

**The Bill Blackwood  
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

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**Operational Achievement Standards  
Point Systems**

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**A Leadership White Paper  
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## **ABSTRACT**

For decades, police agencies have struggled with the need to have an accurate and valid performance evaluation process for patrol officers and first line supervisors. Administrators view performance evaluations in law enforcement as a crucial component of employee productivity performance measures. Many law enforcement agencies have implemented employee performance evaluations within their organizations. The majority of the personnel believe that the current evaluation process is inaccurate and/or biased. The command staff and their subordinates perceive performance and productivity levels quite differently. This has led to many challenges for law enforcement administrators, supervisors, and subordinates for many years.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the need for Texas law enforcement agencies, with a population under 20,000, to implement the Operational Achievement Standards-Point Systems for officers to validate true productivity performances for their yearly evaluation process. This type of evaluation process is not a form of micromanagement and does not endorse any type of quota system for participating agencies. However, the research will demonstrate that implementing the system would hold officers accountable for the day-to-day work and show how effective the officers could be for the city in which they work. The Operational Achievement Standards-Point Systems will clearly establish a concise set of guidelines that all members can utilize to measure performance. It will also eliminate the biases faced in the current evaluation process. Officers will take pride in their work due to the evaluation process being fair for all members in the agency. This will lead to increased morale throughout the organization.

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## INTRODUCTION

Administrators view performance evaluations in law enforcement as a crucial component of employee performance. Texas law enforcement agencies conduct yearly performance evaluations, where several agencies have no certain criteria of an evaluation performance process. Several agencies are evaluating their officers on yearly evaluations to see how officers are performing their duties within that year. If the officers are currently within standards, they may qualify to receive yearly raises, future promotions, and incentives.

Currently, the Lake Worth Police Department (LWPD) administers a ten-questionnaire evaluation for officers and a thirteen-questionnaire evaluation for first line supervisors. The evaluation questions focus on the officer's attendance, appearance, and job knowledge. However, the categories do not pertain to the officer's productivity levels that they perform on a daily or monthly basis (LWPD, 2012). The need for a modification for law enforcement agencies current performance evaluation process is to provide accurate and valid information on each officer's productivity level.

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel developed nine principles of policing for the London Metropolitan Police, since Britain did not have a professional police force or structure within the department. Those nine principles of policing focused on officer's professionalism and how they perform their duties on a day-to-day basis. Sir Peel's nine principles of policing are currently being used in law enforcement across the nation. However, Sir Peel's nine principles of policing did not cover how to maintain consistent productivity or how to evaluate individual officers or first line supervisors within the police force (Oakes, n.d.).

According to the City of Berkeley (BPD, n. d.) history, in 1909, August Vollmer was appointed the first Chief of Police of Berkeley. Like Sir Robert Peel, Chief Vollmer developed innovations in law enforcement, which are utilized today. Chief Vollmer required his officers to be honest, efficient, and hard working. During Chief Vollmer's tenure, he implemented several effective ideas such as; basic records systems, scientific investigations, first police motorcycle patrol, and intelligence test for recruiting police officers. Chief Vollmer created these new ways of policing not realizing that police departments would model his concepts. Chief Vollmer's greatest accomplishment is creating the "Code of Ethics," which is currently being practiced in police departments across the nation. Similar to Sir Peel, Chief Vollmer did not cover how to maintain consistent productivity or how to evaluate individual officers or first line supervisors within the police department.

Although, Sir Robert Peel and Chief Vollmer's innovations made police departments what they are today, there is still not a standard performance productivity evaluation to conduct on patrol officers and first line supervisors. Marx (2006) stated, that most evaluations given once or twice a year was based primarily on a "subjective rating" from a supervisor on "global categories" that lack direction or specificity. Furthermore, some of the rating factors that the supervisors are rating the officers on usually have no effect on the day-to-day police duties that officers perform. The patrol officers and first line supervisors should be evaluated on accountability and effectiveness on a validated Operational Achievement Standard – The Point System. The Operational Achievement Standards would provide informational guidelines in an effort to calculate, evaluate, and maintain consistent productivity from individual patrol

officers and first line supervisors within police agencies. Many Texas law enforcement agencies use different methods of evaluating their employees to fit the department needs.

The LWPD (2012) conducted a one-year raw data assimilated study of overall and individual departmental activity in the area of productivity for the reason of accountability and effectiveness. At the end of one year, the following categories were evaluated: reports, arrests, traffic violator contacts, open buildings, and found offense/public services (events/activities). These elements were determined by the assimilated data to be the core and key components associated with the duties of the police patrol officer and first line supervisors employed by the LWPD (LWPD, 2012).

