



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Health

THE **NEW** NORMAL

The Conduct of
Annual General Meetings
in Trinidad and Tobago

Version 1
July 2020

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2. Mr. Lawrence Jaisingh, Director, Health Policy, Research and Planning;
3. Ms. Cindi Siewdass, Research Officer II, Directorate, Health Policy, Research and Planning;
and
4. Ms. Jenise Tyson, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Directorate, Health Policy, Research and Planning.

1. Background

Pandemic outbreaks such as COVID-19 have the potential to destabilize and disrupt health systems and may have a profound effect on all aspects of a country's economy and the mental and physical health of the population.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 to be a Pandemic and as at July 16th, 2020, there were 13,378,853 confirmed cases with 580,045 deaths across 213 countries (WHO Situational Report No. 178).

In Trinidad and Tobago, the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on March 12th, 2020 and as at July 16th 2020, there were one hundred and thirty-three (133) positive cases and eight (8) deaths, with over five thousand and eight hundred (5,800) tests conducted. The key objectives of these protocols are to educate, engage and empower people to change their behaviour to ensure the transmission of COVID-19 is adequately controlled. All persons should be educated, engaged and empowered to adjust to the “new normal” utilizing the following protocols:

- Wear masks when you go out in public;
- Keep your distance from others (6ft);
- Stay home if you are ill;
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol based sanitizer;
- Cough into a tissue or into the crook of your elbow;
- Avoid touching your face; and
- Clean then sanitize surfaces (e.g. table tops, door knobs and cell phones).

The Guidelines for the conduct of Annual General Meetings (AGMs) in Trinidad and Tobago were sourced from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the key source document is derived from the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>.

2. Objective of these Guidelines

To provide Guidelines to minimize the risk, spread and interrupt the transmission of COVID-19 during the conduct of Annual General Meetings in Trinidad and Tobago.

3. Legal and Policy Framework

On January 31st 2020, the proclamation of COVID-19 as a dangerous infectious disease under the Public Health Ordinance, Chap. 12 No. 4, triggered the special provisions under the Ordinance and the Quarantine Act Chapter 28:05 that are pertinent to the curtailment and management of infectious diseases such as notification, special inspections and offences (Legal Notices Nos. 34 and 35 and excerpt from the Quarantine Act 7(1), appended). Also, the adherence to the 2004 Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chap. 88:88¹.

4. The Guidelines for the Conduct of AGMs

The Guidelines apply to the conduct of AGMs in Trinidad and Tobago. It is the responsibility of the Corporate Secretary of the Company to disseminate these Guidelines to its members. All staff members are to be trained, virtually, or in-person on the use of the following Guidelines:

¹ https://rgd.legalaffairs.gov.tt/laws2/alphabetical_list/lawspdfs/88.08.pdf

4.1.1 Facility Management

1. Signage outlining the new regulations (physical distancing, the use of face masks, hand sanitization, cough etiquette) are to be posted at highly visible locations within and outside of the AGM meeting room/s;

2. Establish a housekeeping schedule to incorporate routine cleaning and sanitisation with regular, frequent, and periodic cleaning of equipment, seating areas (tables, stools, chairs and counter tops), restrooms and shared items;

Emphasize high-frequency, cleaning (2/2)



3. Ensure cleaning and sanitisation before and after the AGM. Surfaces should be cleaned frequently where appropriate (e.g. bathrooms);

4. Ensure that high-touch surfaces such as door knobs, tables, stools, chairs and restrooms are properly disinfected on a frequent or periodic basis, using a bleach solution of 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) per gallon of water (US 3.8L) or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water or 70% alcohol solutions or other EPA-approved disinfectant;

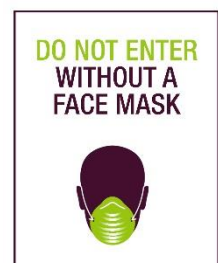


5. Entry and exit points must be equipped with hand sanitization apparatus (60% alcohol based hand sanitizer or sinks with soap and water);
6. Where possible, set-up hand sanitizer dispensers at various locations throughout the area/s where the AGM is being conducted;

7. Ensure that cleaning or disinfecting product residues are not left on table surfaces, as residues could cause allergic reactions or cause someone to ingest the chemicals;
8. Ensure proper ventilation throughout the facility and/or rooms used for the AGM. Where possible, the use of air-conditioning should be minimised and outdoor air should be introduced by opening windows and doors;
9. Where possible, ensure disposable disinfectant wipes are available at all locations for use;
10. Garbage cans should be strategically placed at multiple locations throughout the AGM meeting to allow persons to dispose of gloves, tissues or disinfecting wipes; and
11. Ensure safety briefings are conducted at the beginning of each service for compliance on new normal measures such as wearing of masks, washing/sanitizing hands, maintaining physical distancing, location of wash/restrooms areas, entrance and exits.

