



Sheriff's Task Force on 21st Century Policing April 2016 Progress Bulletin #2

In January 2016 Sheriff Hart created the Task Force on 21st Century Policing to update our policing model, improve our abilities to protect the public and affirm our commitment to community and to maintain the trust and confidence we have earned. The Task Force is scheduled to complete six sessions to discuss and evaluate recommendations intended to promote effective crime reduction while building public trust, completing its work in July, 2016.

Task Force Groups are led by Lieutenants Ross, Ramos, Payne and Carney. Task Force members include Sergeants Fish, Baldwin, Morales, Clark and Baldrige, and Deputies M. Pruger, Burnett, Luna, Cruz, Ryan, Brownlee, D. Clark, Paul and Dunn, as well as Kathy Samms and Ruth Hong.

During Session Two, the Task Force considered the following recommendations which resulted in these responses and positions:

In order to achieve internal legitimacy, law enforcement agencies should involve employees in the process of developing policies and procedures.

The Sheriff's Office frequently assigns employees to review, modify and update policies, particularly those involving critical issues such as the use of force and technical areas such as Bomb and SWAT teams. We recently established the Patrol Resolution Group, comprised of deputies, sergeants and a lieutenant, to discuss policy interpretation or policy conflicts that occasionally arise and make suggestions for improvement. Sheriff Hart

appointed employees from all ranks, assignments and job classes to the 21st Century Policing Task Force to ensure that our personnel had a voice during this transition.

Law enforcement agency leadership should examine opportunities to incorporate procedural justice into the internal discipline process, placing additional importance on values adherence rather than adherence to rules. Union leadership should be partners in this process.

The internal discipline process is regulated by California's Government Code Sections 3300-3312, also known as the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights and Sheriff's Office policy 1020 further defines the parameters of personnel investigations. The disciplinary process is formal to ensure it is consistent, fair, complies with legal and regulatory standards and employees have the opportunity for representation or assistance from union leadership.

Law enforcement agencies should proactively promote public trust by initiating positive non-enforcement activities to engage communities that typically have high rates of investigative and enforcement involvement with government agencies.

When people think of police, the images that probably come to mind involve handcuffs or traffic tickets. In fact, arresting offenders - both necessary and occasionally dangerous - does not constitute the majority of police time.



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Officers spend most of their time keeping the peace, problem-solving social issues, meeting with people and generating reports and records. Recognizing our responsibility to serve communities, the Sheriff's Office is involved in many non-enforcement activities. A partial list of our involvement includes:

- Sheriff Activity League: provides sports, field trips and other activities for the youth aged four to eighteen years old to promote healthy activities.
- National Night Out: an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, better places to live.
- Community education: guidance and planning advice to schools for emergencies, businesses for workplace violence and neighborhoods for crime prevention.
- Coffee with the Sheriff: regular opportunities at each Sheriff's Service Center for the public to walk in and speak directly with the Sheriff about any issue.
- Public Space Protection: During the summer deputies will work out of our Mobile Community Policing trailer at specified regional parks and provide increased patrols on our North Coast beaches.

In order to achieve external legitimacy, law enforcement agencies should involve the community in the process of developing and evaluating policies and procedures.

Police legitimacy means people have trust and confidence in law enforcement, accept police authority and believe officers are fair. Officers build public confidence by:

- Treating people with dignity and respect
- Making decisions fairly, based on facts, not illegitimate factors such as race;
- Giving people voice - a chance to tell their side of the story; and
- Acting in a way that encourages community members to believe that they will be treated with goodwill in the future.

The Sheriff's Office proposed Body Worn Camera policy is a good example of a policy that was subjected to extensive external review by community representatives designed to promote external legitimacy. During policy development we contacted and worked with the local chapters of the ACLU, NAACP and Public Defender to review and make suggestions and recommendations. While the process of engaging community stakeholders takes time and effort, it is a sound practice that produces a reliable policy. Other Examples of efforts to promote legitimacy include:

- ▶ Community member satisfaction surveys



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- ▶ Handing out business cards during contacts
- ▶ Community Observer Program to allow citizens to see how deputies are trained

Research conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of crime fighting strategies should specifically look at the potential for collateral damage of any given strategy on community trust and legitimacy.

Police should not do more harm than good. We understand that police operations may occasionally produce negative impacts on communities and we consider alternatives to mitigate those impacts when conducting law enforcement operations. Although the Sheriff's Office is not a research-producing organization, we regularly provide data to researchers, work with independent evaluators on various initiatives, keep up with the latest information about criminal and social trends and continuously train to best police practices.

The task force encourages policies that mandate the use of external and independent prosecutors in cases of police use of force resulting in death, officer-involved shootings resulting in injury or death, or in-custody deaths.

In Santa Cruz County, all law enforcement agencies, including the Sheriff's Office, agreed to participate in a formal investigative process for cases of officer involved shootings and other critical incidents resulting in death. The critical incident protocol assures that such cases are fully and fairly investigated and the

results are reviewed by the District Attorney for legal disposition and resolution. Investigators with the District Attorney's Office monitor and may participate in the investigation.

In cases involving in-custody deaths at the County Jail, the Coroner's section, including a forensic pathologist – a physician specializing in determining the cause and manner of death – conducts a comprehensive investigation of the circumstances of death that includes an examination of the place where the death occurred, an autopsy of the decedent and examination of medical records, review of all video recordings and official documents, and interviews of witnesses. All in-custody deaths are reported to the State of California Department of Justice.

Policies on use of force should also require agencies to collect, maintain, and report data to the Federal Government on all officer-involved shootings, whether fatal or nonfatal, as well as any in-custody death.

