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Letter from the Executive Director

by David Bradford

NORTHWESTERN CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY is pleased to be a sponsor of the Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge. Originally known as the Northwestern Traffic Safety Institute, roadway safety has been — and continues to be — one of our top priorities. Our two textbooks, *Crash Investigation* and *Traffic Crash Reconstruction*, are the benchmark texts for traffic safety classes and are in their 12th editions.

We recently attended the 2018 Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge Awards Breakfast, at which Buffalo Grove (IL) Chief of Police Steve Casstevens was the keynote speaker. Casstevens is the First Vice President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and a recognized long-time advocate of Law Enforcement Traffic Safety programs. He is also a recipient of the J. Stannard Baker Traffic Safety Award.

The following is an excerpt from the remarks Casstevens delivered at the annual Traffic Safety Challenge breakfast:

“Those in the room who have completed Challenge applications realize it is a great deal of work! Some may say that it is nice to present awards to agencies and officers for their accomplishments, but really, in the end, what does this program accomplish? Why have we done it for 25 years and continue to do it?

In the early 1980s the seat belt-use rate was below 20%. In 2009, Illinois had 911 traffic fatalities, the first time that traffic fatalities were below 1,000 since 1924. How did we accomplish it? Using traffic stops to enforce traffic laws and also to educate the citizens.

Traffic stops and traffic safety programs save lives, reduce crime, and when done properly, enhance community-police relations.

In the past several years, law enforcement has been in the media spotlight and under the public microscope like never before. Our every move is recorded and edited and played back on the 5 o’clock news for pundits and self-proclaimed experts to analyze and criticize.

In response, law enforcement agencies have doubled efforts to connect with communities to improve community-police relations and emphasize the critical importance of community policing. But where does community policing start? On paper? At a press conference? When a community-policing unit is deployed? Or does it start with a policy directive or general order?

Community policing begins with the first contact between an officer and a citizen. There are 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States, employing over 850,000 officers. These officers make millions of public contacts every week. Numerous studies have shown that the first time a citizen comes into contact with a police officer is during a traffic stop. Every traffic stop officers make is a public service announcement for your police department. An executive at Disney said, ‘You have always heard that the customer is always right? Well here at Disney we do not believe that. We believe that quite often the customer is wrong. However, we believe they are allowed to be wrong with dignity.’”
Stress & Trauma: Strategies for Relief

by Rick Peterson

Throughout the last five years of my 18-year career in law enforcement training, I have noticed a significant change in the attitude of the attendees in my emotional wellness classes. Whether the students are attending NUCPS School of Police Staff and Command or are at another venue where I have had the opportunity to present my material, I hear the same thing: The students say they are “too stressed” at work.

Stress in Law Enforcement

Nowadays, everyone seems stressed. So what is stress in the law enforcement world? What I hear from both front-line staff and supervisors is always the same: Stress is not necessarily caused by the incidents in which officers are involved on the street; but rather, internal politics and continual drama within their police organizations generate most of the stress. One officer told me that he would much rather handle a robbery-in-progress call than to hear over the radio, “10-19 and see the Commander.”

Lt. Jim Glennon (SPSC Class #123), former DuPage (IL) County Major Crimes Task Force commander and author of *Arresting Communication*, recently surveyed more than 3,400 officers, asking: *Would you encourage a son or daughter to go into law enforcement as a career?* The results were astounding. More than 81% answered that they would not encourage a career in law enforcement. Fifty-three percent of the officers surveyed stated that their answer was based on the lack of administrative and professional support within their agency. Other responses cited low pay, lack of public support, and media/political cynicism. (Glennon)

I also equate stress in law enforcement with unaccepted change. Unaccepted change in the police world is very real, and in my belief, is the main reason that most cops are stressed out. Painting a moving freight train is easier than asking police officers to change their paradigm.

Chiefs, sheriffs, and other command staff can help defuse some of the anxiety within their agencies by getting out and working with their people. Listen to them and stop listening to local politicians. Politics have unfortunately taken over part of policing, but if officers feel like their command staff has their backs, then they will go to the ends of the earth for them, their respective police agencies, and the communities that they serve.

Reducing Stress as a “75-Percenter”

In the officer wellness class that I teach, we talk about finding a balance between one’s chosen career in law enforcement and home life. There is also another balance to find — the balance between handling stress and personal trauma.

How do you get “unstressed”? Become a “75-Percenter” and strive to achieve the goals outlined below.

- 75% of your time, you come into work with a positive attitude. 100% may be unattainable for some — almost everyone has a bad day.

- 75% of your time is focused on the good things that happen on the job.

Continued →
MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

- 75% of your duty time is dedicated to the 80% or more in your organization who love being on the job. I know it may be difficult but try to stay away from the naysayers.

- 75% of your off time is dedicated to your family. Turn off the electronics and have a family dinner together.

- A 75-Percenter never complains down the chain of command — no matter where he or she falls within the chain.

Here is my “unwritten” guarantee: Try to be a 75-Percenter for 66 days straight. According to research, on the 67th day, it will have become a habit for you. (Clear) This will help decrease your stress.

Trauma & PTSD

Is stress, then, different than trauma? Yes, it is. **Stress** is something everyone experiences, from preparing for high school finals to financial, marital, and work-related issues to such life changes as a new house or a new baby. Stress can be chronic and impact daily life, but it is different than trauma.

**Trauma** is a “specific type of stress that reflects exposure to terrible events generally outside the range of daily human experience . . .” (Lott) It is officially defined as by the American Psychological Association:

“[E]xposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways:
- directly experiencing the traumatic event,
- witnessing, in person, the traumatic event,
- learning that the traumatic event occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event must have been violent or accidental, or
- experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse).” (APA)

Officers are exposed to trauma, and overexposure can be debilitating for some. However, each person handles the traumatic events differently because everyone is made up of different coping mechanisms. In fact, biological responses to traumatic events differ from person to person.

I am 100% sure that each of you can vividly remember traumatic incidents. But let me be clear on one point: There is a vast difference between being involved in a critical incident and being diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

PTSD can be debilitating and can also involve a lengthy journey to recovery. However, with proper therapy and good coping mechanisms, you can heal your wounded soul. The key to that healing is your own persistence and resiliency. With proper therapy, persistence, and resiliency, you may be able to overcome PTSD.

Being involved in a critical incident that is traumatic by nature doesn't automatically mean that you have — or will have — PTSD. Its key symptoms actually are common for everyone in the first few weeks following a traumatic incident. They become more indicative of PTSD if they continue for more than a month. The most common symptoms include:

- re-experiencing the event in intrusive and distressing ways, including flashbacks and nightmares,
- avoiding trauma-related triggers, such as places, people, and activities,
- emotional numbness, insomnia, or mood changes after the event,
- negative beliefs about yourself or others due to the traumatic event, or
- hypervigilance, anger, irritation, and feeling jumpy. (ADAA)

Most police therapists agree that eliminating the D from PTSD would allow law enforcement professionals to seek help without feeling stigmatized. Critical-Impact Stress Debriefings, Peer Support Training, and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction are just some of the examples of helping officers after a

Continued →
critical incident without referring to a potentially stigmatizing term.

