

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

MANPOWER PLANNING ISSUES FOR  
SMALL TOWN & RURAL POLICE  
IN TEXAS

A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED  
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## INTRODUCTION

A scholarly study of small town and rural police should begin with a definition of terms. Since no typology of police departments by size exists, definitions are of special importance for research in this area. In particular a definition of small town and rural police must be developed. Almost all departments can be classified into one of three categories: first, by the number of police officers employed; second, by the population served in the jurisdiction; and third, by the degree of social interaction present in the organization.

The purpose of this research stems from the need to document and analyze the manpower allocation and resources resulting from the rapidly emerging small town and rural crime problem and the question of how best to improve the limited information available to address this issue from a crime prevention or deterrent approach. Understanding this area is made still more important because the majority of all police department in the United States are staffed by 25 or fewer sworn officers. Further rising crime rates and increasing rural population mean that the chemistry of the rural or small town community is undergoing change. The change involved will mean that the rural or small town police agency must itself change.

Much of the importance of change favors on the Chief of a small agency. For example, the small agency Chief has to balance the resources of his or her department--manpower

and finances--with the concerns and demands of the community in which they work and typically reside. Often their responses must be innovative and creative to stretch available resources and address community issues. Small town Chiefs employ personalized methods of policing and are closer to the community and political powers. This study seeks to gather information that will help the small agency Chief meet the challenges and changes that the future holds.

#### **PREVIOUS STUDIES**

Library research, journals and or magazine articles had very little if any data on this topic. Prior to the formulation of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration no research had been conducted and since that time, very little has been performed on the small police departments of any kind.

Uniformed patrol continues to be the most viable of police operations in the United states. Approximately 60 to 75 percent of all uniformed police personnel in this country are assigned to patrol. Most primary contact with the public is initiated by uniformed patrol, which, in turn, becomes the basis for citizens perceptions of law enforcement in the community. The rising costs of police budgets, especially for fuel, maintenance, purchases, and equipment for patrol vehicles, have led many administrators to reappraise current patrol practice in terms of obtaining greater efficiency and effectiveness (Thibault, Lynch, McBride 1990, P.197).

within the last seven years, law enforcement agencies planned their manpower allocations on the basis of the Federal Bureau of Investigations prescribed standard of one (1) officer per every 5,000 citizens. It is apparent that law enforcement administrators base their manpower planning on several factors such as the number of calls of service, response time, number of reported offenses, patrol officer/ initiated activity, sick leave, vacation and required training time. For example, one officer works 2080 hours per year. He or she may have eighty hours of vacation time, forty hours of required in-service training, ninetyfour hours of sick leave per year, which totals 214 hours of known time off per officer. Therefore, the Chief or Administrator must determine exactly how many hours to cover before deployment or assignments of personnel for jurisdiction coverage.

There is a major difference between the type of urban police department routinely reported on and the one in the small community. For example, an agency in a small community might have only twelve (12) patrol officers available to cover three shifts each day, seven days a week. It often happens that only one or two officers are on duty during a given shift. This is quite a contrast to the situation depicted by police researchers in agencies that have at least twenty (20) and sometimes more than 100 officers working per shift. The difference in manpower strength has dramatic effects on such important patrol variables as res

ponse time and the availability of backup, effects which have a marked influence on the behavior of the police in a small community (Gaffney and Gaffney, 1981, P.4).

Most Chiefs are familiar with the "Kansas City Study" conducted by the Kansas City Police Department beginning in the early 70's. The purpose was to determine if additional officers assigned to a high crime district resulted in prevention or deterrent of crimes committed. After a year, no substantial differences among the areas were observed in criminal activity, amount of reported crime, rate of victimization, level of citizen fear, or degree of citizen satisfaction with the police (Thibault, Lynch, McBride 1990, p.199). Large police agencies such as Kansas City or other urban agencies do not readily compare with small or rural law enforcement agencies, and, as a result, the results of the Kansas City study may or may not be applicable to small agencies.

As an individual observer who has been in the law enforcement profession for the past nineteen years with the majority of that time spent in the rural or small communities, it seems obvious that visibility and additional officers can help. The quantity of criminal activity, the level of citizen fear, and the degree of citizen satisfaction with the police.

