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Eyesight Standards

Correcting Myths

PHOTO BY K.L. MORRISON

By
RICHARD N. HOLDEN, Ph.D.

For decades, law enforcement agencies required applicants to satisfy certain eyesight requirements before being considered for employment. Few would challenge the belief that public safety officers need good eyesight. What many do challenge, with some success, is the idea that applicants must possess perfect *uncorrected* vision. A basic question emerges: Should police recruits be allowed to compensate for imperfect vision with corrective lenses? If the answer is "yes," then how much variation should agencies allow?

Several factors converge to make this a timely issue for law enforcement managers to consider. With a dwindling pool of suitable applicants from which to fulfill future personnel needs, some argue that unnecessary selection requirements undermine law enforcement's recruiting efforts.

In addition, the recent enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of physical disabilities, if a person is able to perform the essential functions of the job. Because visual impairment could constitute a protected disability, agencies that cannot defend their vision standards leave themselves open to litigation under this new act.

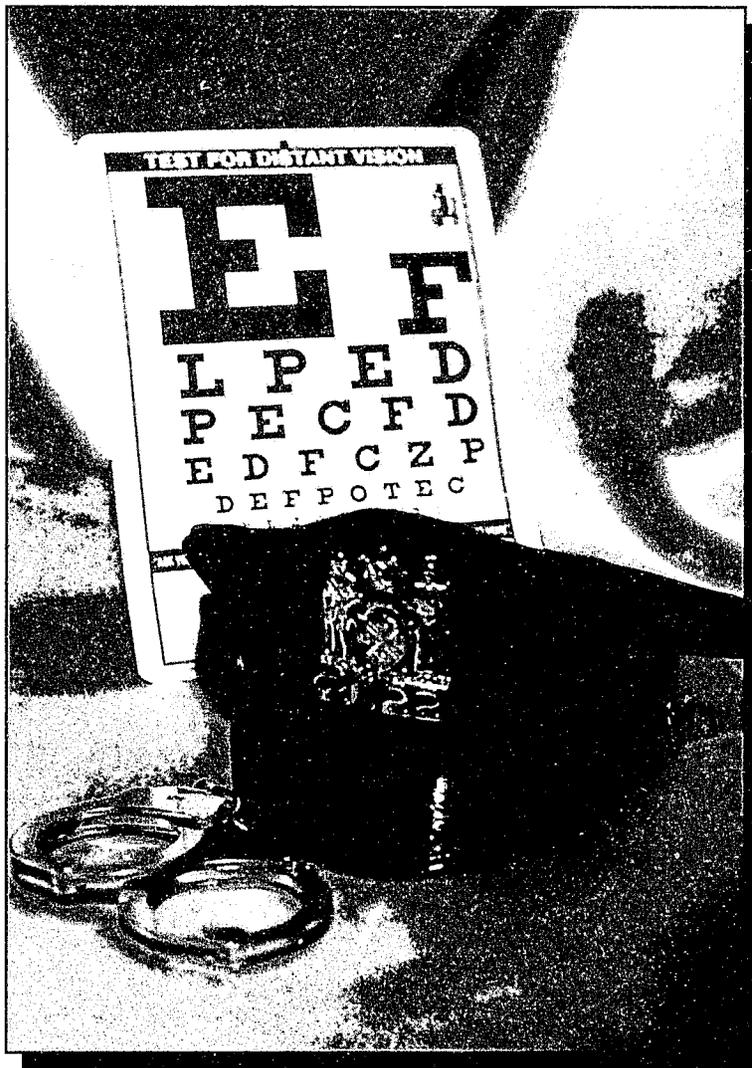
Finally, advancements in medical science need to be considered. Present-day optical technology renders obsolete many of the age-old arguments in favor of vision requirements.

This article explores the issues involved in vision standards. It goes on to discuss these issues as they relate to the experiences and senti-

ments expressed in a recent survey of law enforcement officers concerning eyesight requirements.

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

The necessity for good vision in law enforcement—corrected or otherwise—rests in the visual nature of police work. Law enforcement officers spend a good portion of their





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working hours observing people and events and then reporting what they see. Additionally, officers must respond quickly to events taking place around them. They must interpret and react to the actions of others.

One basic tenant of vision standards is that a significant impairment translates into an equally impaired ability to interpret events and react appropriately. Moreover, evidence of poor vision might make officers vulnerable in court. If an officer's vision becomes open to judgment, so too may the evidence offered based on the officer's observations.

The argument for strict *uncorrected* vision standards rests on the belief that an officer may have lenses forcibly removed. Should this occur, the argument is that the officer would be unable to function adequately. That is to say, the officer would not be able to fire a weapon accurately, discern if a suspect was armed, or operate a police vehicle. This would place the officer in a

physically dangerous situation that could possibly jeopardize others.

Although these arguments constitute the underpinning for vision requirements, police administrators are clearly not in agreement over the necessity for uncorrected vision standards. A 1984 study found that while a majority of the 323 police agencies surveyed required some minimum uncorrected standard, 26 percent of the responding departments required only that vision be correctable to 20/20. Another 22 percent allowed uncorrected vision of 20/100.¹

Further, differing vision standards exist in otherwise similar agencies. Some large police departments, including New York City, Los Angeles, and Dallas, apply restrictive standards. Other large departments—such as Chicago, Detroit, Newark, and Tulsa—have no uncorrected vision standards.

