

## Patrol: The Backbone of Policing

### Chapter 7

## The Central Role of Patrol

- Patrol work is the most important aspect of policing
  - It is where the police have the most contact with citizens
  - It is where most serious problems in police-citizen interactions occur

## The Central Role of Patrol (cont.)

- Majority of officers are assigned to patrol
  - Deliver the bulk of services to the public
- Most important decision-makers in policing
  - Gatekeepers of the criminal justice system
- Patrol experience is a formative part of an officer's career
  - Becomes an important part of the police officer subculture
  - Forms a bond of common experience among officers

## The Functions of Patrol

- To deter crime
- To enhance feelings of public safety
- To make officers available for service

## Standard Model of Policing

- Five basic strategies for improving police services
  - Increasing the size of police agencies
  - Random patrol across all parts of the community
  - Rapid response for calls for service
  - Generally applied follow-up investigations
  - Generally applied intensive and arrest policies

## Factors Affecting Delivery of Patrol Services

- The number of sworn officers
- The percentage of all officers assigned to patrol
- The distribution of patrol officers
- The type of patrol used
- One-officer vs. two-officer patrols
- The work styles of patrol officers

## Number of Sworn Officers

- Traditional measure of the level of police protection in a community is the **police-population ratio**
  - National average for larger municipal departments in 2000 was 2.6 officers per 1,000 population
- Does a higher police-population ratio mean that a city receives better police protection?

## Assignment to Patrol

- A certain percentage of officers must be assigned to patrol
  - Typically between 50-80%
- Many departments have sworn officers in assignments that other departments have civilianized

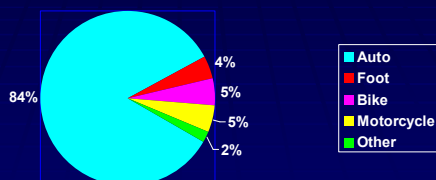
## The Distribution of Patrol Officers

- Officers assigned to patrol need to be allocated and distributed based on the dept.'s workload
- Standard workload formula based on calls for service and reported crimes (O.W. Wilson, 1941)
- Most serious crime and the majority of disturbances occur at night
- Crime and disorder are not evenly distributed throughout the city
  - Crime is more prevalent in poorer neighborhood
  - Low-income people are the heaviest users of police services, especially for noncrime events

## Assignment of Patrol Officers

- There are a variety of methods for assigning patrol officers
  - Seniority bid
  - Rotating shifts
- Some experts favor keeping officers in the same assignment for a long period of time
  - Allows officer to get to know people/problems of area
  - But, officers may become bored/frustrated at the lack of new opportunities
  - Frequent rotations can be an anti-corruption measure

## Types of Patrol



## Types of Patrol - Automobile

- More efficient
  - Covers more area
  - Can pass each point more often
  - Can return to particular spots in an unpredictable manner
  - Can respond quickly for calls for service
- However, officer loses a lot of direct contact with citizens, especially law abiding people

### Types of Patrol - Foot

- Trades efficiency for community relations
  - Cannot cover as much territory as a patrol car
  - More contact with neighborhood residents
    - Can help build trust

### Types of Patrol - Bicycle

- Can have both efficiency and improve community relations
  - Can be as or more efficient than a patrol car
  - But, more limited by weather
  - More contact with neighborhood residents
    - Can help build trust

### Types of Patrol - Motorcycle

- Efficiency similar to a patrol car
- Limited by weather
- Less contact with citizens
- Typically used for traffic enforcement or special events

### One-Officer vs. Two-Officer Cars

- Most patrol units involve single officer patrols
  - 89% of all patrols in municipal departments
- Police Foundation study of patrol staffing in San Diego found that officers in 1-officer units were assaulted less often and were less involved in resisting arrest incidents than 2-officer units
- FBI statistics (2006) show otherwise
  - 63% of officers assaulted were assigned to 1-officer units
  - 16.7% of officers assaulted were assigned to 2-officer units

### Staffing Patrol Beats

- Staffing a single patrol beat 24/7 requires 4.8 officers
  - 1 officer per shift – 3 shifts
  - Days off
  - Vacation
  - Illness/injuries

### Styles of Patrol

- Officer-initiated activity
  - Stopping, questioning, and frisking suspicious persons
  - Informal contacts with law-abiding citizens
  - Stopping vehicles for possible violations
  - Writing traffic tickets
  - Checking suspicious events
  - Making arrests

## Styles of Patrol (cont.)

- Citizen-initiated activity
  - Some officers initiate more activity than others when dealing with citizen-initiated calls
    - Take report, investigate further
    - Take report
    - Take action
    - Give advice
    - Take no action

## Supervisor Styles

- Traditional
- Innovative
- Supportive
- Active

### Supervisor Styles - Traditional

- Expect aggressive enforcement vice COP style or policing minor disorders
- More likely to make decisions/take over calls
- Task-oriented; expect measureable outcomes
- Give more instruction; less likely to reward; more likely to punish
- Ultimate concern is controlling subordinate's behavior

### Supervisor Styles - Innovative

- Tend to form relationships with subordinates
- Low level of task orientation
- More positive views of subordinates
- Generally encourage subordinates to embrace new philosophies/methods of policing

### Supervisor Styles - Supportive

- Support subordinates by protecting them from discipline/punishment perceived as unfair
  - Serve as a buffer to give their subordinates space to perform duties w/o constant worry of discipline for honest mistakes

### Supervisor Styles - Active

- Lead by example
  - Perform dual function as a street officer and a supervisor
- Relatively positive view of subordinates