During the study, the two highest and two lowest averages were deleted from the equation to arrive at a realistic and fair average to all officers concerned. The Patrol Division's average of reportable events found to be 115.21 per month. The number rounded down, in the interest of fairness, and the number 100 was established as the base line number for productivity in the area of reportable events for members of the Patrol Division (LWPD, 2012). Each patrol officer works a 12 hour shift and is scheduled to work 14 days out of a month. To meet the productivity requirement, patrol officers will need to average just over seven points per shift. However, if an officer is not at work for their assigned shift for reasons such as training, sick, vacation, court, compensatory time off or administrative leave, the officer will be given seven points for that day (LWPD, 2012).

In order to establish a uniformed evaluation process, Texas law enforcement agencies with populations under 20,000 should implement the Operational Achievement

Standards – Point Systems for officers to validate true productivity performances for the yearly evaluation process. The remainder of this paper will highlight the benefits that both officers and cities will obtain by applying this type of evaluation process.

## **POSITION**

Today, law enforcement officers and supervisors are facing difficult challenges while working the streets. Some of the officer's challenges are ranging from technology, lack of equipment, services calls, and proactive crime prevention methods. Officers are faced with the challenge to be proactive with the community in order to build a strong working relationship with the citizens they serve.

The LWPD (2012) developed a "Monthly Productivity" report for the reason of accountability. The monthly productivity report was developed for informational guidelines in an effort to calculate, evaluate, and maintain consistent productivity from individual patrol officers and first line supervisors. The monthly productivity report is also a tool for supervisors to study and analyze the statistical information of individual officers. Furthermore, the monthly productivity report allows supervisors to discover problems with individual officers within a reasonable period. It has been noted that police departments that function without productivity evaluations could find it difficult to properly measure officer's performance. Essentially, the time used to complete certain task could shift to other assignments that are more beneficial to both the city and its officers. Jones (1998) stated, "Operating without performance standards enables supervisors to bring sanity, fairness and consistency to supervisory tasks, enhances performance level, make promotions, awards and disciplinary actions fair" (p. 112).

Once the assimilated data was gathered within that year, the Lake Worth Police Department noted that since officers were held accountable, officers' productivity increased by 40%. LaFrance and Allen (2009), stated "explain that professional accountability is characterized by placement of organizational activities in the hands of the employee with the expertise or special skills to get the job done" (p. 93). When holding officers accountable for their work levels and acknowledging their work ethics, the officer's perform required tasked at a higher hevel. Kramer (1998) stated: "When employees feel their hard work counts for something, they strive to do their best" (p. 28).

Most importantly, productivity evaluations should not strictly be based solely on statistical data. However, the officer's evaluation would be based on effectiveness on how the officer is performing his/her duties. This would measure the officer's effectiveness on collected data of citations issued, arrest or calls for service. The Lake Worth Police Department Operational Achievement Standard –Point System has yet to be formally evaluated. However, in order to evaluate it, the effectiveness needs to be defined first. Since the LWPD (2012) obtained the results of the one-year raw data assimilated study, the study showed that the officers were effective in all categories. One way a police department can encourage their employees to meet or exceed expectations is to actively involve them in the performance appraisal process by seeking their input, ideas, and feedback about how the system should work (Gibson, 2004). In all professions, it has shown that employees tend to take more pride in their work when they are held accountable for their actions. Collecting statistical data would provide officers with current feedback relating to their performance, which has the possibility of significantly raising morale in the organization. Kokemuller and Media (n.



d.) stated, “when officers feel positive and enjoy the work environment, their production is normally higher” (p. 1). The overall study revealed that LWPD officers had proven that the Operational Achievement Standards had increased the accountability and effectiveness of this program. Texas law enforcement agencies with populations under 20,000 should implement the Operational Achievement Standards for officers to validate true productivity performances for the yearly evaluation process.

### **COUNTER POSITION**

Several police agencies would question the Operational Achievement Standards as not being a proper way to evaluate officer’s productivity levels. Several police agencies would argue that the Operational Achievement Standards is a form of micromanagement and having a quota. According to The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n. d.), micromanagement is defined as “to manage especially with excessive control or attention to details” (para. 1). Opponents would argue that micromanagement is a sign of control by monitoring every move the officer takes, which can cause stress for the officer. Furthermore, opponents would argue the fact that this type of management skills is one of the worst management styles to conduct while being in upper management. Romero (2012) stated, “Employees feel discouraged and lose interest in the job and has no sense of ownership in the process (p. 8).

Skeptics will continue to argue the fact that micromanagement is a not an effect style of management. However, when police department’s practice “positive micromanagement” in the interest of officers and not on what managers must do to feel that they are in charge, officers tend to look at that type of management differently (Davenport, 2010). Over the years, micromanagement been scrutinized as a bad style

of managing subordinates. Micromanagement has shown that this type of management style has been effective by allowing individuals to bring out the highest productivity out of people. Goldsmith (2012) stated, "Micromanagement can be one most effective ways to increase performance. In addition, there are some environments where micromanagement through systems and structures are necessary to ensure specific outcomes and safety" (p. 2). Furthermore, if micromanagement is being applied correctly, it has shown that this type of management style could achieve results that a police department needs to grow and survive. One great example of micromanagement is when an individual is driving on a roadway in a vehicle. During that time, the driver could control their atmosphere while inside the vehicle. However, the driver does not realize that there are being micromanaged because the driver has to drive a certain speed, pass only in predesignated passing zones, paying for toll roads, and be told where to drive in a construction zone (Goldsmith, 2012).