The academic community also fails to reach a consensus on the subject. Some argue for a strict standard.² Others, however, ques-

tion strict uncorrected vision requirements, especially in light of evolving vision technology, such as shatterproof plastic and soft contact lenses.³

And, even before passage of the ADA, the controversy over uncorrected vision standards attracted the attention of the courts. Although some courts upheld individual agency vision requirements in the past, this congruence may be coming to an end. In 1985, a Wisconsin court ruled that an uncorrected vision standard violated a State law prohibiting discrimination against the handicapped.⁴

In addition to these issues, several other factors fuel the argument over vision requirements. Few law enforcement agencies require incumbent officers to maintain the vision standard required for recruits. This means that many police agencies, even those with strict uncorrected vision standards for recruits, employ numerous veteran officers who now need to wear corrective lenses in order to perform their duties. Still, despite this fact, little concrete data exists concerning the relationship between corrective lenses and police performance.

BASIC ISSUES

Three basic issues emerge as arguments for a restrictive uncorrected vision standard. First, an officer who loses corrective lenses becomes visually impaired and vulnerable to physical assault. Second, the officer will not be able to see sufficiently to aim a service weapon, and as a result, may become vulnerable to an armed suspect. Third, the officer's vision will be

too impaired to operate a police vehicle, and therefore, the officer could not pursue a fleeing suspect. In addition, a corollary to these issues emerges. If an officer's ability to perform becomes hampered, then other officers will be placed at a similar risk due to the loss of support of the vision-impaired officer.

Many observers both within and outside law enforcement offer these beliefs in sincerity. However, some dissenting opinions exist. With regard to the first issue, it could be argued that an officer engaged in hand-to-hand combat does not need eyeglasses to identify an assailant. At that range, the officer would have to be nearly blind to be incapacitated. An individual's uncorrected vision is not likely to be that bad if it is correctable to 20/20.

Second, the vast majority of shoot-outs with handguns occur at very close range. Of the 735 officers killed by firearms between 1980 and 1989, for example, 652 (89 percent) were shot from 20 feet or less. Indeed, nearly 60 percent of the fatalities resulted from shootouts of 5 feet or less.⁵ At this range, officers point their firearms, rather than aim them. Therefore, officers with less-than-perfect vision suffer from no significant disadvantage. As the range increases, vision capabilities become more important, but handgun accuracy diminishes drastically as the distance increases beyond 20 feet, regardless of the officer's vision.

Last, with regard to the issue of visual impairment and the inability to pursue fleeing suspects, few issues currently generate as much debate among police administrators as vehicle pursuits. Several depart-

ments now prohibit pursuits in all but the most extreme circumstances, and few departments possess the facilities to teach effective pursuit procedures. In addition, police vehicles are notoriously subject to poor maintenance.

These factors cloud arguments concerning vision capabilities. Should perfect vision be required when proper training and equipment are not. Those who question the need for strict uncorrected vision requirements frame the question in simple terms. If an officer feels inadequate to initiate a vehicle pursuit, for whatever reason, the pursuit should not occur. This remains true for any situation involving the potential for pursuit and currently represents standard policy in the majority of police agencies.



Finally, it may be argued that officers who lose their corrective lenses in a duty-related incident are no more impaired than officers with perfect vision who get foreign objects in their eyes, such as chemical mace, fingers, or sand. In some cases, an officer with corrective eyewear may actually be better protected than those without eye covering.

RESEARCH STUDY

The lack of quantifiable data regarding the correlation between corrective lenses and police performance hampers any productive discussion of the subject. For this reason, a research study was recently conducted in an attempt to clarify the issue and provide sufficient baseline information so that future debate might center upon fact rather than supposition.

Method

The survey method emerged as the logical means to determine the association between vision requirements and police performance. Unfortunately, no police agency contacted kept relevant records in this area.

There may be several reasons for this lack of information. One may be that officers who wear corrective lenses do not wish to be perceived as weaker than those with perfect vision. Therefore, they do not include information relating to any vision-related incapacitation in police reports. Or, law enforcement agencies may simply not perceive loss of corrective lenses in a physical confrontation as a problem worth studying.

For whatever reason, agencies do not routinely record such information in police databases. The only information available appeared to be the cost to agencies for replacement of damaged lenses. However, this information failed to address the issue of police performance immediately after loss of the lenses.

Failing to obtain agency data relating to vision and performance required that the research effort

concentrate on officers' experiences. While this method yielded primarily anecdotal information, it remained the only viable way of establishing some quantifiable data regarding this issue.

In order to gauge the relationship between vision and policing effectively, the project focused on police managers from a wide variety of agencies. The survey population consisted of 92 police executives from across the United States, England, Australia, and Canada attending a conference at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia.⁶ The combined length of service for the survey population totaled 1,714 years, for an average of 18.6 years per respondent.

Participants were asked if they knew of cases where officers lost their corrective lenses in duty-related incidents. If respondents answered yes, they were asked if the loss of the corrective lenses resulted in injury to the officer or to others.

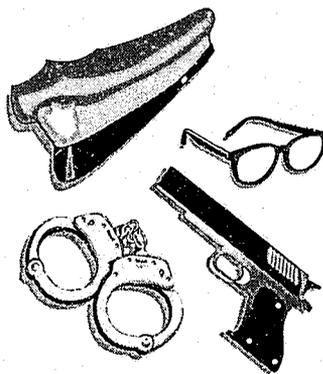
Further, researchers asked if the loss of corrective lenses prevented the officer from completing the activity being attempted at the time of loss. Then, respondents were asked to report any incidents in which impaired vision presented a problem, regardless of corrective lenses. Finally, researchers asked respondents to offer comments about police vision standards and to provide phone numbers for further contact.

Results

Of the 92 participants, 48 (52 percent) said they knew of incidents where officers lost their corrective lenses in the course of duty. Forty-four (48 percent) knew of no such incidents. Twelve respondents (13

percent) recalled incidents where officers sustained injuries related to the loss of corrective lenses. Five (5 percent) reported incidents in which loss of corrective lenses impaired an officer's performance, and 12 (13 percent) recalled incidents where impaired vision unrelated to corrective lenses created a problem.