My hope is that if you are reading this and are struggling with some of these demons, you will go sit down with a good police therapist and talk. In other words, “unpack” your emotions. It sounds simple, but it works. This alone will do wonders for you in the long run. If you would rather not unpack with a therapist, find someone whom you trust who will listen. A close peer or a religious leader are two examples.

To steal a phrase from a local agency, let’s get all officers to annually go in for a “check-up from the neck-up.” That means sitting down with a professional and unpacking, with no strings attached or worries about any stigma. I call it doing good for your soul. As the Nike slogan says, “Just do it.”

No matter where you are in your police organization, I personally challenge you to try these ideas and watch for yourself how morale and retention issues just may improve. If you think that you are better than that, then watch as your department continues to struggle with high turnover and stressed-out personnel.

It’s all about staying well — physically, emotionally, and spiritually. §

Sources:

• American Psychiatric Association (APA). (2013). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5®). Washington, DC.


— Reviewed by Caroline Paulison Andrew

**BOOK REVIEW**


An absorbing, often light-hearted, look into the author’s experiences as a long-time rural state trooper.

A talented storyteller, Nevada native Steve Raabe shares some of the most memorable adventures of his decades stationed at a rural outpost of the Nevada Highway Patrol. Almost every tale is short enough to read during a coffee break or while eating lunch in one’s own patrol car and are written with an engaging, natural voice — almost as if he is sitting having a cup of coffee and chatting with you across a table at a diner on a dusty desert highway.

Beginning with the twists and turns of life that led to his becoming a Nevada trooper and the surprising lessons that await rookie troopers in the field and continuing into more experienced years, Raabe drew from his meticulously-kept daily journals, in which he unpacked his daily experiences throughout his career.

Many vignettes are comical, such as the story of pulling over a car of four drunk good ol’ boys on their way to one of their party’s DUI court hearing. Some, though, are tinged with sadness and loss. All bear witness to the diverse experiences of this retired trooper.

Several stories will be eye-openers for young officers, such those centered around Raabe’s 1973 Plymouth Fury patrol car, rural justice, and so-called law enforcement “communications” prior to mobile phones and radios.

A Nevada native, Raabe is a graduate of Northwestern University Center for Public Safety School of Police Staff & Command, Class #94. He retired as a lieutenant from the Reno (NV) area and spent much of his career as a trooper and accident reconstructionist with the Nevada Highway Patrol in rural north central Nevada. §
A NYONE engaged in filling police officer vacancies understands that the task is challenging. Excuses explaining failures to attract qualified applicants have become monotone rants of bumper-sticker emotionalism and have left many agency leaders in a state of permanent shrug. The economy is hot, and the job market is tight, with unemployment dipping as low as 3.9%, as of August 2018. (BLS) Those who choose the demanding life of a police officer are few and far between. (The Force Is Weak)

In addition to the increased difficulty of recruiting new officers during times of economic prosperity, today’s recruiters face additional challenges. Crime and incarceration issues are creating turmoil in US cities. “When you look around the nation and you see the acts of violence directed at police officers — it makes people reluctant to join,” Dallas Deputy Chief Scott Walton told The Economist. (The Force Is Weak)

Nationally reported police-involved shootings have increased the negative perception of law enforcement and decreased confidence in police. (Cato) Justified or not, these incidents, according to PoliceOne, have “polarizing effects on potential applicants.” (Curtis) According to Sgt. Corey Nunley of Lubbock (TX) Police Department, the “most common issue experienced is that many people are inundated by the negative coverage of law enforcement and they simply do not want to face the constant scrutiny that officers face.” (Romig)

Finally, the lengthy hiring process is frequently cited as a roadblock to recruiting qualified police candidates. PoliceOne’s Sean Curtis notes that the process and requirements are “exhaustive” compared to positions in equally compensated careers.

Competing with Other Agencies

In addition to competing with higher paying security positions in industries with much faster hiring processes, your agency is most likely vying against others for the same qualified recruits. Recruiters must quickly make an emotional connection with potential candidates and sell them on their agencies.

To a potential employee, deciding to accept a position is as much an economic decision as it is an emotional one, with police recruiters competing along the lines of compensation and benefits. In addition to pay and medical, Texas Tech Police Department, like many other agencies, highlights its extensive training and high-quality equipment. According to its administrative captain, Stephen Hinkle, “If we focus on what we do have to offer, then we can make our agency more competitive with larger ones.” (Romig)

Learn from Your Force

To develop effective recruitment strategies, police recruiters must understand what it is about police work that appeals to new officers and then promote those aspects of the job, even if the preferred roles are technical or require advanced education.

Seek out and talk to those who have recently become police officers — not one or two, but as many as you can find in your region. Ask questions that are key to your recruiting and determine the common denominators: Who are these young recruits? What inspired them to become police officers? Where do they see themselves in 5 or 10 years? What are their off-duty activities? When did they decide on a career in law enforcement? What is their education background? What appeals to them about their agencies?

From discussions with young recruits, you may find that you need to target a new group of prospects, communicate differently, or change the way your
According to Hilary Romig, a crime scene investigator with the Ruidoso (NM) Police Department and a frequently published author on public safety, an agency recruiter should also talk to their department’s long-time officers. In her Officer.com article, Romig, along with Lubbock Independent School District Police Chief Jody Scifres, voice the importance of understanding the “commonalities that may be found in the officers who end up staying,” including such characteristics as perseverance, resiliency, and motivation, as well as a solid work ethic and integrity. (Romig)

**Retain What Works — Retire What Doesn’t**

In his 1989 ad for Canon®, 19-year-old tennis star Andre Agassi said, “Image is everything.” (Tignor.) While image isn’t everything, it does have a significant impact on police recruiting. If you want to attract and hire qualified recruits, your strategy should be to develop the appropriate image of your agency in order to reach and appeal to people who you would want to recruit. Be sure you regularly review your agency’s recruiting materials — from website and social media to brochures and ads — for currency and agency image. If you think you are already doing this, but not experiencing results, review your strategies and try a new approach.

For instance, earlier generations of officers grew up exposed to the publicized image of police officers as crime fighters. Agencies emotionally connected with potential recruits using such tag lines as “Be a Force” on promotions that featured pictures of tactical officers. Though these promotions still may have appeal in some communities, the general attraction of today’s applicants to policing has altered. If a tactic has not helped you improve recruitment, put it aside.

