

Registry for People with Autism Pilot Project Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Autism Registry?

The Registry for People with Autism is an Ottawa Police 2010 pilot project in partnership with the Ottawa Chapter of Autism Ontario. The online registry promotes communication and gives police quick access to critical information about a registered person with autism in a police emergency by capturing information such as a full description, routine/favourite attractions, communication and other special needs as well as emergency contact information.

Can individuals with other communication disorders participate with this registry? Or is it restricted to those who fall within the Autism Spectrum?

This pilot project has been spearheaded by Autism Ontario - Ottawa Chapter. Although registrations will be limited to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the registry has been developed with the intent to expand into all communities where communication is ineffective when interacting with police. This expansion will be considered upon completion of a formalized evaluation.

If I don't live in Ottawa, can I still register my child/dependent adult on the registry?

If you do not live in Ottawa but your child/dependent adult comes to Ottawa on a regular basis. (i.e. for school, daycare, etc.), then you should register. If the registrant is not in Ottawa regularly, there would be almost no benefit to registering. Other policing jurisdictions will not have access to the registry, so if you are reporting an incident in another jurisdiction, it will be quicker and safer to go through their process for taking reports.

As soon as I send the registration, will the information be immediately available in case police response is required?

No. The registration form will need to be entered into a number of policing systems in order to capture all relevant information. It is hoped that this process will be quick but it may take up to two weeks to be fully processed. You will receive a confirmation with a "Flag Number" for your future reference for updates, renewals, calls for service, etc.

After I receive my confirmation "Flag Number" will I need to quote this number when I call the police?

You will need to have this "Flag Number" to update the registration on an annual basis, or to make any changes as they become relevant.

During high stress situations, there is no expectation that you remember the number, but merely that the individual has been registered. The Ottawa Police will be able to verify

the information using the person's name once we have been advised of the registration.

How do I get a decal for my house and car? Is it mandatory?

When you receive your confirmation "Flag Number", you will receive information about how to contact Autism Ontario - Ottawa Chapter to obtain these decals. It is not mandatory to have the decals; however, by readily identifying a vehicle or house with an individual with ASD, it may alter how a police officer interacts with the driver.

How do I contact Autism Ontario?

Autism Ontario - Ottawa Chapter

211 Bronson Avenue, Suite 210

Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5

Please note: There may be occasions when office staff will be working in the community during regular office hours. Please call or e-mail to confirm first.

Tel: 613.230.6305

Fax: 613.288.1423

ottawa@autismontario.com

Who has access to my child's profile?

Ottawa Police personnel who require this information in the performance of their duties will have access to the information. There are strict regulations with respect to accessing and disseminating information. There is a Police Information Portal (P.I.P.) that is shared by all police agencies; however, consent of the individual involved, or their parent/guardian, is required before any information is shared among police agencies.

Can I update my profile more than every year if there are changes? How do I do that?

You may, however, only information that has a significant impact on policing response will be necessary. Some examples would include a change in address, school, or emergency contact. You do not need to report a change in hair cut or colour, for example, as the police are familiar with the changes that can be made and are more likely to notice height, weight and eye colour. You can send changes to www.ottawapolice.ca/autismregistry.

Will I be notified when the annual renewal is required?

The renewals are the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian. It is recommended that you renew the registration during the month of the registrant's birthday.

After my child/dependent adult is registered, and if there is an incident, do I need to do something to notify the police?

It is preferable that you let the police know that the individual is already registered. In doing so, the information will be immediately disseminated to the vehicles without having to ask the parents during a high stress situation.

How will this registry help if my child/dependent adult goes missing?

If the individual goes missing and is reported by the parent/guardian, information about

his/her physical appearance, the most likely places where he/she would go to, as well as triggers, stimulants, and de-escalation techniques will be sent to every police officer in the area to look for the missing person.

If the individual has not been reported and is incapable of effectively communicating his/her name to an officer, a computer check of the neighbourhood, coupled with the physical appearance, may allow us to identify the individual more quickly. This will then allow us to use the contact information to connect with the parents/guardians.

What guarantees do we have that the interaction between our child/dependent adult and the police will be positive once he/she is registered?

There is no guarantee with this registry of positive outcome. What the registry allows is the ability for patrol officers to have necessary information faster to begin searching. Also, if an officer comes across a "wandering" child who is unable to communicate, the officer, if they recognize the condition, can have the database queried for persons on the registry that live in the area.

What is important to stress is that simply having a person registered with the registry is not going to change police responses in every instance involving an individual with ASD. Police will act according to procedure depending on circumstances. An individual with ASD can still be arrested. In that case, being registered will assist police in contacting the correct people.