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HOW TO MANAGE YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT

A Handbook for Citizens, City Officials and Police Managers

By

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MANAGING local police affairs is one of the most demanding responsibilities in local government. This is so not only because local police are one of the most important and visible local governmental agencies, but also because local police are often the agency of last resort to many citizens.

The purpose of this handbook, HOW TO MANAGE YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT, is to provide practical awareness for citizens, city officials, and police managers who desire or need greater insight into managing local police affairs. This handbook also provides a practical orientation for citizens and city officials as to what local police management is all about. This practical orientation provides the reader with a broad overview of local police affairs and summarizes essential issues and considerations. It is based on twenty years experience and perspective as a police chief practitioner with three local police agencies.

Chapter 1 pertains to citizen evaluation of police. The chapter identifies five traditional assumptions traditionally but erroneously used to evaluate police. Three basic considerations are presented which more accurately reveal the quality and general productivity of a local police agency. The chapter also presents some essential management fitness and service fitness considerations.

Chapter 2 makes a case for citizen collaboration with police. It describes why such collaboration is needed and presents seven programs as examples of police-citizen collaborative efforts. This chapter briefly summarizes the need for determining citizen perceptions of police and presents an example of a questionnaire to ascertain citizen perceptions.

Chapter 3 presents several pertinent considerations for the city manager, mayor, and city council. It focuses on police chief selection, the police function, community-oriented policing, patrol officer work priorities, and inappropriate police performance indicators. The chapter concludes with some examples of quality and quantity performance indicators.
Chapter 4 focuses on the chief of police as a practitioner. It summarizes the difficulties and dilemmas associated with executing the duties and responsibilities of office. The chapter provides a general awareness and perspective to prepare the reader for 76 case studies presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 summarizes 20 basic issues and considerations involved in managing local police affairs. This chapter provides citizens, city officials, and police managers comprehensive insight into police management concerns. It also prepares the reader to more intelligently consider the case studies and respond to their questions.

Chapter 6 consists of 76 cases studies which pertain to 55 problems and issues associated with managing local police affairs. Although the case studies are brief, each provides a thought-provoking experience for citizens, city officials, and police managers. The case studies are related and portray a new chief of police who desires to develop a local police department that would be progressive and responsive to the community. After five years the chief of police makes a difficult career decision. This decision leads to a new opportunity to develop a capable police management team which becomes involved in developing organizational competence.

The case studies present 364 questions. Answers and comments regarding these questions are included in an appendix. These questions and answers enhance this handbook as a learning resource and provide a future reference for citizens, city managers, mayors, city council, and police managers.

This handbook is not an exhaustive text regarding police management. However, it is a practical reference and resource regarding the complexities of police management. As such it can provide insight and awareness not only for police managers but also for citizens, city officials, and criminal justice students into the diverse responsibilities, problems, and decisions associated with managing local police affairs.

Donald G. Hanna

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HOW TO MANAGE YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHAPTER 1

CITIZEN EVALUATION OF POLICE

MORE HAS BEEN written during the last twenty years regarding American police than in all previous years. Reports and commentaries on the police are common. While they perhaps depict our persistent fascination with lawbreakers and law enforcers, they nonetheless reveal how much citizens depend on police for protection and peacekeeping on the local scene. Because of the critical nature of the police function, police are often the agency of last resort for many citizens. Therefore, managing local police affairs is one of the most demanding responsibilities in local government. Because of this, citizens do and indeed should evaluate their police. Unfortunately, most are detached evaluators, in that they do not have direct involvement with police and their perception of police is greatly influenced by the news media or by others who may have had such direct involvement.

Other citizens have direct involvement with police, in that they are the victims of crime or complainants regarding order maintenance and peacekeeping situations. These citizens are the direct evaluators of police. Their perceived need for police is most important to them at the time, and, unfortunately, each expects and frequently demands that police priority be given to their problem. The citizen complaining of loud music, loud party, loud motorcycle, parked vehicle, barking dog, rowdy neighborhood children, and a host of other similar complaints expects priority police attention the same as the victim of a burglary or assault. However, as a matter of fact, available police resources do not provide for equal priority attention.

Citizen misunderstanding regarding police authority frequently complicates citizen evaluation of police. Frequently, crime victims and order maintenance complainants believe police can do when in fact they cannot or that police cannot do when in fact they can.
One of the real problems is the mass miseducation of citizens about police that has occurred during the last twenty years. A significant portion of this miseducation regarding police results from the entertainment industry, particularly certain police television shows, movies, and police novels. All this greatly contributes to citizen skepticism about police, or wrong impressions, or false assumptions as to (1) the police mission and what it should be or shouldn't be, (2) police authority and what police can or can't do, or (3) police functions and what they are or aren't. Unfortunately, this miseducation has coincided with an increasing insistence by an anxious public that police "do something" to restore public order and personal safety to our communities.