4.1.2 Personal Hygiene

1. Post visual alerts (e.g., signs, posters) at the entrance and in strategic locations e.g., inside and outside of meeting room/s and restrooms to provide instructions (in appropriate languages) about hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Instructions should include wearing a cloth face covering or facemask and face shields for source control, and how and when to perform hand hygiene;
2. Endorse and encourage proper mask/face shield etiquette when entering and exiting the AGM meeting room/s;



3. Provide an adequate supply of 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer or hand washing facilities/stations (fixed or portable), soap and running water; paper towels and tissue for use **before entry**. It would be ideal to have easy open-close taps or pedal actuated/hands free taps;

4. Endorse and encourage proper cough and sneeze etiquette within the AGM meeting room/s either with a tissue or using the inside of their elbow;



5. Encourage all persons to frequently wash hands and or sanitize hands while in the AGM meeting room/s. The use of touch-free technology for sinks, bathroom fixtures is encouraged. Elbow taps may also be utilized;



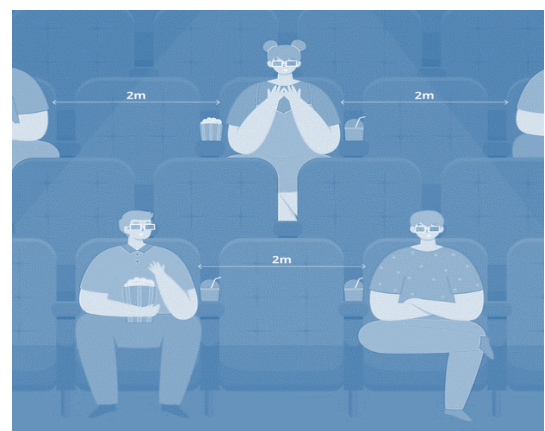
6. Anyone who is ill or exhibits any of the following symptoms (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, muscle pain, headache, sore-throat, or recent loss of taste or smell) should not be allowed to enter the establishment; and
7. Anyone with a potential exposure to someone exhibiting any of the above symptoms or confirmed case of COVID-19 should not attend the AGM until the period of quarantine ends (to be certified by County Medical Officer of Health).

4.1.3 Staff and AGM Members

1. Encourage staff and members who are ill or who have had recent contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay at home. Develop policies that encourage this to remove employees fear of reprisal;
2. Staff and members who are ill or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not be allowed entry;
3. All persons are required to wear a face covering mask/face shield during the AGM;
4. All persons should undergo screening with a contactless thermometer for fever and symptoms consistent with COVID-19;
5. If a person has a temperature $< 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and otherwise without symptoms consistent with COVID-19, then he/she is allowed to enter;
6. If a person has a temperature $> 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ with fever or strongly associated symptoms consistent with COVID-19, then he/she is not allowed into the premises;
7. Notify local health officials or call the health hotline [800-WELL or 877-WELL (9355)] if a person becomes ill at the AGM meeting;
8. Identify an area to separate anyone who exhibits flu-like symptoms during the AGM;
9. Close off area/s used by the ill person and immediately clean and sanitize for use thereafter; and
10. Where possible, establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who becomes ill during the AGM to the nearest health facility.

