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**POLICING NEW YORK CITY IN THE 1990'S**

**VICE CONTROL**

**STRATEGY**



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# INTRODUCTION

The Organized Crime Control Bureau (OCCB) was established on November 10th, 1971, as a direct result of recommendations made following the investigative hearings of both the Knapp Commission and the New York State Commission on Investigation.

These recommendations derived from allegations of widespread corruption and mismanagement in NYPD public morals and drug enforcement. Establishing the Organized Crime Control Bureau (OCCB) brought together, under one unified command, those policing functions identified as most prone to corruption. For two decades, through unceasing efforts toward integrity maintenance and adherence to the principles upon which OCCB was built, systemic corruption has been avoided by NYPD Vice enforcement personnel.

While successful investigations, arrests, and the dismantling of organized criminal enterprises are important, they are but benchmarks of activity. Maintaining a high level of credibility is essential to nurturing community participation. Enforcing the law within the law, with protection of individual rights as a guiding principle, will leave citizens with a feeling of confidence and pride in their City's police.

A philosophy meeting the needs of individual communities, working in partnership with each, and operating in accordance with a strict code of conduct is essential to accomplishing the Department's goal of making New York a better, safer place. The New York City Police Department's Values underscore our commitment to the preservation of the favorable integrity climate we have attained, as well as the safety of citizens and police. With this in mind we reaffirm our pledge to:

- Protect the lives and property of our fellow citizens and impartially enforce the law;
- Fight crime by both preventing it and by aggressively pursuing violators of the law;
- Maintain a higher standard of integrity than is generally expected of others because so much is expected of us; and
- Value human life, respect the dignity of each individual and render our services with courtesy and civility.

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## VICE CONTROL STRATEGY

Throughout the past two years, the Organized Crime Control Bureau has devoted substantial resources to integrating the community policing philosophy into its infrastructure. In addition to OCCB's Key Tasks delineated in the Department's blueprint for Community Policing (entitled Community Policing in the 1990s) which related solely to the Narcotics Division, the Public Morals Division has also made significant contributions to the Department's Community Policing plan.

The Public Morals Division's mission is:

**TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY BY MEASURABLY REDUCING PUBLIC EXPOSURE TO PUBLIC MORALS VIOLATIONS.**

Prior to the introduction of the Department-wide Community Policing philosophy, the Public Morals Division attempted to fulfill its mission by employing traditional policing concepts. The primary response to public morals violations has traditionally involved making arrests. While summary action is an important component of any policing strategy, it is not the only one. Recognizing that tailored approaches have the best chance of reducing vice crime at the neighborhood level, the Department has developed a Vice Control Strategy which is aimed at maximizing the resources of government and the community.

The Vice Control Strategy has four goals. They are:

**GOAL #1:**

**RESTORE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR CITY BY SUPPRESSING PUBLIC MORALS ("VICE") VIOLATIONS**

**GOAL #2:**

**PREVENT THE EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND PREVENT CHILDREN FROM EXPERIMENTING WITH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

**GOAL #3:**

**MAXIMIZE THE RESOURCES OF CITY, STATE & FEDERAL AGENCIES**

**GOAL #4:**

**ENSURE THE SAFETY AND INTEGRITY OF POLICE PERSONNEL**

This booklet describes the strategy devised to achieve these goals.

## **GOAL #1: RESTORE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR CITY BY SUPPRESSING PUBLIC MORALS ("VICE") VIOLATIONS**

### **Monthly Neighborhood Vice Strategy Meetings**

Public Morals District Commanders meet with precinct commanders monthly to identify and narrowly define priorities and problems while formulating strategies to address neighborhood vice-related concerns.

### **Operation Losing Proposition**

In order to augment existing enforcement efforts against street prostitution, the Public Morals Division established Operation "Losing Proposition." During these prostitution enforcement efforts, undercover officers arrest "Johns" who attempt to obtain sexual favors from prostitutes and routinely seize their automobiles.

### **Operation Padlock**

The Padlock Unit of the Legal Bureau works with investigators from the Organized Crime Control Bureau to target locations operating in violation of guidelines outlined within Local Law No. 42, the padlock law. This law enables the Police Department, after a hearing, to close a premise that is supporting illegal activities such as prostitution, controlled substances, marijuana, gambling, unlawful sale/consumption of alcoholic beverages, and both the possession and dismantling of stolen vehicles.

### **Operation Bet & Bust**

Operation Bet & Bust is a pilot project in Manhattan North's 34th Precinct. It combines the resources of the OCCB's Public Morals Division and the Patrol Services Bureau to bolster the involvement of the beat officer in solving illegal gambling conditions.

The beat officers collect information during daily interactions with residents and through personal observations. Public Morals Division undercover officers place bets at locations identified by the beat officer and the same uniformed beat officers make the arrest.

### **Business "Liaison" Cards**

In the Summer of 1991, the Public Morals Division was directed by the Chief of the Organized Crime Control Bureau to make contact with each Community Policing Sergeant and to advise them of the availability of Public Morals Division personnel to assist in solving local problems. Upon making this initial contact, Public Morals Division investigators provided precinct personnel with their names and telephone numbers. Business "Liaison" Cards were distributed to identify Public Morals Division personnel responsible for individual beats, precincts and boroughs to their counterparts in the Patrol Services Bureau.

**GOAL #2: PREVENT THE EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND PREVENT CHILDREN FROM EXPERIMENTING WITH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

**Pedophile Unit**

The mission of the Pedophile Unit is to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. ~~The Pedophile Unit participates in a joint task force with special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.~~

**The Paul and Lisa Group**

The Public Morals Division has developed a working relationship with the Paul and Lisa Group, a not-for-profit, federally funded organization dedicated to rehabilitating young prostitutes through counselling. Investigators make referrals to the group with hopes that some of these young lives will be salvaged.