This miseducation has also coincided with public expectations which have been encouraged by the rhetoric of some public officials which blame the courts, liberals, permissive society, or minorities for police problems regarding public safety and order.

Another complicating factor is that many citizen evaluations of police are based more on assumption than fact. Evaluation of police should seriously consider police quality and productivity. Police quality pertains to competence or excellence. Police productivity pertains to the efficiency and effectiveness of the local police effort. It has to do with resources and results. More specifically, it is the efficient utilization of available resources and the effective realization of results.

There are a few traditional assumptions by which citizens evaluate their police. However, these assumptions are not an accurate indication of the productive quality of a local police agency. They are unrealistic because they are not based on fact. Valid police quality and productivity standards are difficult to determine because the local police effort is diverse and complex. This diversity and complexity result from three fundamental police goals which involve supportive objectives and many interrelated activities. These goals, which also are citizen expectations, are (1) crime control, (2) order maintenance, and (3) providing related services on a continual basis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Public and political evaluation of police is further complicated by unrealistic expectations of what police can or cannot do within the limits of law and cost-effective use of available resources. Uncertain or unrealistic expectations cause people to evaluate their police in hazy, unspecific ways which are based more on assumptions than fact.

Let's take a closer look at five traditional assumptions used to evaluate local police.
1. LOW CRIME RATES DEMONSTRATE HIGH POLICE PRODUCTIVITY OR QUALITY. Police cannot be completely responsible for crime control. The annual Uniform Crime Report issued by the U.S. Department of Justice lists eleven socioeconomic factors that greatly influence crime. Since police cannot control these factors, they alone cannot be held accountable for increases and decreases in crime. Many crimes are crimes of opportunity which occur within areas of privacy where police do not intrude without invitation or lawful authority.

Crime rates are based on reported crimes. There is no legal obligation for a victim to report crime, and reporting rates may be more proportional to a victim's confidence in what the police can do or belief that the police genuinely desire notification.

Property crimes of burglary and theft contribute overwhelmingly to the reported serious (index) crime rate. This rate is computed per 100,000 population. Burglary and theft are directed toward businesses, residences, motor vehicles, and personal property, not persons. The rates for these property crimes often depend on the availability of opportunity such as high-density multi-level dwelling places, ten-speed bicycles, CB radios, auto stereo-tape decks, wire-rim wheel covers, and various other electronic-transistorized equipment.

These diverse variables associated with crime rates make “low crime rate” a very inaccurate measure for police. Reported crime rates should only be considered as general indicators and not specific measures of police quality or productivity.

2. HIGH ARREST RATES RESULT IN HIGH POLICE PRODUCTIVITY OR QUALITY. This is not necessarily so, particularly when most arrests are not for serious crime. Arrest is not a police objective in and of itself. Arrest is only one form of authority whereby police have power to act toward the basic goals of crime control and order maintenance. Arrest authority is limited because it cannot be used at will. It can only be used on the constitutional standard of probable cause. Police work involves crime prevention efforts, criminal-interception activities, criminal investigation, case preparation, order maintenance, conflict management, and related support services. Arrest statistics do not reflect these other aspects of police work. Therefore, their usefulness as a measure of police productivity or quality is most limited.

3. HIGH CONVICTION RATES REVEAL HIGH POLICE PRODUCTIVITY OR QUALITY. Police do not have total control over criminal convictions. When a crime occurs, there is no guarantee it will be reported to police.
If reported, there is no assurance the offender will be identified. If identified, there is no assurance he will be criminally charged. If charged, there is no guarantee of prosecution. Prosecution doesn't always result in conviction. The determination of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt is not made by police. Therefore, conviction rates are very unreliable as measures of police quality or productivity.

4. **Fast Response to Citizen Calls for Service Means High Police Productivity or Quality.** This standard is based on the erroneous assumption that fast police response to reported crimes will result in more criminal arrests. Most crime victims and witnesses wait 10-15 minutes before calling police. Fast police response seldom results in arrest at the crime scene. For many police responses, the citizen is agreeable to delayed response once he or she has been notified of the approximate police arrival time. Sending a police officer immediately to all calls for police assistance is costly and unnecessary. Since fast police response is necessary for only serious incidents requiring immediate police presence, overall response time is limited as a measure of police productivity or quality.

