See these chapters:

- '[Police investigations of complaints and notifiable incidents](#)' for information about reporting requirements
- '[No surprises policy](#)' for details when serious incidents or notifiable matters encountered by Police employees in the course of their duties must comply with '[Immediate notification to the Commissioner of Police](#)'.

Period of deployment

Although there is no fixed maximum period of time for which Police employees may be engaged on drug duties, supervisors must remain vigilant to the risks posed by extended periods of deployment in this area.

In particular districts must ensure that robust local processes are in place to identify and manage the risks around:

- potential corruption of staff
- the introduction of aberrant work practices
- staff health and safety issues
- ongoing career development for employees on very long-term assignments.

Where employees would benefit from secondments to other groups or redeployment for a period of time this should be considered as part of the yearly appraisal process as a part of their ongoing personal development.

Related information

See the '[Expert evidence - drugs and gangs](#)' chapter for information about drug investigators giving expert evidence in prosecutions of drug offences where the court may allow experienced Police employees or employees from other agencies to give expert opinion evidence in court in respect of drugs and gangs.

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