While the data appear fairly straightforward and easy to interpret, several factors actually make it more complex. Analysis of comments and followup telephone interviews revealed misinterpretation in several responses to the questionnaire. For example, a number of respondents understood the question regarding injuries to mean wounds suffered during the specific incident in which officers lost corrective lenses. In fact, the intent of



the question was to determine if respondents knew of incidents where loss of lenses directly led to an ensuing injury. The same confusion occurred with regard to the question of performance. These misinterpretations led to a slightly inflated representation of the number of cases with injuries.

By analyzing the comments on the survey instruments and con-

ducting followup telephone interviews, a slightly different picture emerged. In nine of the cases where respondents reported injuries, the wounds were not due to lost corrective lenses and presumably would have occurred anyway. The injuries happened during the same struggle that caused the officers to lose their lenses. In one case, a subject struck an officer with sufficient force to render him unconscious. The force of the blow also broke the officer's glasses. Similarly, two of the incidents initially reported as failures to perform adequately due to lost eyewear were physical confrontations in which the officers lost corrective lenses but still controlled the subjects and the situations.

In these cases, loss of lenses inconvenienced the officers, but did not impair their performance. Likewise, in several instances, an officer's failure to complete an assignment actually resulted from an accompanying injury, rather than lens loss.

Additionally, several anomalies bear mention. One respondent initially reported that he sustained injury when he lost his corrective lenses. A followup interview determined that vision impairment did not lead to the injury. Rather, when a subject knocked a pair of expensive eyeglasses from his face, the officer instinctively reached for them. When he did so, the subject grabbed and twisted his arm. Although sustaining an injury to his arm, the officer did regain control of the subject.

Another respondent reported that an officer who lost his lenses could not read the license number of an escaping suspect's vehicle. How-

ever, his partner did manage to record the number, leading to an eventual arrest.

In addition, several respondents reported instances where officers' eyeglasses became temporarily fogged as they exited air conditioned vehicles. One respondent also reported that exposure to sand and wind required officers with contact lenses to take periodic breaks for lens cleaning.

Ultimately, only three of the reported cases of injury or failure to perform satisfied the intended perimeters of the survey questionnaire. This represents 3 percent of the survey sample. When accounting for the number of service years represented by the respondents, the number equates to 1 case per every 571 years. Of these, only one incident could be verified.

The sole verified case involved a major shootout between several FBI agents and two heavily armed suspects. After the exchange of gunfire, two of the agents and both suspects lay dead, and five other agents sustained serious wounds. Immediately prior to the shootout, one of the agents lost his glasses when he brought his automobile to an abrupt halt just feet from the suspects' vehicle. He was fatally wounded during the ensuing gunfight, and his fellow agents speculate that the loss of his glasses significantly affected his ability to observe the movements of the gunmen. If that assessment is accurate, then the loss of eyewear may be cited as a contributing factor in the agent's death.

The experiences of the officers surveyed indicated that officers wearing corrective lenses do encounter situations in which they

momentarily lose their corrective lenses or have them forcibly removed. However, the vast majority of these cases occur in arrest situations or within detention facilities. These face-to-face confrontations rarely involve weapons. In most of

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Police vision standards...should be based on proven capabilities necessary to fulfill the terms of employment.

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these cases, the loss of lenses produced no negative results either for the officer or the eventual outcome of the situation.

In their personal commentaries, respondents expressed uniform opposition to uncorrected vision standards. Several noted that their agencies lost a number of well-qualified applicants, who later gained employment in other agencies. The following comment offered by a lieutenant in charge of training and personnel for his department typifies the observations:

“I think this is one of the most meaningless fitness standards remaining to bar qualified people from police service. While I am sure that somewhere at some time some officer was seriously hurt and maybe died because of an eyesight issue—lost glasses,

etc.—officers have not been fired, dismissed, or even had assignments changed because of diminished sight capacity after the hiring process. This standard only serves to eliminate otherwise qualified and acceptable candidates.”

In addition, several officers offered personal accounts. They acknowledged their own vision problems and argued that their performance remained unhindered. Several reported that their agencies changed their standards due to lawsuits. Other respondents reported that their agencies were reevaluating their standards because they felt the current requirements barred too many qualified candidates.

CONCLUSION

Does this mean that law enforcement agencies should immediately eliminate their policies concerning standards for uncorrected vision? Not necessarily. This study is neither sufficiently comprehensive nor scientifically representative enough to draw such a sweeping conclusion.

However, surveys of this type do provide a starting point for meaningful discussion. The arguments upon which agencies base uncorrected vision requirements offer little in the way of empirical support. They remain based on largely hypothetical arguments. Nowhere has any agency documented such situations and studied the data concerning this issue.

This points to the underlying problem. Police vision standards, as well as other areas, should be based on proven capabilities necessary to fulfill the terms of

employment. Instead, the reverse often happens.

Lacking supporting data, law enforcement agencies adopt standards based on "what if" scenarios. In the process, they lose qualified applicants and perpetuate myth-based standards with questionable relationships to police performance or agency needs. Perhaps this survey and future studies can help to counter these myths and lead to a more productive approach in establishing vision standards for today's law enforcement agencies. ♦

Endnotes

¹ Richard N. Holden, "Vision Standards for Law Enforcement: A Descriptive Study," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 12, 1984, 125-129.

² O.W. Wilson, *Police Administration* (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1961); James E. Sheedy, Jeffrey T. Keller, Donald Pitts, Gerald Lowther, and Stephen C. Miller, "Recommended Vision Standards for Police Officers," *Journal of the American Optometric Association*, 54, October 1983, 925-928; Gregory W. Good and Arol R. Augsburg, "Uncorrected Visual Acuity Standards for Police Applicants," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 12, 1987, 18-23; C.J. Forkiotis, "Vision Requirements and the Police Officer Selection Process," *Police Chief*, November 1981, 56-59.