Among the points to consider:

- Do your agency's recruitment promotions look professional and modern?
- Is your website up to date and appealing?
- Do your agency's recruitment materials appeal to the people who may apply to your agency?
- Do these materials make your agency look better than your competitors? (Basich)

**Recruit to Reflect Your Community**

Today’s police departments should reflect their communities: the public expects it; potential recruits expect it. (Mead)

According to USA Today, the Oakland (CA) Police Department has had success recruiting a diverse force. Oakland Sgt. Juan Sanchez, the department’s recruiting supervisor, told the newspaper that his department has done what others must do to attract a workforce that mirrors its community demographics. Recruitment materials must “push beyond their traditional methods, such as printing brochures showing photographs of racially diverse employees or courting students at historically black colleges.” (Alcindor) In Skokie, IL, the police department rose to the recent national law enforcement lip-synch challenge. The resulting video went viral in a matter of days, logging more than 2 million Facebook views as of July 31, 2018 (Chicago Tribune) Not only did Skokie’s diverse force create a strong outreach tool, but the same video will appeal to potential recruits. In addition, the Chicago Tribune reports that the Skokie Police Department has also launched a Facebook recruitment video.

Diversity should reach beyond gender, race, and ethnicity to encompass languages. Sanchez, who grew up in Oakland, told USA Today that police diversity is a personal mission to him. When he was eight years old, his family’s home and car were robbed. When police arrived at the scene, “my mom couldn’t speak English to the officers. Here I am 8 or 9 years old trying to translate. Every time I think about that, it reminds me of the importance of not just Spanish but all the other languages,” said Sanchez. (Alcindor)

In summary, discover what attracts new officers to law enforcement and to your own agency. Spend time selling your agency, its role, and its value in society to those you seek to recruit. Break free of past failures and out-of-date promotions and position your department as the one that offers the best opportunity for potential recruits, as an up-to-date workplace that provides competitive pay and benefits, and as an agency that employs a diverse workforce, including officers who are similar to the recruit. Whatever your candidates’ views of policing,
you need to learn them, understand them, and become them — if you want them to sign on the dotted line. Lastly, and most importantly, promote the good you do, the reason you do it, and how that fits in with the applicants you seek. §

Sources:

Quick Tips for Refreshing Your Recruitment Efforts

• Expand your search network outside of your jurisdiction to reach a “larger pool that may have a variety of applicants.” (Romig)
• Promote your agency’s diversity in all of your recruiting efforts and materials, from websites and brochures to social media. (Meade)
• Offer lateral transfer options, which create more appealing reasons for experienced officers to change agencies. (Basich)
• Maximize your social media presence and use your accounts to promote your agency, its equipment, its diverse force, and the great community that it serves. If your agency’s budget allows, consider boosting (advertising) some of your posts. (Favreau)
• Keep your website current. Jeff Favreau wrote in Law and Order, “If the website is not modern looking, has outdated information, and/or is difficult to navigate, then you will never see [an] application. Your applicant has gone to a different department with a better website.”
• Use community events to recruit. Block parties, community and school fairs, career and job fairs, places of worship, high school sporting events, art fairs, cultural events, and more — all offer excellent opportunities to connect with your community, position your agency at its most positive and service-oriented, and to reach out to and recruit individuals that reflect your community’s diversity. (Basich)
• Review hiring standards. Qualifying as a law enforcement candidate is rightfully difficult. Many agencies are reviewing some factors that automatically disqualify a candidate. (Basich)§
During its 2017–18 session, the US Supreme Court handed down decisions packed with the potential to personally or professionally affect law enforcement officers. As we wait for the Court to reconvene on the first Monday of October, The Key offers an alphabetical summary of recent cases that may be of interest to law enforcement.

- **Byrd v. United States**
  The Court unanimously decided that people in lawful possession of rental cars have a reasonable expectation of privacy in those vehicles, whether or not they are listed as authorized drivers on the rental agreements. Justice Anthony Kennedy, who authored the Court’s opinion, wrote that this includes a “reasonable expectation of privacy against government searches of the vehicle.” (2017 - 2018 Term)

- **Carpenter v. United States**
  “Does the warrantless search and seizure of cell phone records, which include the location and movements of cell phone users, violate the 4th Amendment?” The Court answered Yes, in a 5 – 4 decision. (2017 - 2018 Term)

- **Collins v. Commonwealth of Virginia**
  With only Justice Samuel Alito dissenting, the Court ruled that the 4th Amendment’s automobile exception does not permit police officers to enter the curtilage of private property in order to search a vehicle without a warrant. Curtilage is the area immediately surrounding a home, such as a driveway or sideyard. In her opinion, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that the home and the home’s curtilage clearly require a permit in order for officers to enter and search. Thus, warrantless search of a vehicle parked on a driveway, within the curtilage, is not permitted. (2017 - 2018 Term)

- **Currier v. Commonwealth of Virginia**
  Before Currier’s trial on counts of burglary, grand larceny, and firearms possession by a convicted criminal, the defense and prosecution agreed to sever the firearms charge from the other two charges. A jury acquitted Currier on the grand larceny and burglary charges. Following his acquittal, the Commonwealth decided to try Currier on the severed firearms charge. His defense objected based on the 5th Amendment’s Double Jeopardy Clause, under which an individual cannot be tried more than once for the same offence. However, Currier was tried, convicted, and sentenced. In a 5 – 4 decision for Virginia, the Court stated that because Currier consented to sever the firearms charge from the other two charges, his firearms trial and conviction were not protected under the Double Jeopardy Clause. (2017 - 2018 Term)

- **Janus v. AFSCME Council 31**
  In a potential blow to all public-sector labor unions, the Court overturned its 1977 decision in *Abood vs. Detroit Board of Education*, in which D. Louis Abood et al unsuccessfully argued that being forced to pay agency fees to a union with which the appellants disagreed was a violation of free speech. By 5 – 4, the June 2018 decision instructs that unions cannot charge agency fees for negotiating on behalf of employees who do not join the union even though these workers would receive the same benefits as union members (the fair-share arrangement of union negotiation cost sharing). *Janus* also rules that union membership must be opt-in rather than opt-out.
  In his opinion for the majority, Justice Alito wrote that union negotiations are political and that to force non-members to pay union agency fees is a violation of their 1st Amendment rights, as is the opt-out membership provision. As explained on Oyez.org, “the Court concluded that the state’s collection of agency fees from nonconsenting public employees was a violation of the 1st Amendment, and that *Abood*..."
was incorrect in deciding otherwise. The Court stated that... even under a more permissive standard than the ‘exacting’ strict scrutiny that the Court had applied in evaluating the constitutionality of agency fees in the past, the Illinois scheme could not pass muster. The Court explained that neither of Abood’s two justifications for agency fees, which were maintaining ‘labor peace’ and eliminating the risk of ‘free riders,’ could survive under this standard, finding that both problems could be mitigated through less restrictive means than agency fees. The Court also stat[ed] that unions could be effective without agency fees.” (Janus)§

Sources:

NUCPS’ Roy Lucke Retires after 40 Years at Northwestern

On July 30, NUCPS Executive Director David Bradford and the entire NUCPS staff gathered to honor Senior Instructor Roy Lucke, as he embarked on retirement after 40 years with NUCPS. Northwestern School of Professional Studies Dean Thomas Gibbons and Northwestern Vice-President and NU Police Department Chief Bruce Lewis also attended the luncheon.

