

Quality Assurance Conference

A Message From The Poor Cousin

Areas for Discussion

- Panel was asked to discuss two issues:
 - Quality assurance (QA) strategies in their organization
 - Their vision of today's policing environment
- First, a “*mea culpa*” is required
 - Abbotsford Police Department (APD) does not have a structured and regular internal auditing or QA system
 - Relies on indirect and informal mechanisms
- New Westminster Police Service has an excellent model, which the APD will be looking at



Overview of Abbotsford & the APD

- 130,000+ people/ 360+ square kilometers
- 35,000+ 9-1-1 calls/ 50,000+ annual files
- 198 authorized police positions
- 72 authorized civilian positions
 - high level of civilianization
- 200+ volunteers
- 3,600 prisoners lodged per year
 - Jail guard function is contracted out

QA in the APD

- Specific audits of:
 - Property, Communications and Records Sections
- Provincial government audits of:
 - Compliance with Provincial Standards
 - Emergency Response Team
 - Jail
 - Professional Standards Section
- Continual internal audits of:
 - Informant fund
 - Violence Against Women in Relationships
 - Financial systems
 - Records systems (CPIC, PRIME)

QA in the APD

- Lack of a formal and structured QA system is a risk management weakness in the APD
- APD uses an informal approach, which includes:
 - Management Team decision making
 - Constantly asking questions & reviewing process
 - Critical thinking and analysis
 - Correcting problems quickly
 - Dealing with the underlying systemic problems



Risk Management in the APD

- Pursuit and collision reviews
- Use of force reporting
- Professional Standards early warning
- Training and certification
- Legal updates
- HR policies
 - Recruiting and performance management



Important QA Characteristics

- Focus on high risk areas
- Objective and balanced
 - Measure against known criteria or best practices
- Thorough but concise
- Valid
 - Review draft findings with the appropriate manager/supervisor to make sure they are accurate before producing the final report

Important QA Characteristics

- Constructive
 - Both in content and tone
- Open and transparent, but confidential
 - QA should not be secretive
 - General findings should be open, but specific findings may have to be confidential
- Follow-up on corrective actions taken
- QA must have sufficient, trained resources

Current Policing Environment

- Many reasons for QA and risk management processes:
- Cost of policing
 - Civic government is demanding value for \$
 - Must be able to show effectiveness & efficiency
- Demand for accountability
 - Public's declining trust in the police
 - Media pressure
- Civil liability
 - Increased litigation requires risk management
- Ethical Thing To Do
 - Obligation to provide quality service to the public

Conclusion

- ❑ APD has used indirect & informal QA processes, but the Department has outgrown this
- ❑ BC Government will be implementing a comprehensive audit system for municipal policing over the next two years
- ❑ Given the current environment of policing, a formal QA system is a necessity
- ❑ Many different models, choose the one that best fits your department