³ Michael A. Sciales and Leonard Territo, "Eyesight Standards for Police Applicants," *Police Chief*, February 1983; James E. Sheedy, "Contact Lenses for Police Officers," *Journal of the American Optometric Association*, 57, 1986, 658-660; Terry Cox, Annis Crabtree, Daniel Joslin, and Adrienne Millet, "A Theoretical Examination of Police Entry-Level Uncorrected Visual Acuity Standards," *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 11, 1987, 199-208.

⁴ *Brown County v. LIRC*, 124 Wis. 2d. 560, 397 N.W. 2d. 735 (1985).

⁵ *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted*, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1989, Washington, DC.

⁶ The First International Symposium on the Future of Law Enforcement, FBI National Academy, Quantico, Virginia, April 1-5, 1991.

Crime Data

1992 Crime Trends

Preliminary figures of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program reveal that the volume of serious crimes in the United States declined 4 percent during 1992 as compared to the 1991 total. This marks the first time since 1984 that the country registered a decrease in the Crime Index total, which the FBI uses to measure changes in the level of serious crimes reported to law enforcement across the country.

As a group, the violent crimes of murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault showed virtually no change from 1991 to 1992. At the same time, the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson collectively decreased 4 percent.

Among the Index crimes to register a decrease were murder (6 percent), burglary (6 percent), larceny-theft (4 percent), motor vehicle theft (4 percent), robbery (3 percent), and arson

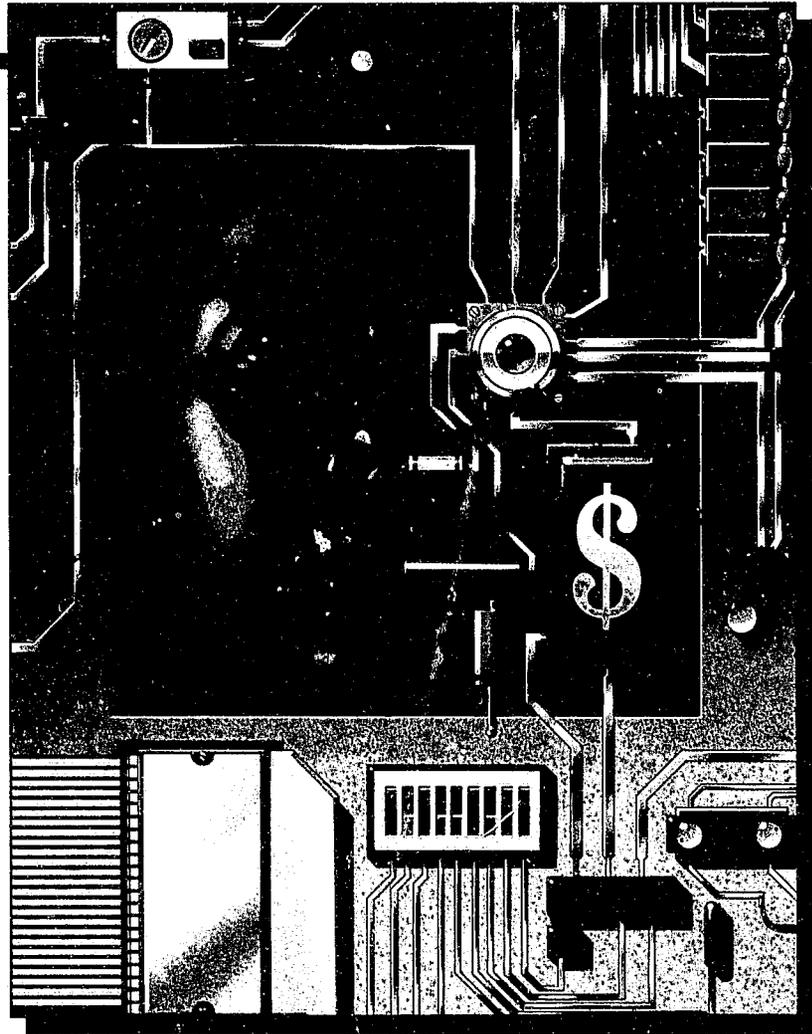
(2 percent). Only forcible rape and aggravated assault increased, each up 2 percent from 1991 to 1992.

Geographically, the Northeast experienced a 7-percent decrease in overall Crime Index totals; the Midwest, 5 percent, and the South, 4 percent. The total for the Western States showed no change for the 2-year period. Violent crime was down in the Northeast and Midwest, while increasing in the South and West. Property crime declined in all regions.

All city groupings by population size, as well as in suburban and rural countries, showed a downward trend in overall crime. The largest decline was in cities with populations over 1 million, which collectively measured an 8-percent drop. In addition, cities within this grouping experienced the only violent crime decrease, one of 6 percent. ♦

The Computer High-Tech Instrument of Crime

By
MICHAEL G. NOBLETT



The use of computers as criminal instruments or as devices to collect information associated with criminal enterprises increases yearly. Criminals use computers to store data relating to drug deals, money laundering, embezzlement, mail fraud, extortion, and a myriad of other crimes. In addition to the simple storage of records, criminals also manipulate data, infiltrate computers of financial institutions, and illegally use telephone lines of unsuspecting businesses.

Statistics suggest that the law enforcement community must act quickly and decisively to meet the challenge presented by the

criminal use of computers. For example:

- Over 4.7 million personal computers were sold in the United States in 1988, as compared with 386,500 in 1980
- An estimated 60 percent of personal computers are now networked
- \$500 million is lost annually through illegal use of telephone access codes
- \$1 trillion is moved electronically each week, and
- Only 11 percent of computer crime is reported.