Lucke was joined at the luncheon by his son Robert and wife Linda.
The May 2018 issue of *The Key* featured Lucke’s retirement announcement, a summary of his career, and recollections from staff and instructors. Our Facebook page (facebook.com/nucps) features more photos from the retirement party. All are welcome to visit and leave your best wishes for Lucke.
Addressing Intersection Safety Problems

by Robert K. Seyfried, PE, PTOE

Intersection crashes account for more than 45% of all reported collisions in the US and 21% of vehicle fatalities. Identification of problem intersections and selection of appropriate operational and safety measures are critical processes for improving roadway safety.

Selecting safety treatments at intersections requires consideration of many factors, including roadway alignment, functional classification, the type and amount of traffic (motor vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle), design elements, traffic control devices, and abutting land use.

Symptoms of Operational & Safety Problems

Intersection problems can be categorized as either operational in nature or safety related. These two categories are not always independent of each other.

Symptoms of operational problems at intersections often include:
- excessive delays,
- long queues of stopped vehicles that block upstream driveways or intersections, and
- aggressive driving.

Symptoms of safety problems at intersections often include:
- higher than expected crash rate or frequency,
- rapidly increasing crash rate,
- higher than expected crash severity, and
- erratic maneuvers.

Common Intersection Deficiencies

Several issues are commonly encountered at problem intersections. Additionally, one type of intersection deficiency may result in both operational and safety problems. For instance, the lack of a left-turn lane may result in long delays for motorists behind a stopped left-turn vehicle waiting for a gap in oncoming traffic. On that same approach, the lack of a left-turn lane may be a contributing factor in rear-end or lane-change collisions related to left-turn vehicles in the through traffic lane. In general, intersections with both operational and safety problems should be addressed first, followed by locations with safety concerns alone, and then by those with only operational shortcomings.

Improper selection or operation of intersection traffic control devices can lead to excessive delays, and an increased frequency of rear-end, crossing, left-turn, or pedestrian crashes. Motorist respect for traffic control devices is degraded if overly restrictive intersection control devices are installed which may create problems at other locations.

Queues of traffic in through lanes, which affect nearby intersections or driveways, can result in both delays for vehicles trying to enter and for through vehicles. Merging and turning-movement crashes at driveways as well as rear-end collisions are likely outcomes.

On an approach with no left-turn lane, vehicles waiting to turn left will block through traffic,
resulting in delays for following vehicles as well as rear-end and lane-change crashes. If a short left-turn lane is provided, but left-turn vehicles cannot reach the entrance to the lane, or if the queue of left turners extends beyond the limits of the turn lane, all approaching traffic will experience delays. This problem results in an increased potential for rear-end and lane-change collisions.

Inappropriate geometrics or channelization may cause delays, awkward merge/diverge movements, or improper approach-lane orientation. Motorists must be given an adequate view of the intersection when approaching. Turning, rear-end, crossing, merging, and pedestrian crashes or erratic maneuvers may result from these problems.

Finally, heavy traffic flows on a major street often result in delays for vehicles turning left off of the major street and for side-street traffic. Disruption to the flow of traffic may be caused by cross street vehicles. Rear-end, crossing, turning, merging, and pedestrian crashes are potential concerns.

The Collision Diagram

The most useful tool for analyzing safety deficiencies at an intersection is a collision diagram. The collision diagram is a schematic drawing of the intersection with crashes shown symbolically. [See Figure 1, next page.]

The collision diagram assists in detecting patterns of the same types of crashes occurring repeatedly. Once a pattern or patterns of crashes have been identified, it may be possible to identify a causal connection between the pattern(s) and the geometric or operational features of the intersection. Only when such causal connections are identified is it possible to identify potential countermeasures that address the underlying causes of the crashes. One should recognize that if no clear crash patterns exist, then it may not be feasible to identify any cost-effective countermeasures at this intersection.

All crashes that are related to the design or operation of the intersection should be included in the collision diagram, regardless of where the collision occurred. For example, a long queue of traffic at an intersection may develop because of inadequate capacity. A rear-end collision that occurs in the queue several hundred feet from the intersection is still considered intersection related because the queue is caused by the design or operational features of that intersection. Therefore, the rear-end collision should be included in the collision diagram for the intersection.

On-site observations of driver actions and behavior may provide important understanding of safety and operational deficiencies as well as aid in selecting appropriate countermeasures. If a pattern of crashes has been observed that are related to night time, peak periods, wet weather, or other factors, the on-site inspection should be timed to coincide with such problem periods.

Intersection Improvement Guidelines

Some general rule-of-thumb guidelines are helpful when considering the development of intersection improvement plans.

Simplify the operation and geometrics of complex intersections. Multi-leg intersections tend to result in higher crash rates and can be treated by:

- closure of one or more legs,
- one-way operation on one or more legs,
- turn restrictions, or
- minor realignment of one or more legs.

The intersection angle should be as close to 90° as possible. Skewed intersections increase the distance over which crossing vehicles are exposed to conflicts, increase conflict severity, and create awkward turns. A pattern of right-angle crashes may be evidence of a problem attributable to skewed angles.

Steep grades and sharp curves should be avoided in intersection areas. Grades should be as flat as possible within the intersection and on approaches where vehicles may be stopped. Maximum suggested values are 3% on high-speed roads and 6% on lower-speed roads.

Left-turn lanes can greatly reduce both operational and safety problems at intersections. Providing a left-turn lane may reduce rear-end, side-swipe, and left-turn crashes at both signalized and unsignalized intersections. They can also substantially increase intersection capacity and reduce delay to all drivers. Right-turn lanes also can reduce rear-end and side-swipe collisions due
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING & CRASH INVESTIGATION

Figure 1: Example of a collision diagram. | Source: Iowa Traffic Safety Analysis Manual, 2012
The appropriate intersection traffic–control technique at any location depends on volume and speed of traffic, available sight distance, functional classification of intersecting roads, and crash history. More restrictive forms of intersection control generally reduce crashes that involve such right-of-way conflicts as right-angle crashes. However, to maximize the efficiency of traffic flow, the preferred policy is to use the least restrictive form of control that provides adequate safety.