Santa Fe, Texas a small community of approximately 10,500 people, provides an excellent illustration of small police agency experience with "Community Policing" concepts.

Santa Fe has deployed additional officers in problem areas of the town and has noticed positive feedback from Santa Fe citizens and a reduction in reported criminal activity. It is worth noting in this regard that the Kansas City Police Department study of manpower planning in high crime areas and citizens response was conducted approximately twenty years ago. Times have changed along with reported levels of criminal activity and citizens demand for additional police officers. These changes have been observed not only by large departments, such as Houston, but by smaller agencies such as Santa Fe as well.

#### **CRIME STATISTICS**

It is important to review crime statistics from small agencies to obtain a sense of how small agencies have addressed their changing circumstances. In what follows, crime statistics are used as an indication of how crime and manpower planning are linked in small town and suburbs.

During the sixties and seventies, urban and rural America experienced sizeable increases in crime. Recent editions of several magazines and trade journals have highlighted the growth and nature of rural crime. Authorities in Arkansas, Kansas, Texas and California reported dramatic increases in the theft of farm machinery, some valued at as much as \$100,000.00. (Carter, Phillips, Donnermeyer, Wurschmidt 1982 P.11)

In Santa Fe, Texas, for example a percentage of crimes are committed by individuals from larger cities that travel

to rural and or suburban communities and commit burglaries, thefts, and robberies and then return to the larger communities and sell their goods. This type of criminal activity has increased dramatically over the past five (5) years and continues to increase. (City of Santa Fe Crime Statistics 1991)

The rise in rural crime is related to several factors, including the increase in crime committed by suburban and rural juveniles, easier access through interstate highways, improvements in transportation, and growth of the rural population largely because of the relocation of industry. (Carter, Phillips, Donnermeyer, Wurschmidt 1982 p.12)

Violent crimes have taken a dramatic climb in most communities, large and small. For example, according to the Uniform Crime Report issued by the U.S.Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, a comparison of two communities, large and small for the years 1990 and 1991 indicate a dramatic increase in aggravated assaults reported:

**Figure 1.**

City	1990	1991	% Increase
Port Lavaca	39	61	(56%)
Houston	7813	10,947	(40%)

(Department of Justice, F.B.I. 1990 & 1991)

A relationship between climate and crime has been established through a number of studies. One recent study in Houston and Chicago found a positive link between hot



weather and violent crimes. (Flowers, 1989 p.55)

Texas has observed an increase in violent crimes for the past five (5) years, more so of a dramatic increase within the past three (3). This increase is related to the juvenile involvement in gang activity related, for the most part, to drug involvement. The drug problem within our society has reached unprecedented numbers, especially in Texas, and the gang problem and its violence is a direct result of the drug problem. The public is at a point or state of paranoia and outrage over these crimes as well as over the early release of convicted criminals on the streets committing a high percentage of these crimes. Throughout Texas, communities are calling for increased police forces, with more officers working the streets to respond to crimes, to prevent crimes and to be visible, which ensures a sense of security for the citizens.

Within Galveston and Harris Counties, governing bodies (City Council members) are allocating monies within their budgets for the hiring of additional officers, along with utilizing other resources. For example, within the City of Houston, Texas, the Metro Police are now patrolling the highways within the city, so Houston Police officers can be reassigned to other areas of the patrol division, in addition to hiring officers. Agencies within Galveston County, such as the City of Dickinson, Texas City, Galveston, and Santa Fe are all hiring additional officers for patrol. The Galveston County Narcotics Task Force is now

allotting personnel to focus on the juvenile gang problem.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Very little research has been done on manpower allocation for small town and rural police in Texas. Developing data in this area will provide the small agency Chief with a practical reference work containing current information for management issues for manpower allocations within the small police agency.

Manpower planning research for smaller agencies will allow Chiefs of Police in smaller towns as they set out to improve manpower planning for their agencies, especially planning for the patrol division to ensure proper patrol coverage. This data may also help justify additional manpower and strategic planning for the future law enforcement of the 90's in smaller police agencies.