While the law enforcement community, in general, often thinks of computer crime as high-tech crime, a growing segment of the population looks at computers and the data they store as nothing more than electronic paper. They feel very comfortable keeping their records, whether legal or illegal, in this format.

In order to address the legitimate need for access to computers and the information they contain, law enforcement must develop a structured approach to examine computer evidence. The examination of this evidence can provide investigative and intelligence information, and at the same time,

preserve the information for subsequent admission in court.

PRESERVING COMPUTER EVIDENCE

As more and more records are converted from paper to electronic storage, individuals are becoming more and more computer literate. Unfortunately, a growing number of individuals use their computer knowledge for illegal activities.

While there is no typical computer case, the majority fall into the broad category of white-collar crime. During investigations of these cases, several problems repeatedly occur. However, by following the guidelines offered in this article, law enforcement agencies can protect valuable computer evidence.

Conduct Preliminary Examinations

Investigators should take immediate action to protect a computer's memory. Often, investigators attempt to generate investi-

gative and intelligence information on site. While this approach is reasonable and should be encouraged, it is equally important that the computer be protected from any input introduced unintentionally by investigators.

For instance, many computer systems update files to the current date when read. In order to preserve the evidence in the same condition as it was when seized, steps must be taken to ensure that no dates are changed and nothing is written into or deleted from the computer's memory. Specialized software currently on the market protects the computer's memory and should always be used before an examination.

Investigators should also consider that anyone conducting a preliminary examination may be called on to testify concerning the procedures followed and the accuracy of the results. Because of this possibility, documented policy and protocol detailing steps to follow during examinations must be estab-

lished. Examiners should closely follow guidelines set by their particular agency to avoid any legal discrepancies.

Seize Supporting Software

When investigators seize a computer, they should also take all supporting software and documentation. This simple action eliminates a host of problems that may arise during the examination of the computer. It is logical, but not necessarily correct, to assume that the software that runs the seized computer is common and commercially available.

As commercial software is developed and marketed, manufacturers add new features and correct previously identified problems. Once the manufacturer revises the old programs, the data seized may not be compatible with the particular version of the same software. Therefore, it is good policy to seize all software, documentation, handwritten notes, and any other related items found near the computer.

Seize the Entire Computer System

Many of the items connected to the seized computer are probably standard pieces of equipment found in any computer facility. However, it only takes one unique, nonstandard piece of equipment to render a system incompatible with others. For this reason, it is best to seize all the equipment related to the computer. If it turns out that some of the items are not needed for the examination, they can be quickly returned to the site.

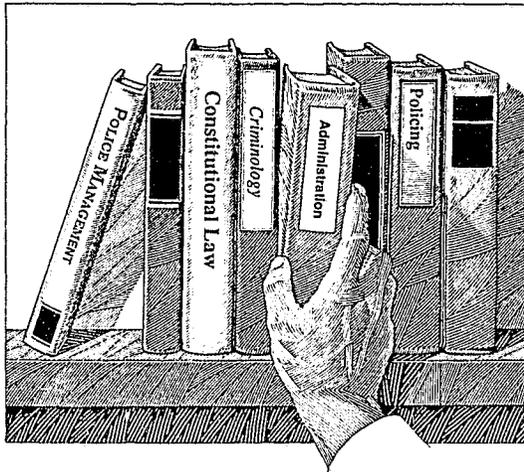
The FBI Laboratory does not recommend that investigators re-



SA Noblett is chief of the Document Analysis, Research, and Training Unit in the FBI Laboratory, Washington, D.C.

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...it is important for law enforcement to have the necessary knowledge and procedures ready to address adequately the examination of computer evidence and records.
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Book Review



Police Administration by Larry K. Gaines, Mittie D. Southerland, and John E. Angell, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1991, 1-800-722-4726.

The authors direct this book primarily to municipal police administrators. However, new and aspiring administrators can easily understand the principals discussed.

The 470 pages of this well-written text are divided into four sections. The presentation covers a wide range of issues, using realistic examples of what today's police administrators may encounter. Individual chapters include thought-provoking, practical application exercises to assist readers in understanding the theoretical points presented.

Part one explores the mechanistic aspects of the traditional police agency and discusses the roles of both law enforcement agencies and administrators. The discussion underscores the importance of information exchange and the necessity for administrative change. It examines the environmental factors, such as interagency relations, personnel, and social structures, that influence agencies. As the authors make clear, these forces can either assist or hinder police administrators.

Part two compares, and then contrasts, traditional and contemporary management principles. The authors conclude that in order for law enforcement to meet the challenges of modern society, agency administrators should consider adopting many of the contemporary and emerging management principles. Within this section, chapter five (contemporary management) is critical to understanding the remainder of the text.

In part three—the largest section—the authors discuss specific issues, such as motivation, communication, stress, personnel management, and labor relations that can “make or break” police administrations. In a general sense, this discussion can be applied to most police agencies. However, because State laws vary, readers should view this section within the context of their own State statutes.

The last section of the book concentrates on managerial control. Within the framework of exercising effective command, the discussion centers on accountability, planning, and productivity. This section concludes with a brief, but insightful, examination of trends that may impact upon police administration in the future.

Within an instructional context, videotapes and other audiovisual aids can easily be adapted to augment many of the issues presented in *Police Administration*. And, from a training standpoint, class exercise recommendations and study questions at the end of each chapter add a helpful interactive dimension to the text. Although aimed primarily toward municipal police administration, the book's broad-based presentation can be easily adapted to rural or small town law enforcement, as well.