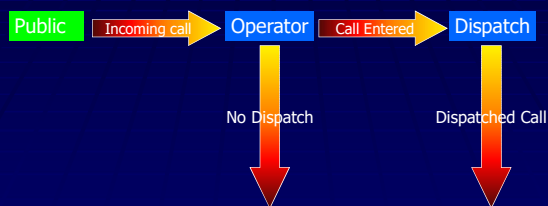
## Dept. Organizational Styles

- **Watchman style**
  - Emphasizes peace-keeping
  - Few controls over rank-and-file
- **Legalistic style**
  - Emphasizes aggressive crime-fighting
  - Controls subordinates through rules and regs
- **Service style**
  - Emphasizes responsiveness to community expectations
  - Generally found in suburban police dept.s where there is relatively little crime

## The Communications Center

- Nerve center of a police dept.
- Decisions by comm center personnel play a major role in shaping police work
  - Police Services Study (PSS) found that:
    - 17% of calls are referred to another agency
    - In 16% of all calls, info is taken by the operator
    - 9% of all calls, info is given to the caller
    - Remaining 14% of calls
      - Citizen is told police cannot handle the call
      - Call is transferred
      - Some other response is given

## Processing Calls for Service



## Processing Calls for Service (cont.)

- Dispatchers also exercise enormous discretion
  - Decide who is dispatched
  - Assigns call priority

## Processing Calls for Service (cont.)

- Officers process the info they get from the dispatchers
  - Info often limited and inaccurate
- Thus, officers often respond to calls in the context of great uncertainty
- Obtaining info from the caller is one of the most important aspects of the comm system

## Types of Calls

- Police Services Study:
  - 1) Criminal law enforcement represents a small minority of all calls for service (20-30%)
  - 2) Vast majority of crime-related calls involve property crime
  - 3) Most police work involves order maintenance
  - 4) Many situations are ambiguous and require officer discretion
  - 5) Many order maintenance calls involve family problems in private homes
  - 6) Calls for service do not come from a representative sample of the community

### Kansas City Patrol Experiment 1972-1973

- First experiment testing the effectiveness of patrol that met minimum standards of scientific research
- Beats were assigned one of 3 levels of patrol:
  - Reactive
  - Proactive
  - Normal (Control)

### Kansas City Patrol Experiment 1972-1973 (cont.)

- Questions:
  - Would citizens notice changes in levels of police patrol?
  - Would different levels of police patrol affect the level of crime?
  - Would different levels of patrol affect citizen fear of crime and if so, would there be any changes in lifestyle or behavior?
  - Would different levels of patrol affect citizen satisfaction with the police?

### Kansas City Patrol Experiment 1972-1973 (cont.)

- Findings:
  - Variations in the level of patrol had no significant impact on crime
  - Variations in the level of patrol had no significant impact on citizen feelings of safety
  - There were no significant in behavior or lifestyle because of perceived changes in police protection
  - Variations in the level of patrol did not affect attitudes towards police
  - 60% of the time officers were uncommitted

### Kansas City Patrol Experiment 1972-1973 (cont.)

- Why?
  - Patrol is spread thin to begin with
    - Doubling not likely to have a measureable impact
  - Many crimes are impulsive and/or occur inside
  - "Phantom effect" or residual deterrence
    - Most people believe that the police are present and patrolling even if the police aren't visible
  - Only tested level of patrol, not what officers actually do

### Response Time

- Getting to the scene of a crime quickly has traditionally been a top police priority
- Both police and citizens believe that it will:
  - Increase the probability of arrest
  - Increase public satisfaction
- Research has shown that response time has little effect on clearance rates

### Time Between Commission and Officer Arrival

- 1) Discovery time
- 2) Reporting time
- 3) Processing time
- 4) Travel time

### Response Time (cont.)

- Discovery, reporting, and processing time are beyond the control of the police
  - 75% of all reported crimes are discovery or "cold" crimes
  - 25% are involvement crimes
    - PERF study
- Corder, et al found:
  - Discovery delay for property crimes is measured in hours
  - Averaged 30 minutes for personal crimes of violence

### Response Time (cont.)

- Involvement crime victims took an average of 4 to 5.5 minutes to call the police
- Of these crimes:
  - 13% were reported while in progress
  - 14% were reported within the first minute after it was committed
  - 80-90% of serious crimes were reported to the police ***"too slowly for a response-related arrest to be made even if the travel time was zero"***

### Reasons Why People Delay Calling the Police

- To verify whether a crime has actually occurred
- To regain their composure
- To call a friend or family member first
- To decide whether or not they want to involve the police
- A telephone was not immediately available

### Citizen Satisfaction Related to Response Time

- Citizens who had to wait more than 15 minutes for the police to arrive were substantially less satisfied than those who obtained a faster response
  - Satisfaction dropped steadily as response time increased from 5 to more than 15 minutes
- Experiments have shown that citizens were satisfied if they were informed about delays

### Officer Use of Patrol Time

- What does a typical patrol officer do during a typical 8-hour shift?
- Why is this important?
  - Personnel costs account for 80-90% of a department's budget
  - Maximizing productivity requires getting patrol officers to do as much work as possible

### Officer Use of Patrol Time (cont.)

- Regular patrol officers:
  - Spend only about 20% of their shift in encounters with citizens (1.5 hrs in an 8 hr shift)
  - Spend an average of slightly more than 20% of their shift on general patrol
  - Spend about 15% of their shift traveling to locations
  - Arrests can have a major impact on an officer's use of time
    - Some arrests can take 1.5 to 2 hrs to process