5. **Highly Visible Preventive Patrol Indicates High Police Quality and Productivity.** This is not necessarily so, particularly during available patrol times when officers fail to initiate activities consistent with crime control and order maintenance goals. This can be most costly and unproductive. There is little proof that random "preventive" patrol actually prevents crime. Officer initiatives must be taken toward directed priorities during uncommitted, available times for patrol officers. Examples of such officer initiatives include selective stops of persons or vehicles on reasonable suspicion of crime, temporary surveillance of targeted areas, informing specific citizens or business places of local crime hazards, establishing information sources from people in the area or doing various crime prevention efforts. Aimless driving about for mere police presence or availability is misleading as a measure of police quality or productivity.

These traditional assumptions (i.e., crime rate, arrest rate, conviction rate, response time, and highly visible patrol) are limited and misleading as measurements for general productivity and quality of local police. However, there are three basic considerations which more accurately reveal the quality and general productivity of a local police agency in fulfilling its responsibilities to citizens in the police jurisdiction. These three basic considerations pertain to (1) managerial leadership, (2) organizational direction, and (3) police responsiveness.
MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

1. What kind of person is the chief of police?
   What is his character, temperament, and administrative ability? What is his style of management, particularly in regard to power, people, and productivity? What about his personal integrity? Does he challenge the status quo, take reasonable risks, and strive to improve the police agency and its capability? Is he progressive and responsive? Does he seek to establish a process toward organizational competence? These same questions should also be considered for all police managers in the local police agency.

2. What example is the chief of police?
   Does the chief personify a commitment to the rule of law and constitutional standards? Is he sensitive to citizen rights of due process? Does he emphasize reasonable restraint in use of police authority and force? Does he reflect a balance between the conflicting demands of policing freedom and public order? Is he sensitive to the implications of majority rule and minority rights? Does he resist improper pressures from his various superiors and various interest groups? Does he subscribe to constitutional accountability, productivity accountability, and police responsiveness to the community? These same questions should also be considered for all members of the local police management team.

3. What leadership is demonstrated by the chief of police?
   What about the personal and interpersonal competence of the chief of police? Do his leadership skills enhance conflict management and change management? Does he develop team work within the department? Does he encourage police-citizen collaboration? Is he generally optimistic or pessimistic? Is he concerned with both people and results? Is he collaborative or competitive? Is he concerned with both resources and results for productivity? These considerations also apply to all members of the police management team when evaluating local police.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION

1. Does the police agency understand its purpose, goals, and objectives?
   • Does it have a sense of direction?
• Is there a written mission statement supported by goals and objectives?
• Does the mission statement describe local police as officers with a unique authority and committed to the rule of law?
• Does the mission statement focus on the fundamental feature of the police role as assisting persons during public safety and public order situations?
• Is there a statement of organizational values?
• Has the chief of police issued a statement describing his management values?
• Has the organization identified the principles which guide its activity?
• Is there a statement describing the role of supervision in the department?
• Is there a statement describing expected attitudes and conduct of all persons in the organization?

2. Do officers have an understanding of their authority?
• Is there written guidance as to when and under what circumstances force, investigative authority, and arrest/search/seizure authority may be used?
• Are constitutional standards and limitations understood and accepted, particularly as they apply to dignity of the person, individual rights, due process of law, and procedural requirements?

3. Are there written standards to guide officers in a broad range of complex situations?
• Use of police discretion?
• Management of conflict?
• Use of investigative authority?
• Use of arrest, search, seizure authority?
• Use of deadly force?
• High-speed pursuit?
• Legal process?
• Criminal case news release?
• Police intelligence function?
• Dissemination of police record information?
• Labor-management disputes?

4. Are police officer candidates selected from a profile consistent with police role characteristics?
• Since complexity is characteristic of the police role, are officer
candidates selected who have significant intellectual ability?
• Since sensitive issues are involved in the police role, are candidates selected who have considerable sophistication?
• Since the police role is stressful, are candidates selected who have considerable maturity and good health?
• Since the police role requires considerable discretion, are candidates selected who have significant initiative and functional ability independent of close supervision?

5. Does the police agency develop and encourage growth for its officers?
• What quality training is provided to develop and maintain knowledge and skills regarding criminal law and procedure, criminal investigation, crime prevention, conflict management, emergency aid, and use of weapons?
• Is there a preventive-medical program, confidential psychological counseling program, and physical-fitness program for officers?
• Is there an enabling work climate (means plus opportunity) to enhance high achievement by all police personnel?