Finally, safety lighting at locations with high crash rates during the hours of darkness can be highly effective in reducing crossing-vehicle and pedestrian crashes. §

Sources & Helpful References


The 10 Most Dangerous Intersections in the US

1. 1450 Block of Ala Moana Blvd, Honolulu, HI is the most dangerous intersection in the US. Ala Moana runs the southwest length of a large shopping mall and intersects with entrances and exits to the parking facility. It was the site of 312 accidents in 2015.
2. Tillary St & Flatbush Ave, Brooklyn, NY is the most dangerous intersection in the continental US and was the site of 180 collisions in 2015.
3. Orchard Lake Rd & 14 Mile Rd, W Bloomfield, MI. In 2016, this roundabout had 163 collisions. While US drivers traditionally resist traffic circles, British engineers seem to like a good roundabout — and none may be more mindblowing than the 7-circle roundabout in Swindon, England, which is a monument to English humor or to traffic engineering wizardry. Visit our YouTube channel (bit.ly/2n09WM3) to watch this circle in action.
4. Merritt Pkwy at Mile Marker 46.42, New Haven, CT. What seems a simple rural highway interchange has resulted in 562 crashes over 3 years.
5. Cleveland Ave & Morse Rd, Columbus, OH. Buckeyes.
7. Bissonet St & Sam Houston Pkwy, Houston, TX. A recipe for disaster: off-ramps, commercial driveways, and multi-lane roads. Mix together at one intersection to arrive at 300 crashes and 252 injuries over 4 years.
8. Knights Rd & Street Rd, Bensalem, PA. An earlier “most dangerous intersection in the US,” still has skewed angles and poor signage that result in crashes.
9. Exit 20 off I-95, Providence, RI. Following some improvements, this is no longer the most dangerous intersection in New England; however, it has been involved in 217 crashes and 90 injuries over 3 years.
10. 59th Ave & Olive Ave, Glendale, AZ. Three corners of the intersection feature commercial driveways to gas stations, shopping, and restaurants. In 2013, the intersection was the site of 68 crashes. §

Source:
Problem

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is a nationally accredited law enforcement agency with more than 1,600 employees (Annex A). The WSP consists of eight regions (Field Operations Districts), the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Bureau, the State Fire Marshal/Fire Protection Bureau, the State Toxicology Lab, the State Crime Lab, and various other specialized services (Annex B). The WSP has one Information Technology Division (ITD), located near WSP headquarters in Tumwater, WA.

The WSP currently does not have any central archiving system for emails sent or received by agency employees. The WSP also has limited server resources and has placed volume limits on employee’s server mailboxes. To allow employees to conduct work via email, employees create Outlook Data Files (PST files) which append to their Outlook screens, but are stored entirely on their desktop or laptop computers, not the servers (Annex C). This process allows employees to use their email to conduct business, but limits email volume retained on WSP servers.

The WSP receives more than 13,000 public records requests each year (Annex D, p 24). Many of these requests involve WSP email, which is defined as a public record in the Public Records Act (PRA) and in case law that interprets the PRA (Annex E). Since agency emails are held both on the server and on individual computer hard drives, no single source search for emails responsive to records requests is possible. ITD employees can conduct server searches, but employees must also individually search their PST files and computers.

Because no standardized or universal folder storage system for emails exists — and retention varies by email topic — employees are confused about how long to keep emails. This results in many staff either holding emails eternally or deleting everything. Neither is a lawful option. The WSP is currently working on a records request for all emails sent or received by WSP in July 2017. Research has determined that the server emails alone number over 1.7 million (Annex F).

In order to set and communicate clear retention requirements for emails and properly and lawfully organize and maintain these records, the WSP must develop and consistently use an agency-wide email organization and retention system.

Assumptions

- The WSP will not receive any additional funding.
- The WSP will not be able to change existing public records laws.
- Records requests for email will continue to occur and increase in the WSP.
- The WSP Records Section will not receive any additional staffing.
- Police accountability, transparency, and integrity will continue to be priorities for the department and the citizens we serve.
- It is the responsibility of WSP leadership to ensure employees are trained and equipped to properly manage email.

Facts

- Email is a public record subject to disclosure under the PRA (Annex G).
- The WSP is staffed by more than 600 sworn and 1,000 civilian personnel (Annex A).
- In July 2017, the WSP server contained 1,756,035 emails (Annex F).
- In 2016, the WSP received more than 13,000 records requests (Annex D).
- WSP policy requires employees to manage their email (Annex H).
Discussion

Background

The management of email has been a long-standing issue in the WSP, with more work done via email than ever before, which presents legal retention requirements, public disclosure requests, agency litigation, and significant liability to the agency.

Many regulatory requirements pertain to email management. These include both state and federal law. State law, for instance, requires that public agencies must retain their records for a specific amount of time, depending on the type of record (RCW 40.14.050). Deleting emails too quickly may violate federal, state, local and/or industry regulations that require certain types of information to be retained for a minimum period of time. Holding emails “forever,” though, increases the WSP’s exposure to legal examination (InfoSec Institute).

With improper email retention and management, records and history can become lost. Many government lawsuits now turn on what is buried in old email messages. Government policy simply has not kept up with the evolving technology (Perlman).

The newer version of Microsoft Exchange offers tools and new features to help manage email. As the agency re-implemented the storage limits for employee email, we recognized the need to re-address this issue. (Jarmon)

Server storage is a problem as far as capturing and holding emails long term. Challenges include public record requests for large amounts of agency records and the lack of continuity in retention from employee to employee. Records holds for tort claims or agency litigation can also be difficult to properly and legally complete when no agency-wide methods exist for retention and storage of emails. The risk is high of missing important documents because they are not properly kept or catalogued. Retention rules are based on record content, not medium (email vs. paper), making their management difficult for many employees to understand.

In a one-month period (July 2017), the WSP had over 1,750,000 emails held on WSP servers. This figure does not include emails kept and held in personal folders (PST) that are linked to individual PCs rather than the server. It is estimated that personal folders may account for another 1,000,000 emails. (Harwell)

The WSP has received a records request for all July 2017 emails from a disgruntled citizen. Assuming WSP can provide 300-500 emails per month (fitting this task in with all other job assignments and only taking into account the known number of emails from the server), this request is estimated to take 292 years to complete.

It is well established that providing employees with work they can complete is a key element to employee satisfaction. An employee who knows that their work is being required only to satisfy the whim of a disgruntled citizen intent on harassing an agency can make an employee feel diminished. This is in conflict with the agency value to make sure every employee knows they are a critical member of a team committed to earning the trust and confidence of the public. It is also incongruent with our mandate to be good stewards of public funds to expend so many resources on one individual with a grudge. But it is our legal obligation. Managing the volume of emails remains our best tool to combat this problem.

Continued →
This issue concerns all WSP employees and stakeholders. Taxpayers share concern as public funds are sometimes spent on personal vendettas. Potential significant budgetary impacts exist if server space continues to be improperly managed and the purchase of larger servers becomes necessary. This would also impact WSP legislative priorities.

It is entirely within our span of control to affect this issue. External stakeholders are impacted by improper collection and storage of emails, but they have no interest or involvement in any specific solution. There is general agreement that the issue is significant given the influx of records requests for emails, the continually increasing amount of work done via email, the high volume of emails generated daily, and the complicated nature of email retention.