Opponents will also argue the fact that the Operational Achievement Standards is a form of an illegal quota. Skeptics would further argue that several police departments has been involved in several law suits regarding ticket and arrest quotas. Rubin and Saillant ( 2013) reported that the Los Angels Police Department (LAPD) paid \$10 million dollars to LAPD Officer's who accused superiors of imposing a "sercet" traffic quota system. A New York Police Department officer testified in a class action lawsuit against the New York Police Department (NYPD) regarding ticket and arrest quotas. According to Webster (2013), the NYPD Officer claimed that, "he was labeled a 'rat' for refusing to bring in the 20 citations and one arrest per month" that was required (p. 2).

In Orem Utah, the Orem Police Department was under scrutiny for having a productivity performance standard and was accused of having a quota system within their policy. After several complaints from officers regarding the productivity performance standard, it was discovered during research by The Deseret Morning News that there was no evidence that the Orem Police Department practiced the quota system (Hancock, 2007).

The reality is that when opponents argue the fact regarding quotas, they tend to focus on two categories: tickets and arrests. According to the Lake Worth Police Operational Achievement Standards, the program was designed not to focus on any singular element of the categories (LWPD, 2012). The program was created for officers to be productive in any of the five key elements, which are reports, arrests, traffic violator contacts, open buildings, and found offense/public services (events/activities). If an officer is on traffic violator contact, the officer is able to utilize their discretion on what action is needed for that particular traffic violator contact. The officers would be able to use their discretion when issuing a written citation or a written warning citation. Regardless of what type of action the officer takes, the officer would receive a point(s) for their action taken. The same standards of discretion are held for making a traffic violator arrest unless the situation deems necessary for the officer to make an arrest under state or federal law.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

In law enforcement, having an accurate and validated productivity evaluation system in place is very crucial for the department and for officers. Law enforcement agencies need to have a particular evaluation process in place to maintain the credibility

of each officer within the department for documentary purposes, yearly raises, future promotions, and incentives. Law enforcement agencies and businesses are no different from each other. Each entity has its own way of measuring employees' productivity. According to Ekici (2008), "only through an effective system of performance evaluations can employees be guided to develop and improve" (p. 1).

In addition, law enforcement agencies are responsible for establishing an unbiased way of measuring the employee. The Operational Achievement Standards allows agencies to measure this criteria and demonstrate fairness, accuracy, and being unbiased. Furthermore, this program allows employees to be accountable from day one. Texas law enforcement agencies with populations under 20,000 should implement the Operational Achievement Standards –Point System to measure these types of criteria. This program would provide a true validated productivity performance for officers and first-line supervisors for the purpose of a yearly evaluation process.

The Operational Achievement Standards is a viable tool to ensure officer's accountability and effectiveness on a monthly and yearly basis. The Operational Achievement Standard should be implemented because it allows the officers to be accountable for their own productivity standards. This program allows supervisors to identify issues with officers by recognizing the officer's monthly productivity report within a reasonable time. Once the supervisor discovers the issue, a training plan would be develop on behalf of the officer immediately. Furthermore, according to the LWPD study, all officers were effective in all categories (LWPD 2012).

Although there is some opposition to the Operational Achievement Standards based on the belief that such evaluation process is a form of micromanagement, this is

simply not the case. According to The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n. d.), micromanagement is defined as “to manage especially with excessive control or attention to details” (para. 1). Micromanagement has shown that this type of management style has been effective by allowing individuals to bring out the highest productivity out of people. Goldsmith (2012) stated, “Micromanagement can be one of the most effective ways to increase performance. In addition, there are some environments where micromanagement systems and structures are necessary to ensure specific outcomes and safety” (p. 2).

The opponent’s views concerning the Operational Achievement Standards is a form of an illegal quota, which been addressed and disproved. Their belief that the Operational Achievement Standards is a form of a quota system might ring true at face value. The Operational Achievement Standards was designed not to focus on any singular elements of the categories. In Orem, Utah, the Orem Police Department was under scrutiny for having a productivity performance standard and was accuse of having a quota system within their policy. It was discovered by The Deseret Morning News that no evidence existed that the Orem Police Department practiced the quota system (Hancock, 2007). The Operational Achievement Standards allows agencies to measure these criteria and demonstrate fairness, accuracy, and no bias. Research was conducted and discovered that out of 47 police agencies, 62% used graphic or numeric rating scales as a method in employee performance evaluations (Ekici, 2008). In closing, Texas law enforcement agencies with populations under 20,000 should implement the Operational Achievement Standards – Point Systems for officers to validate true productivity performances for the yearly evaluation process.

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