

Training the 21st Century Police Officer

**Redefining Police Professionalism for the
Los Angeles Police Department**

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Prepared for the
City of Los Angeles and the
Los Angeles Police Department

**Public Safety and Justice
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PREFACE

On June 15, 2001, the City of Los Angeles signed a consent decree with the United States Department of Justice. The consent decree is essentially a settlement agreement that aims to promote police integrity and prevent conduct that deprives persons of rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States. Areas for remediation are identified and expeditious implementation of corrective measures is required. This project is the result of the mandate of one paragraph in the decree that requires an independent examination of police training in the areas of use of force, search and seizure, arrest procedures, community policing, and diversity awareness. RAND conducted this study over a nine-month period (July 1, 2002–March 31, 2003).

This study will be of interest to Los Angeles City residents and those in the Los Angeles City government. It also has national application for the field of police training.

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RAND PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

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SUMMARY

This book summarizes a nine-month study conducted by RAND for the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD, also hereafter referred to as the Department). The City of Los Angeles entered into a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice. The objective of this book is to provide analyses and recommendations to assist the LAPD in meeting the requirements outlined in paragraph 133 of this decree, ultimately enabling the LAPD to better serve the interests of the people of Los Angeles through improved training in five critical areas. These areas are use of force, search and seizure, arrest procedures, community policing, and diversity awareness.

Early in our investigation, it became apparent that many of the Department's training problems share a common foundation. Even though the problems encompass many varied topics and training challenges, they are systemic in nature and require a unified approach to change. We recommend that the LAPD clearly and consistently communicate expectations for appropriate LAPD officer behavior. Many officers conduct themselves in a manner that community and Department norms would deem appropriate. Others do not. We suggest that the first essential step to improving police training is to establish and communicate a common foundation for police performance—a redefined professionalism.

Police professionalism as described herein refers to a very specific and widely recognized construct. It is distinct from the notion of police professionalism that was prevalent in 1950s and 1960s policing. The police professionalism that we posit instead is Samuel Hunting-

ton's (1957) far wider ranging three-tiered approach based on the tenets of corporateness, responsibility, and expertise.

Not everyone accepts that police can attain professional status. However, many, the authors among them, find evidence to support a more positive perspective. Los Angeles Chief of Police William J. Bratton concurs, plainly stating that he "resents the concept that policing is not a profession."¹

The Huntington concept of professionalism provides the basis for communicating the meaning of service as a police officer in the City of Los Angeles. Other organizational and leadership philosophies fit within this concept to include ethics-based, integrity-centric community policing. Competency-based training is also related to these endeavors. Professionalism accepts that personnel cannot be trained for every event, but they must be prepared to handle any eventuality, to think on their feet, and to react with appropriate legal, moral, and ethical behavior. The authors realize that advancing a notion of a redefined professionalism may unsettle some who see the old professional era of policing as a failed model. Nevertheless, we trust that most will understand that what is presented herein is a much needed new start and potentially very effective means of molding a force that will serve the people of Los Angeles well.

The governing concept of this new professionalism will provide an important underpinning for correction of weaknesses within the LAPD training realm. One overarching and five primary recommendations form the basis for addressing these shortcomings. Each is complemented by numerous additional and more detailed supporting recommendations. Appendix M provides a consolidated listing of all such recommendations for ease of reference.

The following is our overarching recommendation:

The Los Angeles Police Department should adopt a concept of police professionalism that incorporates the tenets of corporateness, responsibility, and expertise as the mechanism for guiding the development and execution of its training, to include training

¹William Bratton, interview with Barbara R. Panitch and Russell W. Glenn, Los Angeles, Calif., February 13, 2003.

in the areas of use of force, search and seizure, arrest, community policing, and diversity awareness.

The five primary recommendations are

- Establish an LAPD lessons-learned program.
- Introduce and maintain consistently high quality throughout every aspect of LAPD training.
- Restructure the LAPD Training Group to allow the centralization of planning; instructor qualification, evaluation, and learning retention; and more efficient use of resources.
- Integrate elements of community-oriented policing (also called “community policing”) and diversity awareness training models throughout LAPD training.
- Develop training on use of force, search and seizure, and arrest procedures that meets current standards of excellence.

This study employed a combination of data collection methods including a review of LAPD and other departments’ written course documents, Department policies, and protocols; observation of instructional sessions; focus groups with police department personnel; interviews with police managers, elected officials, and community members; a case study survey of best practices in the field of policing, both domestic and international; and literature reviews in the areas of adult and police education, policing, use of force, search and seizure, arrest, community policing, and diversity.

Though the five primary areas of study were listed as separate entities in the consent decree, they are in practice not discrete areas of training any more than they are discriminate parts of service on the streets. The five subject areas constitute a core set of competencies that an ethical and effective police officer will regularly employ in concert. We address them accordingly within this book. The days of mandating a given number of hours on community policing, use of force, or other topic areas of concern are past. Such artificial “stove-piping,” where naturally intertwined topics are handled separately, runs counter to common sense, policing reality, and effective service to society as the client. The new police professionalism requires a greater training sophistication just as it demands greater sophistica-

tion of understanding from city government personnel overseeing law enforcement activities, police leaders, and officers on the street.

Conducting training founded on police professionalism is of value only if LAPD's senior leadership stands behind and champions the concept. Department leaders with whom the authors came in contact during the conduct of this study unhesitatingly demonstrated willingness in this regard. There is much reason to believe that a department already proficient in many ways can improve yet further with such leaders at the top and training that promotes the pursuit of professionalism throughout the force.

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ACRONYMS

ARCON	Arrest and control
CALL	Center for Army Lessons Learned
CAPRA	Client, acquiring and analyzing, partnerships, response, assessment
CED	Continuing education division
CEDP	Continuing Education Delivery Plan
CP	Community-oriented policing
C-PABs	Community-Police Advisory Boards
FTO	Field training officer
IDC	Instructor-development course
LACP	Los Angeles Community Policing
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
LD	Learning domain
LETAC	Law Enforcement Tactical Application Course
LMS	Learning management system
OIC	Officer in charge
PACCTs	Police and community collaborative teams
POST	Peace Officer Standards and Training
PTO	Police Training Officer

RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RFP	Request for proposal
ROI	Return on investment
SARA	Scanning, analysis, response, assessment
SLO	Senior lead officer
SOAR	Staff Officers' Annual Retreat
WPLP	West Point leadership program