4.1.4 Physical Distancing

1. Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors and signage, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart;
2. Modify layout of the meeting room/s to ensure staff and members remain 6 feet apart;
3. Establish a seamless entry and exit process that minimises the risk of infection through minimal interaction among all persons when entering and exiting the meeting room/s; and
4. Ensure that program schedules are organised to prevent crowding and congregating in large numbers as per Public Health Regulations.
5. Seating arrangements within the AGM room/s should be modified to allow physical distancing of six (6) feet apart between families/groups of members on either side and by skipping rows; and



6. Attendance shall be calculated for each building based on a measurement of 36 square feet per person. For instance,

- 1,000sqft = 27/25 persons;
- 2,500sqft = 69/60 persons;
- 4,000sqft = 111/100 persons;
- 7,500sqft = 208/200 persons;
- 10,000sqft = 278/250 persons;
- 15,000sqft= 416/400 persons;
- 20,000sqft= 555/520 persons; and
- 25,000sqft= 694/650 persons;

7. Ushers shall be used to monitor and maintain physical distancing.

4.1.5 Operations at the AGM

1. Prior to entering the AGM meeting room/s, all persons are required to wash their hands with soap and running water or sanitize their hands at stations (fixed or portable);
2. All persons are required to wear a face covering mask/face shield during the proceedings; and
3. Ensure safety briefings are conducted at the beginning of the AGM for compliance on new normal measures such as wearing of masks; washing/sanitizing hands, maintaining physical distancing, location of wash/restrooms areas, entrance and exits.

4.1.6 Responsibility of Chairman/Secretary of the AGM

1. Establish a seamless process and layout that minimises the risk of infection through minimal interaction among all persons when entering and exiting the AGM meeting room/s;
2. Promote healthy hygiene practices at all AGM meeting room/s utilised including the wearing of masks and/or face shields;
3. Intensify cleaning, sanitation, disinfection and ventilation of the AGM meeting room/s utilised;
4. Encourage physical distancing and enhance spacing of persons to be at least 6 feet apart;
5. Train all employees and disseminate these Guidelines to all members for ease of understanding and practice during the meeting;
6. Develop and maintain procedures to check for signs and symptoms of illnesses of all employees and members of the AGM;
7. Provide proper signage for all persons (e.g. physical distancing, sanitizer/ hand washing station location and mask wearing/ face shield signs, cough etiquette, avoid touching your face); and
8. Institute measures to manage the number of persons within each meeting room at any given point in time.

4.1.7 Responsibility of the AGM Member

Strictly adhere to these Guidelines prior to use, during use and upon exit from the AGM area/s utilised for the meeting including:

- hand washing and/or sanitizing prior, during and upon exiting the AGM;
- use personal mask and or/ face shield during the AGM;
- maintain physical distancing of 6 feet prior to and during the AGM; and
- do not attend if ill or if family members exhibit any flu-like illness.

5. Implementation of the Guidelines

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer will officially communicate to the Chambers of Commerce and Industry the Guidelines for the conduct of AGMs. Subsequently, the Chairman of the Company will then disseminate these Guidelines to its employees and members to ensure effective implementation and compliance. Thereafter, continuous assessment and reporting on the adherence of these Guidelines should be implemented to ensure strict compliance.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The County Medical Officers of Health and the Public Health Inspectors will provide continuous assessment and reporting to the Chief Medical Officer on the implementation of these Guidelines, through continuous site visits and inspection of the AGMs to ensure the strict adherence to the Guidelines in order to reduce the threat and mitigate the risk of spread of COVID-19.

