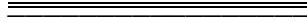
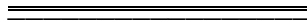


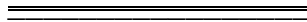
**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**



Shifting Police to the 12-Hour Shift



**A Leadership White Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**



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ABSTRACT

Law enforcement continuously faces the challenge of protecting the community while struggling to fill vacancies and tightly control spending. In an attempt to do more with less, agencies with 100 to 249 sworn personnel should evaluate patrol staffing currently working a traditional eight-hour shift. Implementing a 12-hour patrol shift allows an opportunity to use it as a recruiting tool, deploy more officers on the street, and control spending. Agencies with 100-249 sworn personnel on 8-hr shifts should consider changing to the 12-hour shift. Information was reviewed from law enforcement journals, medical publications, and law enforcement magazine articles in order to thoroughly review both the advantages and the disadvantages of changing from the 8-hour to the 12-hour shift. Issues considered include officer fatigue, scheduling conflicts, and the quality of an officer's work. The research indicated that if the transition is made with careful planning and agency transparency, the community, the department, and the officers can benefit from the 12-hour shift.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the law enforcement community is facing many challenges. Local law enforcement agencies face issues in every facet of the job ranging from technology and equipment, to budget and personnel. As more scientific police dramas air on television, the public will expect agencies across the nation to do more with less. Also, there are internal expectations that each agency faces. There are expectations from within to answer calls, prevent crime, and engage with the community in order to build relationships with the people the police serve.

In regards to hiring new recruits, police administrators are not in a position to make salary negotiations with eager applicants. Local police departments can only offer set salaries and city benefits. To continue, recruiting officers have a tougher time at college job fairs because they are generally offering smaller salaries and shift work to the potential applicant. Working evening shift or night shift is generally not what most people want due to the fact that the American society is adjusted to this being the time away from work. To complicate the matters further, if the local police department works an 8-hr shift, five days a week, there is another issue. A police department, if being honest with new recruits or applicants, must tell them that their days off from work will initially be days such as Tuesday and Wednesday, or Wednesday and Thursday. Again, this is while working either the midnight shift, which is typically 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. or evenings, commonly referred to the swing shift, from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Communities expect their police departments to hire the best applicants, but the average person will not purposely go to a lower paying job that offers non-traditional days off while working shift work. Even if a person finds himself or herself drawn to law

enforcement, a larger (250 or more sworn personnel) and higher paying agency will be considered over a medium-sized agency offering no other benefit. Hickman and Reaves (2006) showed that the second largest group of all officers (12.8%) are employed by agencies that range from 100 to 249 sworn personnel, with the largest group of officers (34.1%) belonging to agencies employing 1,000 or more officers. There is a solution that is already in place at smaller (49 or fewer officers) police departments; the use of twelve-hour shifts, in order to do more with less. While many 12-hour models currently exist, the example that will be used consists of working no more than three consecutive days and having a three-day weekend every other Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Table I demonstrates how this example schedule functions. The 12-hour patrol shift offers benefits to the department, the officer, and the community. Medium-sized police departments operating on 8-hour shifts should consider changing to the 12-hour shift.

Table I. Two Week Work Schedule on 12-hour Rotation

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wk #1	Work	Work	Off	Off	Work	Work	Work
Wk #2	Off	Off	Work	Work	Off	Off	Off