Reviewed by
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In addition, instructors discuss the types of peer pressure young people may encounter in connection with drugs. Drug dealers attempt to coerce students to use drugs by exerting different types of pressure—teasing or tempting. Preparing students for this possibility and giving them ways to avoid yielding to negative pressures help to prepare them to just say “No.”

Drugs and the Law

Through this segment of the program, students gain insight into the criminal justice system so that they can better understand how it works. The younger students can discuss areas as simple as how buying or selling drugs can get them in trouble, while the older students discuss the laws more specifically. For example, they may discuss why society needs such laws, the penalties for violating the law, and the differences between misdemeanor violations and felonies. Instructors also explain under what circumstances juveniles can be tried as adults, the investigation and arrest procedures, and how an arrest record on drug charges can affect students in the future.

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The key to
reducing drug abuse
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people.”

Communicating Choices

Another area of emphasis in the Essex County program is how students can assertively communicate their choices and feelings about drug use to their peers. Instructors suggest certain courses of action for students being pressured to engage in drug activity. They advise students to change the subject, walk away, ignore the person who approaches them, or simply say “No.”

Students also learn to react assertively to drug dealers and to design their actions to let them know that the presence of drug dealers is unwanted. By acting out different scenarios, students learn how to deal with various situations.

Managing Stress

This vital segment of the program allows students to discuss the stress they feel in their lives and offers positive ways to deal with this stress. Instructors

encourage the young people to manage this stress through constructive activities or by simply talking their problems over with another person. The instructors’ goal is to convince students that they can deal with stress in positive, effective ways—they need never resort to drugs.

Drugs and Violence

The final section of the drug program deals with how the illegal use of drugs contributes to the increase in violence among young people. During this segment, instructors help students develop ways in which they can decrease drug-related violence. They also educate the students on the possible tactics of drug dealers.

For example, drug dealers sometimes attempt to intimidate students into using drugs by force or the threat of force. This intimidation may take the form of verbal, mental, or physical abuse.

Instructors warn that drug use can also cause the users to hurt either themselves or others. As instructors make clear, drug use often contributes to motor vehicle accidents, suicides, and murders.

CONCLUSION

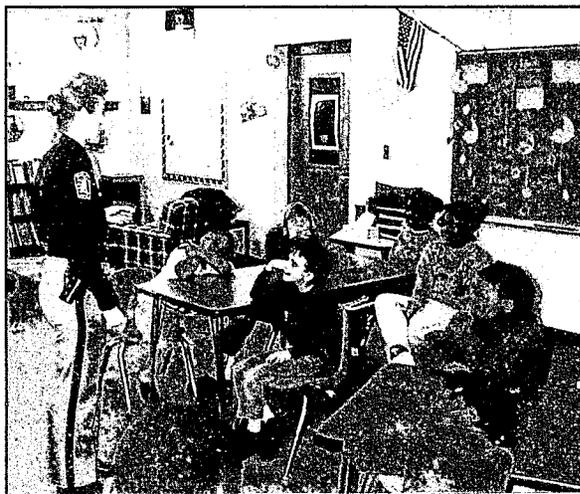
The key to reducing drug abuse may lie in the education of young people. Clearly, those students who receive drug education are better prepared for the temptations they may confront in later years.

An added benefit to drug education given by police officers is the rapport built between law enforcement and the youth in the community. Drug education instructors sometimes become confidants to the students and often render the moral support youths need when trying to avoid drugs.

Citizens and law enforcement agencies must come together to form a united front against the use of drugs. Unless this happens quickly, America may lose a generation to drugs. ♦

*Sheriff Davis heads the Essex County, Virginia,
Sheriff's Office.*

Police Practices



Drug Education Saving America's Youths

By Damon Davis

As America grapples with the increasing use of drugs among its young people, police leaders throughout the country seek effective solutions to the problem. However, when considering specific programs, these leaders must also consider their impact. They must find programs that youths, as well as adults, accept and support.

When members of the Essex County, Virginia, Sheriff's Office considered ways to reduce drug use in their county, they decided to build on a program already in existence in most States—the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program. Moreover, the sheriff's office expanded the program to begin the drug education process in kindergarten and continue it through the 12th grade.

Two full-time, uniformed deputy sheriffs spend the first semester of the school year teaching kindergarten through 7th grade students and the second semester of the school year teaching 8th through 12th grade students. Funds for the program come from both the sheriff's office budget and a Federal grant.

THE PROGRAM

The goals of Essex County's drug education program are to teach students at an early age how to recognize and resist peer pressure to use drugs and to help them understand that most individuals do not use drugs. Drug education instructors also attempt to impress upon the students that citizens and law enforcement agencies must work together to eliminate the drug problem. Instructors reinforce these two recurring themes throughout the students' elementary and high school years.

The program concentrates on five general topics. Students learn about drug demand reduction, drugs and the law, how to communicate choices assertively, how to manage stress without using drugs, and how drugs and violence mix. Instructors begin at a very simple, general level with the younger students and progress to more complex material with students in the higher grades. For example, instructors may discuss drug-use symptoms in very general terms with younger students, telling them that drug use makes individuals sick. With the older students, they can be more graphic in their explanations of how drug use ruins the health and lives of those who choose to indulge.

Drug Demand Reduction

After years of attempting to reduce the supply of illegal drugs, criminal justice leaders now believe that the drug problem must be attacked by reducing the *demand* for the drugs as well. Drug education instructors approach this problem by familiarizing students with the risks associated with drug use. They then ask the students to describe the effects drugs have on their peers and how this drug use may affect their neighborhoods and community.

Instructors also discuss drugs in connection with crime rates, violence, medical emergencies, and suicide rates. They attempt to bring the problem closer to home by discussing with the students incidents involving either themselves or family members that may have occurred as a result of an individual's drug use. For example, the homes of students may have been burglarized by someone who needed money to buy drugs.