6. Does the police agency investigate and discipline officer misconduct or corruption?
• Is there a written procedure to process citizens' complaints of officer misconduct or corruption?
• Does the agency publish in writing the various steps in the complaint process, its investigation and disposition, and does each complaining citizen receive a copy?
• Is there a written standard of officer conduct to which they are held accountable?
• Is the citizen complaint procedure designed to safeguard the due process rights of both citizens and police officers?
• Is a letter of disposition regarding the investigation sent to both the citizen and the officer?

POLICE RESPONSIVENESS

1. Are police officers committed to constitutional standards and limitations on police powers?
• Do police officers respect citizen rights?
• Do constitutional standards guide officers during conflict management tasks?
2. Does the police agency keep citizens informed of crime and order maintenance hazards?
   • Does the agency communicate well with citizens?
   • Do officers take the initiative to present crime prevention information to citizens?
   • Does the chief of police and his management team set the tone for openness with the community?
3. Does the police agency collaborate with citizens to reduce crime and order maintenance problems?
   • Do officers confer with citizens to identify mutual concerns regarding these problems and work toward reduction or resolution?
   • Does the agency encourage citizen involvement?
4. What is the police agency’s image with the news media?
   • Is the police agency open with the media within the constraints of fair trial-free press issues?
   • Is there a written policy to guide in the release of case information to the media?
   • Does the police agency welcome news media inquiries?
   • Does the agency value the media as a means to disseminate pertinent information to the public and enhance citizen awareness?
5. What is the police agency’s image with local prosecutors and judges?
   • Does the agency have a reputation for good or bad case preparation?
   • Does the agency maintain effective liaison with local prosecutors for guidance in filing criminal charges?
   • Do local judges consider that the agency promotes due process and fundamental fairness in criminal cases?

   However, in considering managerial leadership, organizational direction, and police responsiveness, it must be recognized that organization competence and excellence is a condition that defies easy definition. Nonetheless, we must have a common awareness and understanding of what it is all about in order to realize organizational progress with regard to competence and excellence.

   The distilled essence of competence and excellence is a value issue. It is a reflection of an organization’s (and the people in the organization) concern for adaptive fitness to realize potential and maximize resource capacity to work toward and be consistent with organizational values. Fitness is a reflection of organizational health. Organizational fitness
can be determined by the ability of an organization to translate its values into action and results.

Organizational competence and excellence involves a management commitment to realize potential. It is a development process involving interdependence among people. It is value driven. It consists of management and service fitness.

**Management Fitness Considerations Include:**
- Are management functions (planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling) guided by organizational values?
- Do managers work together as a team with relationships based upon mutual trust and respect?
- Does management anticipate issues and plan for the future?
- Do managers assert power as well as share it with others in the organization?
- Is each manager responsible for development of human resources within the organization?
- Do managers focus more on direction, design, and development than technical task completion?
- Are managers willing to admit personal deficiencies and weaknesses, learn from others, and improve their behavior?
- Do managers assess themselves honestly and assume personal accountability for their results?

**Service Fitness Considerations Include:**
- Are service performance results consistent with organizational values and management direction?
- Do people in the organization (employees) have and share a commitment to public service and collaboration with the community?
- Is there a spirit of teamwork in the organization?
- Do people in the organization (employees) have the technical knowledge and skills to properly accomplish their duties and responsibilities?
- Do employees accept responsibility for individual discretion and use their discretion consistent with organizational values?
- Do employees anticipate work-related problems and take the initiative to resolve them?
- Are employees willing to become involved and committed to determining ways to better accomplish work responsibilities?
How to Manage Your Police Department

- Are employees willing to become better and adjust to changing requirements of the job and the changing environment of the community?
- Do employees assess their work and take responsibility for improving service delivery to citizens?
- Do employees share a mutual interdependence for organizational competence and excellence?

Summary

The local police agency is one of the most important and most visible agencies in the local governmental jurisdiction. So often local police is the agency of last resort for the citizen. Therefore, the quality and productivity of local police are most relevant to both elected and administrative officials as well as concerned citizens. Managing local police affairs is one of the most demanding responsibilities on the local scene.

The traditional measures of crime rate, arrest rate, conviction rate, response time, and highly visible patrol are limited or misleading to measure police quality and effectiveness. However, there are pertinent questions to be considered in evaluation of local police. This chapter presents some of these questions pertaining to the presence or absence of organizational competence and excellence.

Positive answers to most of these questions are characteristic of a police agency that reflects quality, productivity, competence, and excellence.

Strong managerial leadership, competent organizational direction, and comprehensive police responsiveness are foundational to high-quality, productive service from a local police agency that reflects considerable organizational competence and excellence.