**S.P.E.C.D.A.  
(School Program to Educate and Control Drug Abuse)**

Alcoholic beverages are drugs. The primary purpose of the SPECDA program is to prevent drug experimentation, including alcohol. Through SPECDA, the Organized Crime Control Bureau and the Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Community Affairs have a unique partnership with the Board of Education to provide positive role models, help students make sound decisions and bolster their confidence. Long range benefits include stronger ties between the community and the police, and the enhanced understanding of the Department's role within society.

**Underage Drinking Task Force**

In conjunction with the New York State Liquor Authority, the Department participates in the Underage Drinking ~~Task Force~~<sup>Enforcement</sup>. The Task Force conducts inspections of licensed premises throughout the City to ensure compliance with State Liquor Authority rules and regulations.

**Civil Enforcement Initiative**

The Civil Enforcement Initiative was developed to address quality of life concerns at the precinct level through a combination of law enforcement strategies and civil remedies. By working with various enforcement units throughout the Department, such as the Patrol Services Bureau, the Organized Crime Control Bureau and the Detective Bureau, the Civil Enforcement Unit of the Legal Bureau focuses on abating public nuisances identified by the community and precinct personnel.

## **GOAL #3: IMPROVE SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY BY COORDINATING THE RESOURCES OF CITY, STATE & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **Mayor's Office of Midtown Enforcement**

The Public Morals Division provides the Mayor's Office of Midtown Enforcement with documentation of criminal activity which is a prerequisite for their use of Nuisance Abatement statutes to close locations involved in hard-core illicit conduct.

### **State Liquor Authority**

The State Liquor Authority (SLA) is a licensing agency that regulates the sale of alcoholic beverages. The Public Morals Division conducts enforcement to ensure compliance with SLA laws. Enforcement activities include the enforcement of statutes involving the unlicensed sale, sale to minors, and after-hour sales of alcohol.

### **Department of Consumer Affairs**

Acting upon the request of the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Public Morals Division conducts background checks on locations seeking Consumer Affairs licenses.

### **New York State Lottery**

In an effort to stop licensed lottery agents from possessing electronic gambling devices, the Public Morals Division notifies the New York State Lottery of enforcement activities related to existing electronic gambling devices within licensed locations. The Lottery Commission maintains the option of revoking their lottery licenses.

### **Other Enforcement Agencies**

Illegal gambling enterprises are not restricted by City and State boundaries. In order to address gambling conspiracies with ties to New York City, the Public Morals Division conducts joint investigations with other enforcement agencies that include the New York State Police, Westchester County District Attorney's Office, New Jersey State Police, Bergen County Police, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### **Mayor's Social Club Inspectional Task Force**

On September 22, 1992, the responsibility of the Mayor's Social Club Inspectional Task Force was transferred from the Police Department to the Fire Department. The task force was formed to conduct inspections to ensure the safety of persons who frequent social clubs. Although the Public Morals Division no longer provides personnel to staff the inspectional teams, this unit continues to assist the Fire Department by providing information regarding the complaint and arrest histories of social clubs.

## **GOAL #4: ENSURE THE SAFETY AND INTEGRITY OF POLICE PERSONNEL**

In addition to the Organized Crime Control Bureau's introductory investigator course, all newly assigned officers to the Public Morals Division attend specialized training courses in vice related investigations. One of the touchstones of the Department is not only singular responsibility for personal integrity, but the additional responsibility of actively assisting in the identification of any member who may be engaged in misconduct or corrupt practices.

The Department's emphasis on values and its organizational commitment to integrity is a critical element in the defense against corruption. Conducting regular reviews of integrity programs, emphasizing the Department's Values, and stressing the importance of adhering to a strict code of conduct are just a few of the methods employed to reduce the Department's vulnerability in this sensitive area. Enforcement models are designed to ensure citizen and officer safety, and a system of checks and balances is built-in to maintain the favorable integrity climate achieved during the last two decades.

### **Module Concept**

The module, or team concept is used in the Public Morals Division and all other units in the Organized Crime Control Bureau. The short span of supervisory control, inherent to the module concept, reduces the opportunity for corruption, promotes quality investigations and safety, and ensures supervisory accountability. In structuring operations in this manner, the Department has, to some extent, sacrificed personnel costs to underwrite integrity maintenance and safety.

### **Employee Drug "Dole" Testing**

Given the modern attitudes toward drug use and certain aspects of human nature, no one can guarantee that breaches of integrity will never occur. Nevertheless, the importance of maintaining the highest standard of integrity cannot be overemphasized.

Among the many control mechanisms put in place to preserve a favorable integrity climate are the pre-assignment and random drug testing programs. In addition to random drug testing in which all officers must participate, the Organized Crime Control Bureau requires all applicants to submit to a pre-assignment drug test. Upon assignment all investigators continue to be subject to the random drug testing program. Drug abuse is not tolerated by the Department. Employees found using illegal drugs will be dismissed.

### **Field Associate Program**

All candidates for assignment to the Organized Crime Control Bureau are interviewed by senior supervisors and a field intelligence officer from the Field Control Division. The field intelligence officer is responsible for developing a cadre of field associates. A field associate is a regularly assigned member of the OCCB. The mission, in addition to the regular duties, is to alert the Field Control Division to any evidence of misconduct or corruption in their field unit. Because each candidate for assignment is given an opportunity to participate, the program is effective in preventing corruption in that it imbues an aura of omnipresence. Participation in the program is strictly voluntary.

## **VICE CONTROL STRATEGY**

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### **Integrity Training**

The Commanding Officer of the Field Control Division conducts a training class for all newly assigned members to the OCCB. This training program emphasizes the Department's Values, the commitment to maintaining the highest levels of integrity, and related policies.