Assist Drug Teams

Often, EVS members are called on to assist drug teams that plan to raid apartments in highrise buildings. When such a raid is planned, the drug teams contact EVS members, who enter the buildings disguised as elevator mechanics. They then hold an elevator at the main floor so that the drug team can enter the building, quickly get on the elevator without waiting for one to arrive, and go straight to the appropriate floor.

Another benefit of having the EVS present during drug raids is that they can keep the elevator at the floor where the raid takes place. This way, if any injuries oc-

cur during the raid, an elevator is immediately available to take the injured persons directly to the lobby.

CONCLUSION

The Elevator Vandalism Squad has proved to be an asset to the New York City Housing Authority Police. The professional, knowledgeable investigations conducted by the squad avert costly lawsuits, saving the Housing Authority large amounts of money. Because of their speedy responses to elevator accidents, the squad can reconstruct the incident almost immediately, as opposed to reconstructing the incident at some later date in response to a

civil lawsuit. In addition, the EVS reduces the amount of vandalism to elevators, as well as thefts of elevator parts.

Most importantly, however, the EVS saves lives. Buildings that previously experienced numerous elevator incidents now report no problems. This is due, in large part, to the implementation of EVS recommendations.

Departments continually seek out programs that make their citizens safer, while conserving money. This is a program well worth consideration by departments that must ensure the safety of their citizens while in elevators. ♦

Author Guidelines

Manuscript Specifications

Length: 1,000 to 3,000 words or 5 to 12 pages double-spaced.

Format: All manuscripts should be double-spaced and typed on 8 1/2" by 11" white paper. All pages should be numbered, and three copies should be submitted for review purposes.

Publication

Basis For Judging Manuscripts: Manuscripts are judged on the following points: Factual accuracy, style and ease of reading, structure and logical flow, length, relevance to audience, and analysis of information. Favorable consideration will generally not be given to an article that has been published previously or that is being considered for publication by another magazine. Articles that are used to advertise a product or a service will be rejected.

Query Letters: The Editor suggests that authors submit a detailed one- to two-page outline before

writing an article. This is intended to help authors but does not guarantee publication of the article.

Author Notification: Receipt of manuscript will be confirmed. Notification of acceptance or rejection will follow review. Articles accepted for publication cannot be guaranteed a publication date.

Copyright: Because the *Bulletin* is a government publication, materials published within it are not copyrighted.

Editing: The *Bulletin* reserves the right to edit all manuscripts.

Submission

Authors may contact the Special Agent police training coordinator at the nearest FBI field office for help in submitting articles, or manuscripts may be forwarded directly to: Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Room 7262, 10th and Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20535.

Investigate Elevator Injuries

The EVS also investigates elevator injuries to determine how the injuries actually occurred. For example, one youth left his apartment and returned later with three fingers missing. The youth told responding Housing Authority officers that the injury was caused by the elevator door closing on his fingers. A trail of blood from the elevator to the youth's apartment appeared to corroborate this story, but the officers could not find the severed fingers.

When EVS members arrived to investigate, they meticulously searched the garbage-strewn elevator shaft for the fingers. They then examined the top of the elevator, actually riding the top to check every ledge, where the fingers might possibly have fallen.

Past experience then led them to check the guide rollers on the floor where the accident occurred. (Guide rollers are wheels attached to the steel tracks that run vertically inside the shaft. The elevator runs on these tracks, and the rollers stabilize the cab while it is in motion.) Juveniles who ride the tops of elevators sometimes grab the steel tracks for balance. This young man, while playing a dangerous game on the elevator, grabbed the steel tracks for balance, and his hands slid up to the guide roller, severing his fingers. EVS members found the fingers still in the guide roller.

Through investigations of this type, the EVS provides valuable information that protects the Housing Authority from costly negligence lawsuits. Officials estimate that this program saved the Housing Authority between \$40 and \$50 million over the last 10 years.

Recommend Modifications

In addition to investigating injuries or deaths on elevators, EVS members make recommendations concerning possible safety modifications that could prevent future incidents. In some cases, simple modifications can totally eliminate specific problems.

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The [EVS] focuses primarily on reducing the number of elevator injuries and fatalities among juveniles....

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For example, prior to the formation of the EVS, the city required that all safety hatches at the tops of elevators remain unlocked in order to allow trapped riders to exit the elevators in cases of emergency. However, EVS members determined that juveniles were being killed or injured when they climbed through the hatches to ride the tops of elevators.

EVS members convinced city administrators that trapped riders would be safer if they remained inside the elevator until help arrived, rather than risking injury by climbing through the safety hatch. Now, the city requires all safety hatches to remain locked. This simple modification resulted in an immediate decrease in the number of juvenile

injuries and deaths caused by riding the tops of elevators.

At times, specific cases serve as the impetus for changes that enhance elevator safety. When the blind woman died as a result of the faulty elevator lock, the EVS recommended certain changes that have since been implemented. First, whenever possible, building managers rent ground floor apartments to blind individuals. Second, elevator maintenance workers now focus special attention on the locks of elevator hallway doors on the floors of blind residents. These simple precautions can help to reduce elevator fatalities among the blind.

Investigate Other Elevator Crimes

The EVS also investigates other types of elevator crimes, such as robberies and sexual assaults. Elevators provide ideal environments for such crimes because criminals can contain the movements of the victim and control the movement of the elevator. The isolation also heightens the victim's fear.

When a particular crime pattern develops, EVS personnel mount cameras (approximately the size of a pack of cigarettes) equipped with pinhole lenses on the roofs of elevator cabs. This allows them to view the interior of the elevator on a television monitor located in the motor room. They can also video tape any action within the elevator.