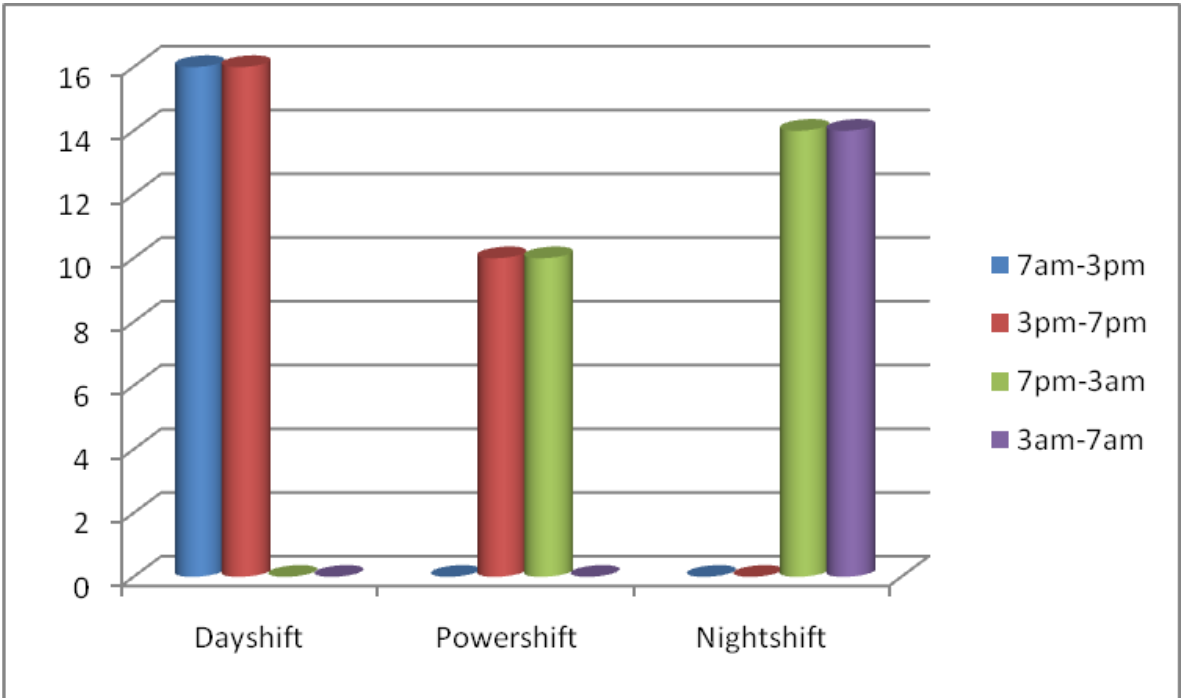
POSITION

The 100 to 249 sworn officer police department working a traditional eight-hour shift, forty hour work week, increases efficiency by moving to a 12-hour compressed shift. First of all, there is an abundance, of people that give a department more options. Walker and Eisenberg (1995) and Meztger (1995) noted that with an additional shift at peak times, there was an abundance of officers. More officers mean that the police

department can answer calls at a quicker rate and a department has more resources to use proactively as well as reactively.

To illustrate this point of staffing, the hypothetical patrol shift number of 80 patrol officers will be used for illustration purposes. Under the traditional three shift, 8-hour schedule, there would be 24 officers assigned to day shift (7 a.m.-3 p.m.), 32 officers assigned to evening shift (3 p.m.-11 p.m.), and 24 officers assigned to night shift (11 p.m.-7 a.m.). However, about one-third of those numbers would always be on assigned days off. The actual on-duty numbers would be 16 for day shift and night shift, and 21 for evening shift. Using the same 80 patrol officers for the 12-hr scheduling would have 16 officers on the day shift (7 a.m.-7 p.m.), 14 on the night shift (7 p.m.-7 a.m.), and 10 officers on an overlapping shift (3 p.m.-3 a.m.), commonly referred to as a power shift. The table below illustrates the scheduled personnel with the 12-hour shifts utilizing a power shift and 80 officers.

Table II. Eighty Patrol Officer Shift with 12-hour Assignments



The additional officers at peak times not only offer more personnel on the streets, but also an overlap that assists in preventing overtime. With the overlap of four hours, the power shift covers calls so that the day shift can go out of service, and the midnight shift then covers the power shift. The Lincoln, Nebraska Police Department experimented with moving from the 8-hour to the 12-hour schedule and reduced overtime by 51% using the overlapping shifts (Sundermeier, 2008).

Sundermeier (2008) also reported other benefits from the 12-hour shift adoption namely that the officers were pleased with the squad concept. In a squad concept, the same supervisors and officers work together on an assigned schedule. About 50% of the Lincoln officers also reported that they believed the supervision had increased due to the 12-hour shift and the squad based system. Under the 8-hour shift, a sergeant could see officers under his or her supervision as little as three out of five shifts a week due to different scheduled days off. The squad concept has the same officers and supervisors coming to work, as a team, each shift.