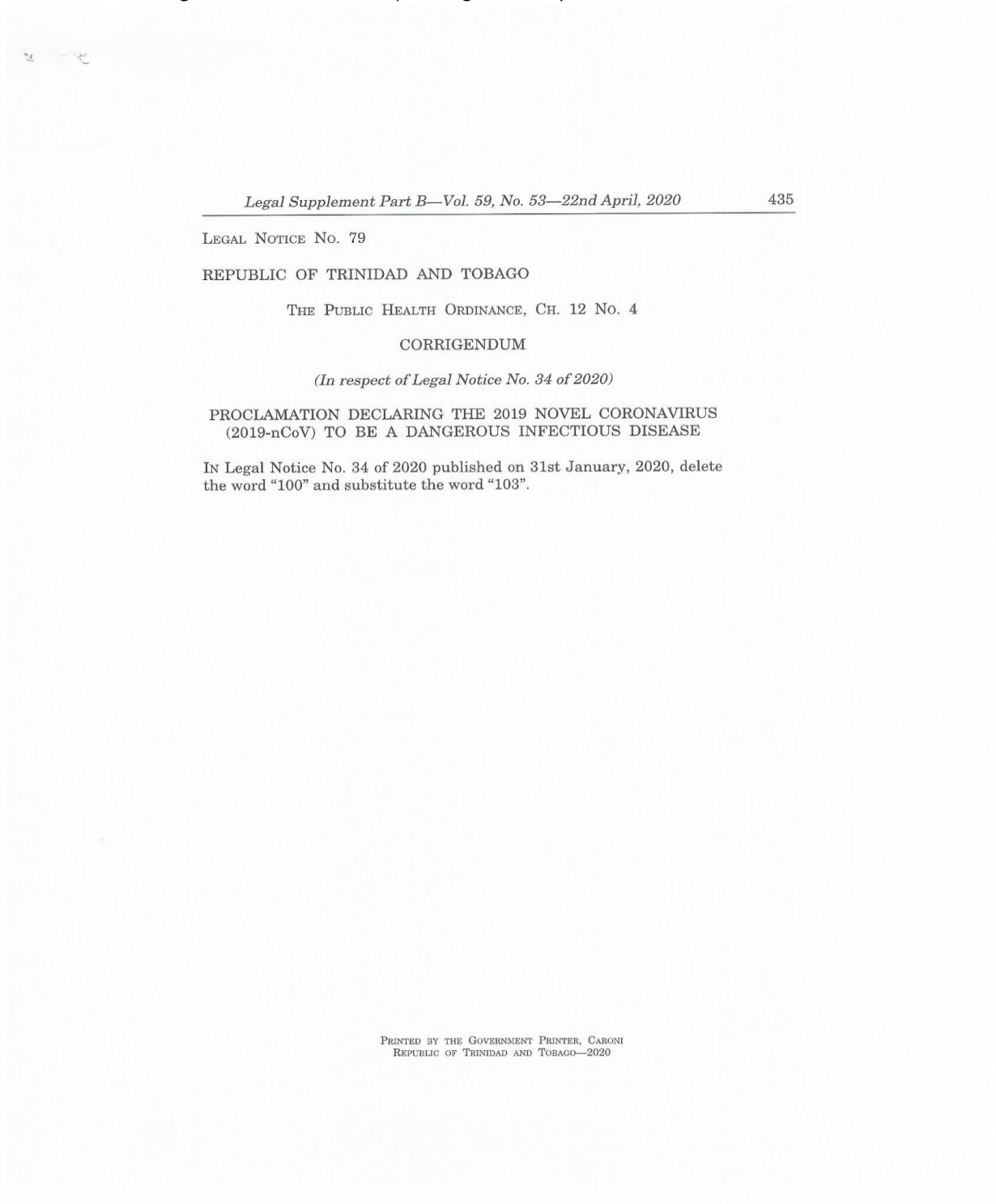
7. References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 7th, 2020, Considerations for Events and Gathering

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>.

8. Appendices

8.1.1 Legal Notice No. 34 (Corrigendum)



8.1.2 Legal Notice No. 34

Legal Supplement Part B—Vol. 59, No. 11—31st January, 2020

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LEGAL NOTICE NO. 34

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

No. 17 of 2020.

By Her Excellency **PAULA-MAE WEEKES**, O.R.T.T.,
President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

[L.S.]

PAULA-MAE WEEKES
President

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS it is provided by section 100 of the Public Health Ordinance, Ch. 12 No. 4, that the Governor may, by proclamation, declare any disease to be an infectious disease or a dangerous infectious disease:

And whereas it is provided by section 3(1) of the Existing Laws (Amendment) Order, No. 8 of 1962, that any reference in any existing law to the Governor shall be read and construed as a reference to the Governor-General:

And whereas it is also provided by section 5(5)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Act, Chap. 1:01, that any reference to the Governor-General shall be read and construed as if it were a reference to the President:

And whereas Trinidad and Tobago has been advised recently by the World Health Organization of the existence of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), a highly infectious and dangerous disease which is currently occurring in various locations around the world:

And whereas the Minister of Health believes that due to the speed and ease of international travel, Trinidad and Tobago can ultimately expect the arrival of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and the devastating effect on its public health:

Now, therefore, I, **PAULA-MAE WEEKES**, President as aforesaid, do hereby declare the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) to be a dangerous infectious disease.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of
the President of the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago, at the Office of
the President, St. Ann's, this 31st day of
January, 2020.

