

Police Officers I: Entering Police Work

Chapter 5

The Changing American Police Officer

- More female, African American, Hispanic officers compared to 40 years ago
- Many college educated or hold masters' degrees
- Openly gay and lesbian officers

Aspects of the Personnel Process

- A Career Perspective
 - Many departments have personnel problems because:
 - Hire good recruits, but don't train recruits properly
 - Train officers well, but don't supervise officer adequately
 - Poor evaluation systems
 - Failure to discipline
 - Failure to provide career opportunities
 - Don't promote the best officers

Beyond Stereotypes of Cops

- Stereotypes can be either positive or negative
 - Positive: Heroic saints, risking their lives
 - Negative: Uneducated, untrained, prejudiced, brutal or corrupt
- Neither is accurate
- Inaccurate stereotypes can affect the recruitment of officers
 - Stereotyping emphasizing the use of force/physical size/strength discourage women from applying



The Personnel Process: A Shared Responsibility

- Shared with other governmental agencies
 - Police dept.
 - Civil service
 - City personnel dept.

5-5

The Personnel Process: A Shared Responsibility (cont.)

- Civil service
 - 1) Develop job description
 - 2) Establish minimum standards
 - 3) Develop tests for each position
 - 4) Announce job openings
 - 5) Conduct some (but not all) of the testing
 - 6) Certify list of to be hired/promoted
- Police dept.
 - 1) Advise the civil service agency on job descriptions, requirements, etc.
 - 2) Conduct some of the recruiting
 - 3) Administer some of the tests

Recruitment

- Minimum qualifications
- Recruitment effort
- Applicant's decision to apply for a position

Minimum Qualifications

- Age
 - Most depts. is 21 yrs old
- Height & Weight
 - Proportional
- Education
 - At least high school/GED
 - Some have college degree requirement
- Criminal record
 - No felonies
 - Drug use a problem
- Residency requirements

Recruitment Effort

- Historically, departments did not actively recruit
- Today, most departments actively recruit, especially minorities & females
- 2010 Rand study
 - 80% of all dept.s had a special recruitment strategy for minorities
 - 74% had one for women
 - 66% actively recruited veterans & college grads
 - 50% looked for prior experience/language skills

Choosing Law Enforcement as a Career

- Two main reasons:
 - 1) Nature of police work
 - 2) Material benefits of the job
- Applicants motivations
 - 1) Help people
 - 2) Job security
 - 3) Fight crime
 - 4) Excitement
 - 5) Prestige

Choosing Law Enforcement as a Career (cont.)

- Barriers to recruitment
 - Negative image of officers
 - May cause some African-Americans not to apply
 - Traditionally male occupations
 - May dissuade females from applying

Selecting Officers from the Recruit Pool

- Selection tests
 - Written
 - Physical
- Drug tests
- Oral interviews
- Background investigations
 - Previous employment, possible criminal record, interviews with neighbors, social media
 - Educational background, financial status, home visit
- Polygraph
- Psychological evaluations
- Physical exam

Screening Methods Used by Local Police Depts. (2007)

Method	% of Dept.s Using
■ Personal interview	99
■ Criminal record check	100
■ Background investigation	99
■ Driving record check	99
■ Medical exam	89
■ Psychological screen	72
■ Drug test	83
■ Written aptitude test	48
■ Physical agility test	60
■ Polygraph exam	26

Predicting Police Officer Behavior

- Who will become a good police officer?
 - Existing pre-employment psychological tests do not successfully predict future behavior
 - Flaws:
 - The assumption that good police performance can be predicted solely by pre-existing personality traits
 - Do not necessarily identify people who have good judgment
 - Written tests only screen out the illiterate and very poorly educated

Predicting Police Officer Behavior (cont.)

- Bottom line: Studies have shown that the only factor that correlated with good on-the-job performance was the recruit training score
 - Even then, it is not possible to predict which individuals will become good officers on the basis of background characteristics

Equal Employment Opportunity

- Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
 - Race, color, religion, sex, or national origin
 - Protected class
- 1972 Equal Employment Opportunity Act
 - Extends 1964 legislation to state & local govts.
- 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act
- Bona Fide Occupational Qualification



“Not Your Father’s Police Department”: Diversity in Policing

- Employment of Racial & Ethnic Minorities
 - Reflect the composition of the community it serves
- Hispanic & Latino officers
 - Fastest growing population
 - Spanish-speaking officers recruited
- African American Officers
 - Previously underrepresented in the police force
 - Employment discrimination litigation has helped to increase number of African American officers in the police force
- Women
 - More seriously underrepresented than racial or ethnic minorities
 - Concentrated in lower ranks
- Gay and Lesbian officers
 - Increasingly open over the last 20 years

Achieving Diversity in Police Employment

- U.S. Supreme Court held that diversity is a “compelling state of interest”
- Three basic goals
 - Ensure employer is not discriminating
 - Improve police service
 - Improve image of police department
- Employment Discrimination Suits
- Controversy over affirmative action
- The question of quotas
 - Reverse discrimination

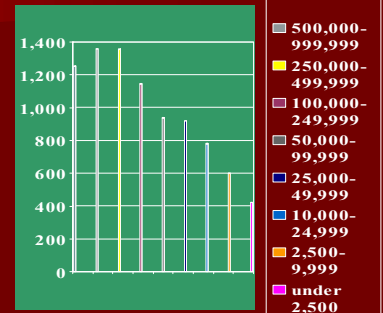
The Police Academy

- Pre-service training (police academies)
 - Serves several functions
 - 1) Provides formal training
 - 2) Process for weeding out unqualified recruits
 - 3) Rite of passage that socializes recruits
- Field Training
 - Supplement to academy training

Training

Average number of hours

- Police Academy
 - Big departments have own academy
 - Small departments use state-run academies
- Field training
 - FTO program
 - 2/3 of departments use this process



State Training & Certification

- Every state has some form of mandated pre-service training for certification
- State-required content of training
- Decertification
- Shortcomings of current police training:
 - Don't cover important subjects like discretion & ethics
 - Pre-service training not adequate
 - Classroom training alone is not adequate

The Probationary Period

- Can range to six months to two years after being sworn in as an officer
- Officer can be dismissed without cause during this period
 - Rules for this process determined by local civil service regulations
- Average of 7% of all recruits dismissed during this period