The 12-hour schedule offers agencies other financial benefits and aids in retention. Lincoln police department reported in their results that two of the 37 officers who participated in the 12-hour shift had been seeking other employment until the 12-hour shift was offered (Sundermeier, 2008). Due to the high investment departments have in each officer, any tool that will help retain employees must be considered. The Neenah, Wisconsin police department switched from an 8-hour schedule to a 12-hour schedule and was able to avoid hiring four new officer positions after the implementation (Byrne, 2000). Also, many of the case studies reported having a decrease in used sick time with the 12-hour shift (Metzger, 1995; Byrne, 2000). This

could be a result of the officers having days off with the extended shift or from officers avoiding the loss of twelve sick hours from calling in sick.

The shift from a traditional 8-hour shift to the 12-hour shift creates many benefits for the individual officers. Most 8-hour schedules have staggered days off for the officers on each shift. Therefore, some will have Saturday and Sunday, and other officers will have Tuesday and Wednesday. This is generally chosen by seniority, so a relatively new officer to the department will have less desirable days off until seniority is built up inside the organization. However, Table I illustrates that each patrol officer will get a three-day weekend every other week. A study by Violanti and Aron (1994) of 103 officers across the nation determined that shift work was the fifth biggest stressor of law enforcement officers. The only four events before it included killing someone, a fellow officer being killed, a physical attack, or a child being injured. Shift work cannot be removed from police work, but it can be improved by offering more days off each month. Advantages to the officers include the 14 days off each month instead of eight days off each month, having every other weekend off, and never working more than three days at the most (Walker & Eisenberg, 1995).

Offering the officers more days off each month with the 12-hour schedule creates additional benefits to the officers. Olson (2009) pointed out that time away from work in itself is a stress reducer, and more time away creates more social or family time. According to Metzger (1995), officers see this as a benefit when interacting with the community on a personal level. An officer is able to make more ball games, school plays, or just spend quality time with friends and family. Also, the 12-hour shift model illustrated in Table I equals 84 hours in two-week pay period. The Zeeland Police

Department in Michigan took care of this by working two 10-hour days during the pay period (Metzger, 1995). Another option would be flexing out four hours on one shift, such as the method used by the Lincoln, Nebraska police department (Sundermeier, 2008).

Many agencies and researchers have conducted surveys and polls with officers after switching from the 8-hour schedule to the 12-hour schedule. Pierce and Dunham (1992) studied a Midwestern police department that had about eighty patrol officers for a community of about 100,000. They discovered that the officers reported improved satisfaction with the job and leisure time. The officers also reported a decrease in fatigue and stress, and there was no decline in the department's effectiveness. The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office in Tampa, Florida conducted a survey one year after switching from an 8.4-hour shift to the 12-hour shift. One hundred and two deputies were surveyed, and 95% percent of the officers stated that they strongly agreed with the statement, "I like the 12-hour shift as opposed to the 8.4 hour shift" (Walker & Eisenberg, 1995, p. 18).

The community also gains by a medium size agency abandoning the 8-hour shift for the 12-hour shift. When the Neenah police department in Wisconsin went from the 8-hour to the 12-hour shift, they observed an increase in police presence and follow-up investigations. After changing to the 12-hour schedule, they were able to actually deploy Bicycle Units because they had more officers working than police cars available. Also, more investigations were completed in the field, which helped the Criminal Investigations Division (Byrne, 2000). One possible explanation for the better investigations is that patrol officers have more time to conduct in-depth investigations if

they are working four additional hours each shift. Sundermeier (2008) also stated that Lincoln police department saw the ability for midnight patrol officers to complete more follow-up investigations due to them coming in earlier in the evening under the 12-hour schedule. Under traditional 8-hour schedules, the midnight officers do not arrive for work until ten or eleven at night.

To continue, the Lincoln police department in Nebraska discovered that the overlapping shifts places more officers on the streets at peak times (Sundermeier 2008). This allows supervisors to strategically place officers wherever problems exist. Possibilities range from working traffic enforcement to flooding problem neighborhoods that have seen an increase in criminal activity. Metzger (1995) also reported that the Zeeland Police Department had better coverage of the city with the 12-hour shift and measured an increase in productivity in the community. This was measured by the agency reviewing officer arrests and self-initiated activity.