### Comparative Analysis

The need to address email retention pertains to all public agencies and law enforcement agencies in the country. Some other state agencies (e.g., Attorney General’s Office) and larger local police departments (e.g., Seattle Police Department) have created universal email folders identifying specific emails by retention period and implementing automatic deletion periods. (Camus) Still others have purchased outside vendor services to manage electronic records according to a survey of SPSC #422 students. (Survey) Of the 30 students in #422, I preempted responses from the 16 WSP employees. I received 6 other responses. The results of the survey indicated that 100% of the respondents liked the method their department employed to archive emails, and 50% of the departments made their employees at least partially responsible for proper retention of their own emails. The majority of the respondents (66%) used a combination of Outlook and an external vendor, such as Barracuda, to manage their email.

### Records Retention and the Court System

Unmanaged email could trigger financial, productivity, and legal nightmares should the organization one day find itself embroiled in a workplace lawsuit. The cost and time required producing subpoenaed email, retaining legal counsel, securing expert witnesses, mounting a legal battle, and covering jury awards and settlements could put an agency out of business. Best practices call for a proactive approach to email management and combine written content, usage, and retention policies. (Symantec)

The courts appreciate consistency. If an agency can demonstrate that it has consistently applied clear email usage, content, and retention policies — and has supported written email policy — then the court is more likely to look favorably upon the organization should it one day become embroiled in a workplace lawsuit. (Symantec) It has already been determined how long records (based on content) must be kept.

### WSP Records Retention Schedule

The WSP records retention schedule was approved by the State Records Committee in accordance with RCW 40.14.050. Public records covered by the records series within this records retention schedule (regardless of format) must be retained for the minimum retention period as specified in this schedule (SGGRRS 2016). If a retention period is not known for a particular type of data, seven years (the minimum IRS recommendation) is often used as a safe common denominator.

Email is a vital part of agency work, and this is not likely to change. Most communication is conducted via email, as is a wide variety of other agency business. Addressing the complex issue of email retention will result in employees being able to discontinue stockpiling email to avoid improper deletion or deleting everything and losing key records. Both could severely impact agency liability. Email management will decrease liability.
for public records requests and make searches less cumbersome by creating smaller and more concise volumes of responsive records. A comprehensive email organization system would also reduce the tremendous number of emails stored on the server. The WSP already has tools at its disposal to design a manageable email archiving system. (Harwell)

### Possible Solutions

WSP has three options to consider regarding the proper and lawful organization, maintenance, and retention of email, which are outlined below.

#### Option I

Continue to have each employee be responsible for their own email archiving and retention.

**Pros:**
- Employees would not have to learn a new method for email archiving and discovery.
- Employees would be saved the time of learning a new system.
- No new policies would be required.

**Cons:**
- When WSP becomes litigants in court it must produce any electronic information considered relevant to the case. If it can’t easily retrieve emails because it hasn’t established an efficient way to store and recover them, considerable staff time will be needed to retrieve and review a large volume of email.
- There is a risk of an unfavorable case outcome if employees have deleted crucial emails that are public record. (Perlman)

**Costs:**
- Increased storage cost.
- The required email often lies hidden among millions of spam messages and irrelevant emails, making retention an arduous, stressful, and productivity-busting activity (Nayab).

#### Option II

Create universal email folders for all employees with built-in retention.

**Pros:**
- It would pay to segment different types or uses of email into different retention periods to avoid subjecting the entire online email store to the maximum email retention period.
- Because email retention depends on content, it would be a simple matter to create some universal folders for each Outlook account based on common WSP uses for email.
- ITD indicates that it can include automatic deletion when retention rules are met by email folder type.
- Segmentation by type of content would look something like this example:
  - Financial – 7 years
  - General Correspondence – 1 year
  - Equipment – 6 years
  - Spam – not retained
  - Executive email – 2 years
  - All else (e.g., “default retention policy”) – 1 year

**Cons:**
- An archiving system will require additional work for those employees who currently ignore retention, delete everything, or save everything. But once employees fully integrate email storage into their daily work flow, it will take next to no additional time.
- Policies will need to be reviewed or created.

**Costs:**
- This option can be accomplished with currently available resources. As noted above, there will be an initial cost in employee time to become familiar with the new folder structures.

#### Option III

Purchase a system from an outside vendor to manage WSP email storage.

**Pros:**
- This approach would remove additional
workload for WSP staff to program the above folder structure.
• It would move the archiving function from WSP employees to an outside vendor, saving WSP time.
• Several other local law enforcement agencies use these systems and are very satisfied.

Cons:
• This would require a budgetary impact for WSP for which it does not currently have funding.
• It also would provide an outside vendor with access to potentially significant confidential information.

Costs:
• A system such as Barracuda would cost the WSP upwards of $225,000, with additional yearly costs (Annex I).

Conclusion

The WSP currently has no organized email management system. With ever increasing volumes of work being done via email, it is critical that the agency find a method of email management that will help it to comply with regulations and state and federal retention laws, while meeting its mission and providing the best resources to employees.

Option I, the status quo, is not the best option because the problem of improper email retention will persist and the agency will remain out of compliance with legal requirements. Option II, which is recommended, implements a comprehensive internal email folder system that will assist each WSP employee in proper email management. This option does not have a budgetary impact and after initial time invested in set up and training, this option will ultimately reduce staff time required to retrieve archived records from email. Option III, purchasing an available system for email archiving and retrieval from an outside vendor, is not a good option at this time as it would impact the WSP operating budget where funds are not currently unavailable.

Recommendation

The implementation of an in-house email folder structure with built-in automatic retention or destruction for all employees offers a more convenient way for employees to manage email, while also streamlining agency retention compliance with the least budgetary impact. It is recommended that WSP implement Option II, a comprehensive email management strategy, to include executive-level support, updated policies on email management, and technology-based solutions of universal email folders and automated retention or destruction of email to help enforce laws, rules, and regulations. A proposed implementation schedule is outlined in Annex J.

Sources

• Camus, Mandy. (2017). Interview with Former Legal Secretary for Attorney General’s Office Mandy Camus. Interview by Gretchen L. Dolan.

(Cited Annexes cited can be accessed via the online article, The Key, Issue 7, nucps.northwestern.edu).
SINCE THE CONVERSION to digital photography, the trend has been to eliminate training for forensic photographers. Law enforcement agencies rely on point-and-shoot photography and “What you see, is what you get.” This practice raises the questions of what is acceptable and what is required or necessary for identification or court purposes.

Lack of proper training usually results in the photographer working in ‘Program’ or ‘Automated’ modes on the camera. Shooting in these modes decreases or limits such adjustments as:

- modifying the intensity of the light shutter speeds,
- increasing or decreasing depth of field,
- selecting an ISO level to free the image of digital noise,
- adding illumination with an electronic flash or other source, and
- accessing available modes to allow for the ease of adjustments above.