8.1.3 Legal Notice No. 35

LEGAL NOTICE No. 35

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

QUARANTINE ACT, CHAP. 28:05

ORDER

MADE BY THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER UNDER SECTION 6(1) OF THE
QUARANTINE ACT

THE QUARANTINE [2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCoV)
DISEASE] ORDER, 2020

1. This Order may be cited as the Quarantine [2019 Novel Citation
Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Disease] Order, 2020.
2. In this Order, “Health Officer” has the same meaning assigned Interpretation
to it in regulation 2 of the Quarantine (Maritime) Regulations. No. 19 of 1944
3. For the purpose of the prevention of the spread of the 2019 Novel Special
Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Disease (“NCV”), the Health Officer may take measure
the following special measures:
 - (a) where an infection, which may be NCV, has occurred on
board a ship during a period of six weeks immediately
preceding its arrival at a port of Trinidad and Tobago, the
surveillance of the crew and passengers who have been
exposed to the infection, for a period of fourteen days from
the last day of possible exposure to the infection; or
 - (b) where an infection, which may be NCV, has occurred on
board an aircraft at any time immediately preceding its
arrival at an aerodrome in Trinidad and Tobago, the
surveillance of the crew and passengers who have been
exposed to the infection, for a period of fourteen days from
the last day of possible exposure to the infection.

Dated this 31st day of January, 2020.

R. PARASRAM
Chief Medical Officer

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8.1.4 Quarantine Act Chap. 28:05 7 (1) to (3)

LAWS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS www.legalaffairs.gov.tt
Quarantine **Chap. 28:05** 7

Minister. In approving any rules, the Minister may make any amendments thereto which he thinks desirable.

6. (1) When in the opinion of the Quarantine Authority an emergency exists, the Quarantine Authority may by Order direct special measures to be taken during the continuance of that emergency for any of the purposes specified in sections 4 and 5, and any such Order shall have effect notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any regulations or rules in force by virtue of those sections.

Power to make
Orders in
emergency.

(2) An Order made under subsection (1) may be varied or rescinded by Order of the Minister.

7. (1) Any person who—

- (a) refuses to answer or knowingly gives an untrue answer to any inquiry made under the authority of this Act, or intentionally withholds any information reasonably required of him by an officer or other person acting under the authority of this Act, or knowingly furnishes to any such officer or other person any information which is false;
- (b) refuses or wilfully omits to do any act which he is required to do by this Act, or refuses or wilfully omits to carry out any lawful order, instruction or condition made, given or imposed by any officer or other person acting under the authority of this Act; or
- (c) assaults, resists, wilfully obstructs or intimidates any officer or other person acting under the authority of this Act, or offers or gives a bribe to any officer or person in connection with his powers or duties under this Act, or being such officer or person, demands, solicits or takes a bribe in connection with his powers or duties under this Act, or otherwise obstructs the execution of this Act,

Offences and
penalties.

is liable on conviction to a fine of six thousand dollars and to imprisonment for six months.

(2) Any person who is guilty of any other offence against this Act is liable on conviction to a fine of six thousand dollars and to imprisonment for six months.

Ch. 4:20. (3) All offences against this Act may be prosecuted summarily under the Summary Courts Act.

Rewards to informers. **8.** The Minister may direct that any part of any fine recovered in respect of any offence against this Act shall be paid to any person who has given information leading to the conviction of the offender.

Recovery of expenses and charges. **9.** (1) All expenses and charges payable to the Quarantine Authority under this Act may be sued for and recovered by him before any Court of competent jurisdiction, and a certificate purporting to be under the hand of the Quarantine Authority to the effect that the expenses or charges sued for are due and payable shall be received in evidence and shall be sufficient evidence of the facts therein stated unless the contrary be shown.

(2) Any sum received or recovered by the Quarantine Authority in payment of expenses or charges payable to him under this Act shall be paid into public funds.

Duty and power of the Police. **10.** (1) Every member of the Police Service shall enforce (using force if necessary) compliance with this Act and with any order, instruction or condition lawfully made, given or imposed by any officer or other person under the authority of this Act; and for such purpose any member of the Police Service may board any ship or aircraft and may enter any premises without a warrant.

(2) Any member of the Police Service may arrest without a warrant any person whom he has reasonable cause to believe to have committed any offence against this Act.

(3) In this section the expression "member of the Police Service" includes a member of any police organisation constituted by law who has the general powers of a member of the Police Service.