


# Law Enforcement Accreditation



What is This and Why are  
We Doing This?

# Goals of Accreditation

- ▶ Strengthen crime prevention.
  - ▶ Formalize essential management practices.
  - ▶ Establish fair and nondiscriminatory personnel practices.
  - ▶ Improve service delivery.
  - ▶ Increase interagency cooperation.
  - ▶ Increase trust and confidence in the agency.
- 

# Why Accreditation?

- ▶ A stronger defense against lawsuits and civilian complaints.
  - Accredited agencies are better able to successfully defend themselves against lawsuits, tort claims, and civilian complaints. Many accredited agencies report a decline in legal action against them.
  - The reporting mechanisms used to prove compliance are the exact documents needed in a typical tort action to defend the agency.

# Why Accreditation?

- ▶ Greater accountability within the agency.
  - Accreditation standards provide the Chief of Police and law enforcement leadership with a proven management system of written directives, effective training, clearly defined lines of authority, and routine processes that support decision making and resource allocation.

# Why Accreditation?

- ▶ Support from Government Officials.
  - Accreditation provides objective evidence of an agency's commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management, and service delivery. Thus, government officials are more confident in the agency's ability to operate efficiently and meet community needs and expectations.

# Why Accreditation?

- ▶ Increased Community Advocacy.
  - Accreditation embodies the concept of community-oriented policing. It creates a forum in which police and the public work together to prevent and control crime. This partnership helps the public understand the challenges confronting the law enforcement community and gives the law enforcement community a clear direction concerning community needs and expectations.

# Why Accreditation?

- ▶ Recognition for Excellence.
  - Accreditation is a most coveted award that symbolizes professionalism, excellence, and competence. It requires written directives and training to inform employees about policies and practices; facilities and equipment to ensure employees' safety; and processes to safeguard employees' rights. Both the community and agency can take pride in their department, knowing that it represents the very best in policing.


# What's in it for ME?

## ▶ Qualified Immunity!


- ▶ In short, qualified immunity is a legal concept where individual employees are protected from tort claims when they are following their employer's policies and procedures.




# What's in it for Me?

- ▶ Fair Supervisory Practices
  - ▶ The most common complaint in any organization is 'unfair supervisory practices', such as preferential treatment, pet employees, misconduct that goes unnoticed, or worse, misconduct that is ignored or condoned.
- 

# ...but we're the police!

- ▶ Not a very good defense in today's environment!
  - ▶ Police departments need clearly defined policies, procedures, and practices. These policies, procedures, and practices need to be defensible. Nationally recognized best practices are the first step in a good defense.
- 

# ...but we're already the best!

- ▶ NASA said that just before the Challenger Disaster.
  - ▶ Chrysler said that just before they asked for a major government bailout in the 1980's as their stock plummeted to record lows.
  - ▶ Lehman Brothers said that just prior to the 2008 recession.
- 


# Quo Vadis (Where are you going?)

*“If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.”*

(Lao Tzu )



# What Will Change?

- ▶ General orders.
  - ▶ Current comfortable practices.
  - ▶ Supervisory and management review.
  - ▶ More detailed reporting mechanisms.
  - ▶ More structure.
  - ▶ Accountability at all levels.
- 

# Change?

*“Change is not made without inconvenience.”*

(Samuel Johnson)

*“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”*

(John Fitzgerald Kennedy)



# Change?

*“Progress is a nice word; but change is its motivator and change has its enemies.”*

(Robert Kennedy)

*“Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.”*

(Martin Luther King)



# Change?

- ▶ *“If you don’t like change, you’re going to like irrelevance even less.”*

(General Eric Shinseki, US Army Chief of Staff)



# So When Does this End?


- ▶ *Accreditation is a journey, not a destination!*

This is not a finite project that ends once we achieve accreditation. We'll need to verify that we are complying with these standards and our own general orders every three years to maintain accreditation.


# ...but this stuff is hard!

- ▶ Excellence isn't easy, nor should it be. If so, everybody would be doing it. Change isn't easy either. Expect some natural resistance, but that's okay. Accreditation is not a process that you can put in place and then sit back and watch.

# Standards

- ▶ There are currently 109 nationally recognized standards in the program.
  - ▶ Nearly 45 general orders will be modified or developed to meet these standards.
  - ▶ Simply put, we need to prove that we follow our own general orders.
  - ▶ Revisions to the remaining general orders are still to come.
- 

# Accreditation

- ▶ In 2005, the prevailing question was, “Why are you seeking accreditation?”
  - ▶ In 2023, the prevailing question is, “Why aren’t you seeking accreditation?”
- 

# Accreditation

- ▶ The cadre of attorneys in New Jersey suing police departments and police officers are aware of these standards.
- ▶ It is common for these attorneys to challenge law enforcement practices and agencies that DO NOT comply with these standards.

# Questions?

- ▶ Please direct questions to your supervisor or the accreditation manager.