COUNTER POSITION

While many advantages exist for a medium-sized agency to consider changing patrol from an 8-hour schedule to a 12-hour schedule, opponents to the twelve-hour shift have some concerns. There is always legitimate concern about fatigue and officer performance when discussing increasing the length of the workday, or, more importantly, the work night. Also, there are general logistical issues that cause concern for a shift moving from an 8-hour to a 12-hour work day. Some of those concerns include personnel/payroll issues, such as accumulation and use of vacation and holiday time, and scheduling flex and court time with the officers. Finally, an equity concern

exists with the senior patrol officers who have earned being on the shift they want with the two days off they want under the 8-hour shifts.

Opponents of the 12-hour schedule fear that officers will be exhausted; which leads to mistakes and poor work performance. Much research exists for the profession of nursing and the effects of prolonged work hours. A Brazilian study reported that close to the end of a 12-hour night shift, the nurses perceived themselves as being tired (Borges & Fischer, 2003). In that same study, nurses taking one-hour naps on shift did not see an improvement in their fatigue. Another study with nurses also suggested fatigue issues during extended shift schedules. According to Johnson and Sharit (2001), it was found that an increase in accidental needle sticks occurred at the last two hours of the shift (as cited in Caruso, Hitchcock, Dick, Russo, & Schmit, 2004). Other concerns relating to fatigue extends past the time officers actually work their shift. Nielson (2007) offered that officers with an extended commute to work must also battle fatigue on the drive to and from the department (as cited in Olson, 2009).

Fatigue and work performance are critical factors when dealing with law enforcement. Mistakes made by them can bring harm to the community or the officers themselves. However, many departments that have changed to the 12-hour schedule have specifically monitored fatigue issues. Olson (2009) pointed out that police agencies have historically restricted off-duty employment in a way to prevent officers from working too much. Also, Lincoln police department conducted surveys for the 37 officers participating in the extended shift. Eighty-two percent stated that they were "very rested" when returning from scheduled days off, and 56% stated that they were "less tired on their days off" (Sundermeier, 2008). Metzger (1995) found that the

Zeeland agency had no increase in disciplinary or accidents with the 8-hour to 12-hour swap. Johnson and Sharit (2001) stated that “a 12-hour fast rotation was associated with better perceived general health and fewer gastrointestinal complaints when compared with a fast 8-hour 3-shift rotation” (as cited in Caruso et al., 2004, p. 17). In addition, Smith (1995) recorded that shift workers at nuclear power plants did not vary in performance between an 8-hour and 12-hour shift (as cited in Caruso et al., 2004).

A greater concern exists for the night shift when considering 12-hour scheduling. Officers and supervisors must watch calls as officers approach the end of shifts in order to prevent late calls (Sundermeier, 2008). Also, the Brazilian study uncovered another issue with fatigue that goes beyond the extended shift. Many of the night shift nurses had been up between 22 and 24 hours at the end of shifts, whereas the day shift nurses had only been up between 13 and 16 hours (Borges & Fischer, 2003). Once someone is sleep deprived, mistakes will increase no matter what type of shift is deployed. Thomas (2006) reported that flight nurses’ poor performance issues did not arise as long as they received seven hours of sleep prior to shift (as cited in Olson, 2009). Officers who work nights on any shift schedule will always fight issues of fatigue. The key is receiving the appropriate rest before shift. To combat the issue of fatigue, agencies going to the 12-hour schedule will need to place limitations on off-duty employment and train supervisors to observe call loads at the end of shifts to monitor that end of shift calls go to the next shift coming in for duty.

The move from 8-hours to 12-hours creates many department and officer administrative issues that could leave apathetic personnel believing the benefits of the longer shift do not outweigh the logistic issues that must be addressed. First, this is a

difficult concept for most nine-to-five workers to understand, and the idea must be sold to both human resources and the city council (Metzger, 1995). City management specifically told the Zeeland Police Department that it could not be done if there would be an increase in money spent (Metzger, 1995). Other concerns include the perception of officers that they are being cheated of benefits. Officers receive eight hours of holiday time; however, the officer must use four hours of banked holiday or vacation time to receive a full day off with the 12-hour shift. Other concerns include officers needed for court proceedings (Olson, 2009; Sundermeier 2008). An officer working a 12-hour night shift and then responding to court creates a potential hazard for the officer as well as a potentially poor testimony due to exhaustion.

