

# Chapter 1

## Police Operations in Context

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### CHAPTER 1 OUTLINE

Introduction

A View of Contemporary American Law Enforcement

Changes Affecting Police Operations

- A Changing Public and Society

- A Changing Law Enforcement Officer

  - More Women and Minorities

  - Better Educated

  - Different Generational Values

- A Changing Police Bureaucracy

- Standards Set Forth by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)

- A Change in Community Involvement: Community Policing

- A Change in Approach: The Emergence of Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP)

- Advances in Technology

Mission and Values

Goals, Objectives, and Tasks

- Policies

- Procedures

- Policies and Procedures Manuals

- Regulations

- A Final Note and Caution

Discretion

- Problems with Officer Discretion

- Limits on Discretion

- Discretion and Critical-Thinking Skills

Summary

Application

An Exercise in Critical Thinking

Discussion Questions

Gale Emergency Services Database Assignments

References

Case Cited

**CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY**

Police operations are activities conducted in the field by law enforcement officers as they “serve and protect,” including patrol, traffic, investigation, and general calls for service. Law enforcement is affected by a changing public and society, changing law enforcement officers, a changing police bureaucracy, standards set forth by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), a change in approach, and advances in technology.

Our society is becoming older and has more minorities, more immigrants, and more single-parent households, and the gap between rich and poor continues to expand. Our law enforcement officers also have changed. Today's police recruits include fewer people with military backgrounds and more women and minorities. New recruits have more formal education and police training, and they value on-job satisfaction more than they value material rewards. These recruits also are expected to perform more diverse operations and are held to a higher professional standard. Another change is anticipated in the police bureaucracy itself. The police bureaucracy may become less militaristic and may move toward a team approach to providing services. This includes decentralization and a shift from management to leadership. Yet another influence on law enforcement is the CALEA, which certifies law enforcement agencies that meet the standards set by the commission.

A further change is the trend toward community policing, which is proactive and empowers citizens to help local law enforcement provide safer neighborhoods. Community policing usually includes an emphasis on foot and bicycle patrol.

Advances in technology are also affecting every aspect of police operations.

An agency's mission is its reason for existence, its purpose. This is often embodied in a mission statement. This mission is accomplished most effectively by clearly stated goals and objectives. Goals are broad, general intentions. Objectives are specific activities to accomplish goals.

Officers need to follow policies, procedures, and regulations, but they also need to use discretion. Discretion allows for equitable enforcement of our laws and for police officers to grow morally and professionally. Discretion is not without its problems, including a lack of accountability, unpredictability, and the potential for inconsistency and allegations of racial profiling. A major challenge facing law enforcement is finding the balance between a department's clear-cut goals, policies, and procedures and its officers' discretionary actions.

## CHAPTER 1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, students will know:

- What police operations are and what they include.
- What changes have affected police operations.
- How our society has changed.
- How our law enforcement officers have changed.
- How the police organization may change.
- What the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) is and how it affects police operations.
- What community policing is.
- How advances in technology are affecting police operations.
- What a mission and a mission statement are.
- What the relationship between goals and objectives is.
- What police discretion is and what positive contributions it makes.
- What problems are associated with discretion.
- What balance presents a major challenge for law enforcement.

## KEY TERMS

Students will be introduced to the following key terms:

broken windows metaphor, community policing, discretion, dog shift, goals, heterogeneity, information, intelligence, mission, mission statement, objectives, participatory leadership, police operations, policy, procedures, regulations, selective enforcement

## APPLICATION

*Instructions:* Write a policy for writing policies, that is, outline what policies should be written for. Then write at least five procedures to be used when writing policies.

## POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO THE CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE

1. b. An officer's ability to explain the reasons for policies and procedures will help citizens better understand and possibly accept requests that the officer makes. Furthermore, people want to be acknowledged, and when they feel that an officer has listened to them, their response is less likely to be abusive.

2. b. Certainly community witnesses will help corroborate verbal and physical events, but an even better outcome would be the less militaristic and more participatory policing atmosphere that respects members of a community.

## **POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO THE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What purposes do goals serve in a police department?

Goals usually reflect the attitudes and values of a community. Goals are valuable from the standpoint that they are a general statement of the direction, purpose, and intention of the police department. In reality, they are the desired outcomes or ends to be achieved. If the police department has a goal of preventing crime, the question arises: How is it to be done? Possible options are educating the public, increasing interaction with the community, increasing the number of officers, and using foot patrol.

2. What do you consider the most important goal for a police department?

In most instances, a variety of opinions will exist about what is the most important goal of a police department. The attitudes and values of the community and individuals responsible for the safety of the community may differ. However, most individuals will concur that crime prevention and social control is the most important goal of a police department.

3. What are the advantages of having written policies?

Systematically developed written policies bring forth the identification, study, and resolution of important issues. They result from examining practices and analyzing items such as routine complaints. Other methods that lead to formulating policies are observing field procedures, analyzing court decisions, and systematically reviewing officers' experiences in the community.

4. Are value statements necessary? How can officers best be involved in developing a department's values?

Value statements are controversial. Some believe they are coercive, but others believe they infuse a belief system. Value statements attempt to integrate empathy, due process, ethics, professional responsibility, and fairness. Whether this also dictates managerial philosophy is sometimes questionable, but there is no question that value statements outline the expectations of police officers.

Officers directly affect the department's values by their daily actions with the public. The officer's view can have a direct influence on other officers of an area, a group of people, or simply on how to respond to a situation. All these influence how an officer can directly affect a department's values.

5. Who should be involved in policy development?

Management should allow all persons interested in policy development to participate, including police officers and support staff and civilians who contribute their time to the benefit of the community and the police department.

6. Why is discretion a necessary part of a police officer's job?

Students may differ on this debatable subject, and their different viewpoints about police discretion can create a good dialogue. A lively discussion can ensue. One possible response may be that each situation will vary, and at times, the police officer will have to react quickly based on the information he or she gathers at the scene.

7. Have you observed police discretion in operation?

Here, students should convey either their own experiences or knowledge they have acquired through friends. It would be good to try to elicit both positively and negatively perceived incidents for discussion.

## ANCILLARY MATERIALS

*The NYPD Emergency Services Unit* (54-minute DVD, #BVL31991 DVD ISBN: 978-0-7365-7401-3)

The NYPD ESU is a select group of officers who are highly skilled and trained for emergency response. When officers encounter a situation beyond their control, the NYPD ESU responds.

[Source: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 800-257-5126]

Cengage Learning's Criminal Justice Media Library (ISBN 0-495-80998-5) is available for purchase with adoption of any Cengage Learning criminal justice text. This extensive media resource includes videos, animations, simulations, and more on topics such as policing, fundamentals of criminal justice, and careers in criminal justice.