This technique helps to obtain valuable information in cases where authorities identify particular crime patterns. The EVS has used the cameras in over 20 crime patterns that detectives identified, solving cases in 8 of these patterns.

now focuses on reducing the number of juvenile deaths and injuries on elevators.

SQUAD SELECTION

Given the technical nature of the assignment, most investigators chosen for the EVS have either a mechanical or electrical background. These backgrounds are helpful because squad members receive extensive training, much like that given to elevator mechanics. Squad members learn about elevator electrical systems and how to read wiring schematics and blueprints.

The extensive training provided to squad members gives them an added edge in solving cases. Their expertise in elevators allows them to pursue suspicions they may have about how the crimes were actually committed or how the accidents really occurred, either proving or disproving the original theories of responding investigators.

SQUAD DUTIES

The Elevator Vandalism Squad focuses primarily on reducing the number of elevator injuries and fatalities among juveniles who play dangerous elevator games. However, they also investigate other elevator injuries and deaths and make recommendations for elevator safety modifications that may reduce unsafe access to elevator shafts. In addition, they assist in other investigations that involve elevators, and they support drug teams when they raid apartments in highrise buildings.

Investigate Elevator Deaths

The expertise of EVS members is crucial in investigations of eleva-

tor deaths. This expertise allows them to determine whether an injury or death resulted from a dangerous elevator game or whether it resulted from an elevator malfunction.

For example, when Housing Authority officers found a blind woman at the bottom of an elevator shaft, they originally believed that the woman was murdered. However, the responding officers immediately called in EVS members to assess the incident.

When squad members arrived, tenants advised them that the elevator doors on the third floor (the victim's floor) would often fail to open. With trained eyes, EVS members focused on the elevator's locking mechanism, which should have prevented the outside door from opening before the elevator arrived at the floor. When squad members took the lock apart, they found that the catch to the lock had actually

been bent, allowing the door to open without the elevator being on the floor.

Further investigation revealed that the blind victim had no way of knowing when the elevator arrived at her floor. Because of this, she constantly pulled on the hallway door to the elevator until it opened. When the door opened, she assumed the elevator was there. Tragically, on the day she died, the lock failed because of the repeated pulling action.

In other cases, EVS members determined how juveniles died while playing dangerous elevator games. The youths would gain entry to the elevator shafts by circumventing safety features and then jump from the top of the elevator to the counterweight or from one elevator to the next. Eventually, bad timing, lack of concentration, or other factors led to the loss of life.



Captain Welsh is with the Housing Authority Police Department in New York, New York.



Sergeant Cestare is commanding officer of the Elevator Vandalism Squad of the Housing Authority Police Department.

move and submit the hard drive (memory), located inside the computer, for examination. The manner in which the computer is set up internally is often crucial to reading, displaying, and printing the data on the hard drive. Thus, removing just the hard drive may be useless to the investigation.

In light of technical considerations, it may be appropriate to use an expert as a consultant in the execution of these types of search warrants. This is especially true if investigators do not seize the entire system. Concerns regarding incompatibilities of computer systems should be stated in the supporting affidavit as justification if investigators plan to seize the entire computer system.

Package Equipment Properly

If investigators need to ship the computer to another facility for examination, they should package it properly. Oftentimes, examinations take an inordinate amount of time because poorly packaged computers are damaged in shipment and must be subsequently repaired.

Likewise, shipment of computer diskettes and other memory devices requires certain precautions. Because of the potential hazard of static electric discharge, these items should not be shipped in plastic evidence envelopes. In addition, the evidence should be marked to avoid exposure to strong magnetic fields, such as those generated by x-ray machines.

COMPUTER ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TEAM

To assist with investigations involving computers as evidence, the

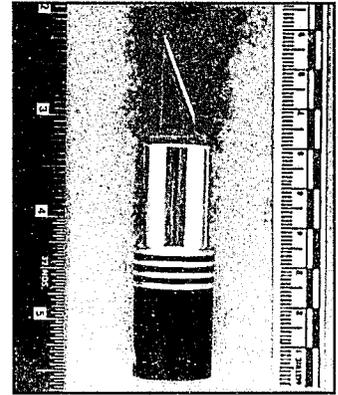
FBI Laboratory established the Computer Analysis and Response Team (CART) at FBI Headquarters. Computer professionals with a variety of experience and expertise, along with a sensitivity to the needs of the law enforcement community, staff the team. The CART has a full range of hardware available, as well as unique utility software useful in forensic examinations of computer-related evidence.

Limited by the number of technical personnel available to conduct these investigations, this service is available to police agencies authorized to submit evidence to the FBI for forensic examination. In addition to its traditional forensic examination, the FBI Laboratory's CART provides on-site field support to both Bureau field offices and local police departments. Approval for this on-site support depends on the individual case, the resources available, and the needs of the requesting agency.

CONCLUSION

The FBI Laboratory has seen the submission of computer evidence double and then double again in the past few years, reflecting the proliferation of computers in society. With the role of the computer becoming more predominant in society, its impact is felt in every law enforcement investigative program. Therefore, it is important for law enforcement to have the necessary knowledge and procedures ready to address adequately the examination of computer evidence and records. ♦

Unusual Weapon



Lipstick Knife

The principal of a Newmarket, Ontario, public school recently confiscated concealed knives from two students who were arguing on school grounds. One of the adolescents apparently manufactured the weapons and charged other students \$5 for them. The weapons were produced by altering ordinary lipstick tubes. The lipstick was removed and an exacto knife was affixed to the bottom of the empty container using a silicone-based glue. Despite this modification, the retracting mechanism remained intact, allowing the knife to be easily concealed when not in use. ♦

*Submitted by the
Newmarket, Ontario, Canada,
Police Department.*