While daylight applications may simply record images digitally, the use of artificial light poses a more difficult problem. Such techniques as time exposure and flash applications — including multiple flashes, painting with light, fill flash, and bounce flash — require a more in-depth knowledge of the camera, peripheral equipment, and the Inverse Square Law.

The Inverse Square Law is critical for forensic photographers, as well as all other professional photographers. The Inverse Square Law dictates that the intensity of the light emitted from a light source is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the subject; in other words, it explains the significant decrease in light over distance. Understanding the Inverse Square Law is critical for using supplemental light sources in photography.

\[
E = \frac{I}{D^2}
\]

- \( E \) = intensity of emitted light;
- \( I \) = inverse;
- \( D \) = distance squared in units

For instance, by moving 2 meters from your subject, the flash intensity is reduced to \( \frac{1}{4} \) of what it was at the 1 unit from your subject.

\[
D = 2^2 = 4
\]

Inverse (I) of 4 = \( \frac{1}{4} \)

Tripling the distance from your subject reduces the illumination to only \( \frac{1}{9} \) the amount.

\[
D = 3^2 = 9
\]

Inverse (I) of 9 = \( \frac{1}{9} \)

**Time Exposure** (see Figure 1) is a method of adding illumination in low-light levels or night photography. Longer shutter speeds allow more light to be absorbed, capturing the entire dynamic range of the digital sensor.

**Flash Photography:** All flash photographs are actually a double exposure (ambient light and flash... Continued →
illumination). The camera shutter speed affects the ambient light but not the flash exposure. When the flash is discharged, it provides instantaneous and immediate illumination. The flash provides supplemental light, color, and stop action.

**Multiple flash photography** involves the use of a single flash multiple times or multiple flashes instantaneously (see Figure 2). The use of multiple flashes may be used to create ratios by reducing the power or distance of flash units or by a single flash used multiple times in a single frame (see Figure 3).

Calculations must be made for the flash-to-subject distance, both in ratios and single flashes, to evenly illuminate the scene (see Figure 4). This is usually accomplished with the use of a flash meter or by calculating the distance required for the flash based upon the guide number (intensity). The flashes must be evenly balanced to provide overlapping illumination and no gaps. Of course, ambient light must be taken into consideration as well.

**Painting with light** provides another technique for increasing additional illumination (see Figures 7 & 8, p. 25). This is accomplished by using a permanent illumination light source and moving through the exposure in patterns or by painting as in brush strokes. Painting can create problems in the exposure if not evenly applied, and color shifts may occur depending upon the light source used.

A **fill flash** is used to reduce, but not eliminate, harsh shadows (see Figure 9, p. 25). By creating lighting ratios between the ambient light and the flash, a more natural appearance is produced with reduced shadows. Many times the forensic

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**Figure 1:** Time Exposure (note camera movement)

**Figure 2:** Single Flash Photography on camera: Appears flat and washes out bloodstains on the back of the lab coat.

**Figure 3:** Multiple flashes in a single frame.

**Figure 4:** Calculation of number of flashes required.
Figure 5 (above): Multiple flashes into a single frame. Notice the gaps and flashes from the side of the image as well as the flash ghosting from the sides of the photo. This is a 300-foot-plus photograph.

Figure 6 (below): Multiple flashes used to illuminate a building. Notice the time exposure of sky and windows that occur, as well as the color balance achieved using an electronic flash.
photographer is called upon to photograph an object which may be in heavy shadows and not readily visible. Items such as a gun under a car seat or an object in the truck of a car, while visible, may be shown or concealed by ambient sunlight. Fill flash will reduce this contrast and make the items visible within the image.

Finally, a **bounce flash** is a fantastic tool for helping the photographer create extra distance from the flash to the subject (see Figure 10). Since all flash photography is calculated with the flash-to-subject distance ratio, bouncing the flash from a reflective surface can extend the distance. This helps allow reduce shadows, improve contrast, or even provide a color shift. Bouncing the flash may also substitute for a fill flash because the process provides illumination by bouncing and softening the light.

The ultimate purpose of forensic photography is to provide images to the court that are of such high quality that they place the jurors in the photographer’s shoes, as if the jurors were actually at the scene. All of the addressed techniques add to the photographer’s skills, but quality training is critical to the final product. Professional training in the use of the camera, flashes, and accessories is a must for producing demonstrative evidence for courtroom presentation. Setting the camera to P for Police (Program mode) is not an option.

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**Figure 7 (above):** Painting with light using an incandescent floodlight.

**Figure 8 (left):** Painting with light in a classroom with an incandescent floodlight. Notice painting gaps and color shift from light source.

**Figure 9 (left):** Notice the reduction of shadows with use of fill flash.

**Figure 10 (below):** Direct flash (in left box) is compared to bounce flash in right box. Notice how the bounce creates more distance between the flash and the subject.

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All photo source / credit: Don Ostermeyer
Improving Interactions with the Mentally Ill, Part I: Successful Social Worker Partnerships

by Caroline Paulison Andrew

As one of the few public agencies open 24/7, people call their local police for a myriad of reasons, including domestic violence, child abuse, juvenile justice issues, dog fights, and drug abuse. As a result, officers often are asked to efficiently and adeptly perform many roles, from marriage counselor and auto mechanic to welfare worker and friend. But the most difficult involves mental health–related crises. (Lamin)

Ten percent of 911 law enforcement calls involve mental health–related issues. For the families and loved ones of the 10 million US adults living with one or more serious mental health illnesses — schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, bipolar disorder, and psychopathic personality disorders — sometimes the only solution to a crisis is to call 911. While only 3% of Americans suffer from one of these severe illnesses, they make up more than 25% of all fatal law enforcement interactions. (Maciag)

Even for the most experienced police officers, mental health crises can be some of the hardest calls to handle. “Surveys of officers suggest that they do not feel adequately trained to effectively respond to mental health crises, that mental health calls are very time-consuming . . . and that mental health providers are not very responsive. Officers perceive mental health–related calls as very unpredictable and dangerous, which without adequate training in de-escalation, could inadvertently cause them to approach in a manner which escalates the situation.” (Watson)

In addition to crisis intervention response teams (CIRTs), agencies are seeking better tools and strategies for handling their communities’ mental-health calls to ensure the safety of officers and civilians, to reduce strains on police resources, and to help divert the mentally ill away from the criminal justice system and, instead, toward medical resources. The ideal tools would place the mentally ill back into the hands of the medical profession — and those are the tools that are being developed or tested in agencies today. (Gray)

Partnering with Mental Health Professionals

Police agency collaboration with other community professionals, especially community-based mental health workers, offers several potential tools for increasing safety, reducing strain on police resources, and positively impacting de-escalation. Additionally, partnerships with community social workers can help divert the mentally ill from incarceration.