Issues with human resources and city management are handled by making sure they understand what the department wants and what the perceived benefits are (Metzger, 1995). The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office in Tampa, Florida and the Neenah police department in Wisconsin utilized committees, meetings, questionnaires, and openness about the proposed change in order to address most logistic issues before committing to the change from the 8-hour to the 12-hour shift (Walker & Eisenberg, 1995; Byrne, 2000). Court is a difficult situation that affects the night shift personnel the most. The Lincoln police department coordinated with the court to schedule the officers where their rest would not be interrupted. Metzger (1995) also pointed out how the officer has a much greater chance of being off with the rotating shift associated with 12-hour shifts. Table I shows that an officer never works more than two consecutive days during the workweek.

Another issue when shifting to the 12-hour schedule includes equity concerns for senior officers. Generally, under traditional 8-hour shift schedules, the senior officer chooses which of the three shifts he or she will work and which days off he or she will take. The most senior officer will take the day shift (7 a.m. – 3 p.m.) and days off of Saturday and Sunday. These officers, through longevity, have earned having society's traditional days off, and the implementation of a 12-hour shift will cause the officers to work every other weekend and work for an additional 4 hours each assigned workday. This could lead to morale issues amongst the most senior patrol personnel inside a department considering the shift transition.

When transitioning to the 12-hour shifts, the officers have the opportunity to still choose between day shift and night shift. Vila and Kenney (2002) found that older officers allowed to choose their shift were less fatigued. Also, Metzger (1995) points out that Zeeland police department had complaints from senior personnel, but their final opinion rested with there being much more positive benefits for the agency to transition to the 12-hour schedule. In addition, while Lincoln police department used 37 volunteers for the 12-hour shift, 100% wanted to continue after implementing it (Sundermeier, 2008). The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office surveyed 102 deputies who had worked both shifts one year after the 12-hour shift implementation. The results of the survey were that 95% preferred the 12-hour schedule, 88% reported stronger morale, and 79% perceived the job to be less stressful (Walker & Eisenberg, 1995). The senior deputies at Hillsborough sheriff's office took part in the one-year survey because the senior patrol personnel would have worked both shifts. The 95%

preference of the 12-hour schedule shows that for this agency, the shift to the 12-hour schedule was a positive change for 97 deputies out of 102.

RECOMMENDATION

The law enforcement profession will continue to face many challenges as it continues through the 21st century. Recruiting and retaining new officers will continue to be a challenge for law enforcement. However, agencies with 100 to 249 personnel that operate with three, 8-hour shifts can increase satisfaction with the current employees and add a recruiting tool when looking for new officers. The agencies will also receive the benefits of more officers at peak times and less sick and overtime usage. The community will also reap the benefits of the transfer from 8-hour to 12-hour schedules. The agencies reviewed had more officers available at peak times to work proactively in the community. Also, better follow up investigations occur when officers on all shifts have more time and more availability to victims and witnesses during normal hours. Fatigue is a concern and will continue to be an issue for law enforcement no matter what shift schedule is worked. However, it can be controlled through restrictions in off-duty employment and working with other entities, such as the courts, to ensure the officers are getting uninterrupted rest. Police departments currently working 8-hour schedules should transfer to a 12-hour schedule in order to improve benefits for the community, agency, and the officer.

Moving from an idea to a plan of action must be a careful one. Agencies such as Hillsborough sheriff's office, Zeeland police department, Neenah police department, and Lincoln police department were successful because of planning and being transparent to the city management and the officers of what the goal and the plan was in the

transfer from an 8-hour to a 12-hour shift. While there may be no perfect solution when evaluating shift work schedules, the 12-hour schedule providing three day weekends every other week and officers working only 14 days a month allows for the most benefits to officers currently trapped in an 8-hour per shift work week.

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