The Sheriff's Office reports all officer involved shootings and in-custody deaths to the California Department of Justice in compliance with California Government Code Section 12525.

Policies on use of force should clearly state what types of information will be released, when, and in what situation, to maintain transparency.

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern,



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both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Sheriff Jim Hart is committed to releasing information to the public on critical incidents involving officers as soon as possible and to the extent allowed by law.

Use of Force Policy 300 provides guidelines on the reasonable use of force, including reporting to the California Department of Justice.

News Media Relations Policy 346 provides guidelines on the release of information to the public.

Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to implement non-punitive peer review of critical incidents separate from criminal and administrative investigations.

The Sheriff's Office regularly debriefs critical incidents with staff during shift briefings and peer input/review is an important factor. When reviewing an incident, we conduct a professional discussion of the event emphasizing performance standards, policy adherence, options and alternatives, causal conditions and mitigating and aggravating factors. When correctly used, debriefing is an integral tool to:

1. Increase safety for deputies and the public
2. Identifying areas for improvement
3. Improve teamwork through better awareness and coordination

4. Develop competence by sharing useful tools and techniques
5. Instill confidence by recognizing and reinforcing successes

The implementation of appropriate technology by law enforcement agencies should be designed considering local needs and aligned with national standards.

The Sheriff's Office Technology Team provides evaluation, training and implementation assistance specific to new technologies as they become available to our agency. The team considers any national or industry standards as it applied to proposed technologies as well as agency-specific needs for the technology as it applies to our mission.

Law enforcement agencies should encourage public engagement and collaboration, including the use of community advisory bodies, when developing a policy for the use of a new technology.

Sheriff Hart holds open meeting hours known as "Coffee with the Sheriff" at each Sheriff's Service Center. The public is invited to attend and speak directly with him about problems and concerns in their neighborhood. A schedule is available at <http://www.scsheriff.com/Home/CoffeewiththeSheriff.aspx>. Sheriff Hart also meets monthly with the Sheriff's Advisory Team, a group of twenty community members who live or work in Santa Cruz County to discuss law enforcement issues and



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maintain communications with the communities we serve.

Law enforcement agencies should include an evaluation or assessment process to gauge the effectiveness of any new technology, soliciting input from all levels of the agency, from line officer to leadership, as well as assessment from members of the community.

The Sheriff's Office has diversified the task of evaluating, assessing, and gauging the effectiveness of all new technology through the use of the following groups:

- Technology Team comprised of employee members including deputies and civilians equipped and experienced with the technology.
- Community Advisory Groups to include input from stakeholders or community representatives.
- Private Consultants for technical expertise and appropriate use of technology.
- Requests For Proposal purchasing process to ensure transparency, value and fairness when acquiring new technologies.
- Discuss technology needs and solicit input from Board of Supervisors

Law enforcement agencies should adopt the use of new technologies that will help them better serve people with special needs or disabilities.

Sheriff's Office Policy 370 provides guidance to members of our agency when communicating with individuals with disabilities including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, have impaired speech or vision, or are blind. We strive to ensure that people with disabilities, whether they are victims, witnesses or arrestees have equal access to law enforcement services, programs and activities to which they are entitled.

Sheriff's Office employees are encouraged to use:

- Audio recordings and enlarged print
- Qualified interpreters
- TTY and relay services
- Office employees who have demonstrated communication services such as ASL or SE
- Hand gestures and visual aids during field contacts
- Exchange written notes or communications
- Use of computer, word processing, personal communication device or similar device to exchange texts or notes

Law enforcement agencies should engage in multidisciplinary, community team approaches for planning, implementing, and responding to crisis situations with complex causal factors.

A good example of a multi-disciplinary approach is our partnership with the County Mental Health Department. Sheriff Jim Hart applied for and received a grant to adopt innovative strategies and practices



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to effectively interact with persons with mental health problems. Our partnership has resulted in a full-time mental health worker embedded in the Sheriff's Office working directly with deputies to resolve issues with persons with mental health issues. This collaboration is proving to be an effective approach and has contributed to the implementation of least-harm resolutions to crisis incidents involving mentally ill offenders. We will continue to look for new opportunities for multi-disciplinary approaches.

Law enforcement agencies should engage youth and communities in joint training with law enforcement, citizen academies, ride-alongs, problem solving teams, community action teams, and quality of life teams.

Deputy Travis Huntsman is developing a Youth Academy as a pilot project that is scheduled to begin Fall 2016. We anticipate a six-session format for youth drawn from County high schools to familiarize them with justice related topics and promote positive youth-law enforcement relationships. We look forward to new opportunities that may arise in the future.

Law enforcement agencies should establish formal community/citizen advisory committees to assist in developing crime prevention strategies and agency policies as well as provide input on policing issues.

Sheriff Jim Hart established the Sheriff's Advisory Team (SAT) in September, 2014 to promote open communication with the community we serve and assist in the production of positive public safety outcomes. SAT is a representative group of community members from all walks of life who live and work throughout Santa Cruz County. SAT meets with Sheriff Hart monthly to discuss law enforcement issues that are impacting our neighborhoods and rural areas.

Communities and law enforcement agencies should restore and build trust between youth and police by creating programs and projects for positive, consistent, and persistent interaction between youth and police.

- The Sheriff's Office created and maintains the Sheriff's Activity League to provide sports and activities for local youth.
- School Resource Officers are deputies assigned to Soquel and Aptos High Schools who work closely with school administrators and youth in a positive interactive manner.
- The Sheriff's Office is developing a Youth Academy to begin Fall 2016.

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