Even when a city or state requires continued education in mental health — and many do not — it is with extraordinarily rose-colored vision that officials consider eight hours of continuing education every three years, as now required in Illinois, as sufficient training for learning about the types of illnesses that may be encountered, and handling potential interactions. (Bjorhus, LeForge)

In their paper “Police Social Work and Community Policing” published in Cogent Social Sciences, researchers Sylvester Amara Lamin, Consoler Teboh, and John Martyn Chamberlain reported that most officers are not trained for managing situations that involve the mentally ill. Most experience the
critical dilemma of “anticipating the potential for an escalation or not, within a constrained window of time.” (Lamin). Agency collaboration with social workers provides the critical, clinical knowledge needed in these situations. As the Lamin study predicts, “collaboration between law enforcement and social workers during police interventions will reduce the amount of avoidable casualties as well as build, or increase, police-community trust.”

**Police Social Workers**

Social workers who work within police precincts practice what is defined as police social work. (Patterson) They attend agency staff meetings, where they can offer professional recommendations on mental health cases and case management strategies. Police social workers possess the critical, clinical experience and expertise for providing on-going, mental health–related training for officers, intervention and de-escalation strategies and techniques, and stress management skills. They can also improve strained officer resources by spearheading case management, identifying types of required intervention or medical care, and locating community mental health resources, including in-patient admissions. (Patterson)

**Police Social Workers at Dispatch**

Selected by the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG JC) as one of ten Law Enforcement–Mental Health (LE–MH) Learning Sites, the Houston (TX) Police Department’s Mental Health Division helps other jurisdictions improve responses to situations involving the mentally ill, from co-response and crisis intervention teams (CITs) to general police-mental health collaborations. (CSG JC)

The Houston pilot program also features a 911 Crisis Call Diversion (CCD) program, which staffs police social workers at the department’s dispatch center. When dispatchers receive calls involving mental health, they quickly connect callers to the center’s social worker, instead of dispatching a squad car. If police services are indeed needed, the social worker knows that the dispatcher can immediately send a police unit or other emergency responder to the scene. In 2017, Houston CCD social workers took more than 59,000 mental health–related calls. For 20,000 of the calls, no police or fire/EMS unit was needed. (Baham)

**“The importance of police collaboration with social workers employed by nonprofit organizations, or within their own departments, cannot be overstated. On a daily basis, social workers and police officers primarily work with individuals from the same populations, facing the same kinds of problems and challenges…” (Lamin)**

Houston Police Mental Health Division Capt. William Staney told the CSG JC that he initially thought that the CCD program would divert calls from police and fire, improving financial and human resources. However, he also discovered that “the crisis callers are actually providing better services to the community by making better, more appropriate referrals and getting people better guided help than, perhaps, an officer or a trip to the emergency room [can do].” (Baham)

Even when officers do need to be dispatched, Houston CCD Program Manager Karen Slaton notes, “We’re [also] helping in other ways. We’re getting additional information so the dispatchers and police have a better idea of what’s happening. We’re de-escalating people in crisis so that it’s a stable situation.” (Baham)

**Co-Response Programs: Social Workers in Cars**

Houston’s Mental Health Division now employs 30 police social workers. In addition to launching a crisis intervention team in 2011, the sheriff’s office of Harris County, in which Houston is located, collaborates with the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County. As a co-response program, the partnership places social workers with CIRT teams for dispatch to mental health–related calls.

Ann Macleod, LCSW, is the mental health authority program director for the Harris County
Sheriff’s Office CIRT teams. “When an officer and a clinician arrive at someone’s home,” noted Macleod to CBS News, “they are very empathetic. They are not charging in. It’s not uncommon for an officer and clinician to sit at a dining room table to talk [a distressed person] through it for an hour and a half. No one needed an arrest warrant. They needed someone to listen.” In Harris County, dispatching social workers with CIRT teams has helped divert nearly 13% of 7,700 emergency calls to treatment rather than to the criminal justice system. (Gray).

Whether a police social worker is embedded in an agency or the police department partners with a community mental health organization in an emergency co-response program, social workers dispatched with officers have been of significant help de-escalating situations and avoiding fatalities or serious injuries by offering on-the-spot insight to officers.

In addition to valuable social-emotional skills, social workers are able to access medical records that are unavailable to officers, an asset that can be of utmost value on the way to a potentially dangerous situation. (Kanno-Youngs) For instance, in one situation in Houston, as related to the Wall Street Journal, the police social worker was able to access a delusional man’s records via her laptop while on route to the scene. She learned that the man suffered from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and a history of drug use. This advance knowledge allowed the officer to effectively communicate with the man and ask if he was taking his medication. After the officer ensured he was not armed, the social worker was able to have a conversation with the man, who agreed to go to a hospital.

Houston’s senior training officer in its mental-health division, Rebecca Skillern, told the Wall Street Journal that she has observed that one difference in officers and social workers is that “clinicians will look people in the eye more, where officers are going to be watching their hands. Eyes can’t hurt us but their hands can.” (Kanno-Youngs) §


Sources: For a full list of the sources used to research this article and its sidebar, please access the online article at The Key, Issue 7, nucps.northwestern.edu.

The Police Social Worker: A Growing Discipline

Ten years ago, most police social workers were employed in Illinois and Wisconsin. With the help of LE-MH Learning Sites, employment of police social workers is growing nationally. The ten Learning Sites help agencies develop successful strategies for interacting with people with mental illnesses, including collaborating with or hiring social workers. Due to the success of these sites, embedded police social workers and co-response collaborations that utilize community social workers are continuing to develop or enlarge. Houston (TX) Police Department now employs 30 police social workers. (Baham, CSG JC)

Dr. George T. Patterson, PhD, ACSW, LCSW-R, an assistant professor at Hunter College of Social Work and former counseling specialist for the Rochester (NY) Police Department, expressed several important points for those seeking positions as police social workers in an article for the New York City chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Patterson recommends that prospective candidates possess:

- an understanding of law enforcement culture, procedures, and general orders;
- the ability to function effectively in a para-military environment; and,
- the personality required to “establish and maintain rapport with police officers and a diverse community.

Patterson also notes that certain concerns should be addressed and solved before hiring a police social worker, including:

- regulations that dictates required degrees and licensing,
- appropriate agency training for the social worker,
- supervisory matters,
- perceptions that social workers are replacing police officers,
- the concern that social workers will be performing police functions, and
- policies regarding use of such police equipment as radios or unmarked vehicles. §
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- Digital Night-Time Forensic Photography.
  Nov. 12 - 14. NUCPS, Evanston, IL.

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- Jan. 8, 2019. Baton Rouge, LA.

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Gretchen Dolan, Washington State Patrol, SPSC #422. Dolan is a 2017 graduate of NUCPS School of Staff and Command’s Class #422, which met in Burien, WA. Her staff study was selected for publication in this issue and published with her permission.

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Thank you to this issue's contributors.

We welcome new authors! If you would like to contribute an article to The Key — or wish to see an article on a specific topic — please contact Caroline Paulison Andrew, editor, at nucps-alumni@northwestern.edu.