



Governor's Commission on Police Accountability, Transparency and Community

Summary Report on Current Training and Improvement Considerations

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Scope of Presentation

- The scope of this presentation, as directed by this commission, is twofold:
- To offer an overview of current training offered at NHPSTC with regard to,
 - Diversity,
 - Communications and De-Escalation
 - Use of Force
- To identify areas of possible improvement with regard to Police Training at NHPSTC.

Background

- I was appointed by the NHPST Council in February 2020 and my first official day was March 16, 2020.
- Prior to my appointment, the NH Department of Legislative Budget Assistance conducted an audit of NHPSTC in February of 2019.
- One of the observations made was that a Job Task Analysis should be conducted and, based on those findings, the curriculum should be reviewed to insure that it's providing training to recruit officers so they can perform essential tasks of an entry level police officer
- Initial arrangements have been made for NHPSTC to work with UNH Justiceworks to complete the JTA.

Diversity

- Currently, “Cultural Dynamics” is a 2 hour block of instruction that is part of the Recruit Academy.
- After a review, I felt that we could improve on this block of instruction, particularly in the area of implicit bias and procedural justice
- A working group made up of SME and stakeholders was formed to review our present lesson plan and a model lesson plan was offered for comparison
- At this writing, we have already conducted our first meeting and written submissions are anticipated from the members to help guide further discussion and recommendations.

Communications and De-Escalation

- Currently, “Communications” is a 6 hour block of instruction during the recruit academy.
- This course is an interactive lesson on effective law enforcement communication skills. Specifically this course addresses de-escalation tools, effective listening skills and professional communication in a law enforcement setting.
- Further, during the course of the academy, a number of different types of Use of Force classes are presented, all which reiterate communications and de-escalation techniques.
- Historically we have offered in-service programs on communication and de-escalation techniques for active NH police officers as funding allows.

Communications and De-Escalation

- Currently, “Mental Illness Dynamics”, in total, is a 24 hour block of instruction delivered in the recruit academy
- This class introduces recruit officers to concepts, laws and procedures used in working with the mentally ill. Topics covered include types of mental illness, successful communication techniques for each illness, presentation from a consumer of mental health services and reviewing tactics and techniques for handling calls for service involving people with mental illness or who are suicidal.
- This lecture is reinforced with scenario based training where recruits will practice the techniques learned during the lecture.

Use of Force

- Currently, the following blocks of instruction are delivered in the academy setting that deal with Use of Force:
 - “Defensive Tactics Classroom” (4 hrs), Practical (37.25 hrs)
 - “Firearms” Classroom (6 hrs) Practical (42 hrs)
 - “Baton” Classroom (1hr), Practical (7 hrs)
 - “OC Spray” Classroom (1hr), Practical (7 hrs)
- Total hours on these combined topics
 - Classroom 12 hours
 - Practical Skills 93.25 Hours

Use of Force

- During these collective blocks of instruction, the following topic areas are continually taught, reviewed and practiced throughout each block of instruction:
 - Statutes and Case Law regarding the lawful Use of Force
 - Communications Skills
 - De-Escalation Skills
 - Reporting Use of Force
 - Recognizing Pre-Event signs indicative of predisposition to medical event
 - Providing after care post arrest

Recommendations for Improvement

Improvement to Diversity Training

- As outlined, improvement is needed and action is already being taken to accomplish this by way of a working group made up of SMEs and Stakeholders.
- Strong consideration should be given for NHPSTC to transition to the Fair and Impartial Policing Training Model which is recognized by PERF, the IACP and the 21st Century Policing Blueprint.
- This program is designed to teach the topic to recruits, in-service officers, supervisors, command staff and the public.

Improvements to Communications and De-Escalation Training

- Overall, the existing cumulative blocks of instruction at the academy that teach and reinforce communication and de-escalation skills are robust.
- Strong consideration should be given for NHPSTC to consider including Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics Training. This program was developed by PERF and provides modules for both Academy and In-service level training.
- Strong Consideration should be given for NHPSTC to include Crisis Intervention Training for both academy and in-service officers. This would require significant funding to accomplish.

Improvements on Use of Force Training

- Overall, the existing cumulative blocks of instruction at the academy that teach and reinforce Use of Force skills are robust.
- Lesson plans covering these blocks of instruction should be revisited to insure that they reflect all applicable guidelines set forth in the “PERF-30 Guiding Principles on Use of Force”.
- Strong consideration should be given for NHPSTC to include “EPIC-Ethical Policing is Courageous” Training at both the Academy and in-service level. This program was developed by the NOPD to help empower officers to prevent or intervene when witness to police misconduct thereby protecting citizens and enhancing public trust.

Overall Considerations for Improvement

- NHPSTC and all NH Law Enforcement agencies should use the PERF-30 Guiding Principles on Use of Force as the overarching guide to set standards for developing police training, establishing agency policy, and setting the standard for all police conduct.
- NHPSTC and all NH Law Enforcement agencies should incorporate and embrace “EPIC-Ethical Policing is Courageous” training to reinforce the all ready established NH Law Enforcement standards of police conduct.
- NHPSTC and all NH Law Enforcement agencies should routinely refer to the report of the President’s Taskforce on 21st Century Policing

Overall Considerations for Improvement

- Delivery of training should use adult learning strategies (group problem solving, experiential learning, role playing)
- NHPSTC Annual in-service training hours should be significantly increased for all active officers with NHPSTC mandated topics.
- Diversity should not be taught as a topic but a theme throughout the academy experience.
- NHPSTC should re-establish the State Level Police Agency Accreditation Program

Challenges

- NHPSTC is under-resourced to be able to implement every consideration that will be put forth today.
- NH Police Agencies and NHPSTC will be financially impacted by increasing the length of time for the academy and/or increasing mandatory annual in-service training hours.
- Careful consideration should be taken as we implement changes, it will be better to do it correctly than to do it quickly.