Library's holdings provide very little data on this topic. Local library research also provided no information. Chiefs in the Santa Fe area, who are presently administrators or have in recent past managed small police agencies, suggest that much of the expertise in planning their manpower allocation could be made accessible through questionnaires.

As a result, it was decided to seek information through a questionnaire relating to the number questions of sworn officers within the department, shift schedules, geographical locations, population at present, typology of the community, such as rural or suburban, crime problems and

their volume, district assignments if any, and additional open-ended data that might be beneficial to this research.

#### **RESEARCH DATA**

The research focused on law enforcement agencies in Texas with a population ranging from 8,000 to 13,000 citizens. The communities were selected from the 1990-91 Texas Municipal League Directory of Texas City Officials.

The questionnaire was sent to forty-nine (49) different agencies throughout Texas, receiving twenty-eight (28), two (2) of which did not fall within the population guidelines that were selected. Therefore, this research is based on twenty-six (26) law enforcement agencies in Texas.

The main items of interest in the questionnaire were the number of officers each department employed, the number of reserve officers, typology of shifts (hourly shifts), geographical area, the population within the city limits, the five (5) most numerous crimes for the year 1991, the number of officers per shift, district assignments and the number of officers per district, and the criteria for deployment for patrol.

#### **METHOD**

From the questionnaires returned, there were twelve (12) law enforcement agencies in Texas between the population range of 8,000 to 10,000. There were two (2) agencies, Addison Police Department and Highland Park Police Department, that employed fifty-seven (57) and fifty (50) officers respectively. These two different agencies were in

affluent suburbs of Dallas, Texas. Therefore, the average number of officers employed with the twelve agencies is considerably high, (Addison is highly commercial with a large amount of retail buildings, stores and hotels and an approximate daily daytime population of 50,000 commuters. Highland Park is highly residential and very affluent which will make its data only questionably representative of the areas designated as "rural" or small agency. The average number of officers employed by law enforcement agencies in that category is twenty (20) actually 19.58).

The remaining fourteen agencies fall into the category range between 10,000 to 12,000 population. The number of officers employed in this category was found to be nineteen (19) (actually 18.71). These figures do not include any reserve officers with any agency. The figures do include all personnel, including investigators and administrative staff, such as lieutenants, captains and assistant chiefs. It was also noted that almost half of the communities were divided between being rural and suburban communities respectively (twelve (12) and fourteen (14)).

From the research conducted, it was obvious that agencies plan their manpower allocations on calls for service and reported offenses or case load and not necessarily do they have the same number of officers on each shift.

The data accumulated using the twenty-six agencies, as an average indicates there are approximately five (5) of-

ficers per shift throughout those agencies, which include a supervisor. However, realistically using those figures, there were some agencies that had seven (7) officers per shift and as low as one (1) per shift. Again, this does not include the utilization of reserve officers.

### **RESULTS**

I found through the research that smaller agencies tend to rely on reserve officers (Officers commissioned through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Education who have successfully completed the Basic Academy, licensed with a police agency as a non-paid officer working a minimum of sixteen hours per month), however, these reserve officers are more often utilized for special events, which will be more fully discussed later. After speaking with other local chiefs in my geographic area, reserve officers are considered more and, in some agencies, utilized as full-time, non-paid officers.

It is hoped that the time and effort put into this research will benefit a small town police administrator with data supplied as options, suggestions. What planning for manpower allocation for small town X may not be beneficial for small town Y, even though they might be close together.

One definite advantage of reserve officers to police departments in Texas is the fact that by organizing a strong and effective reserve force and providing maximum training along with full background and character investigations of

reserves, they have created a body of men and women from whom many applicants for the regular police service arise. (Bristow, 1981, P. 43)

Sixteen (16) of the agencies surveyed utilize reserve officers. It was found that the reserve officers are required to work a minimum of sixteen (16) hours per month. The agencies polled utilize reserve officers for special assignments, such as parades, traffic control on special events, security for football games, and most were required to work or ride with a regular officer at all times. Some are not authorized to issue citations, complete reports or even make arrests alone. Some of the agencies' reserve force had a president, vice-president, secretary and some had only a coordinator, who was a reserve officer and all duties or assignments were scheduled through that person (such is the case at Santa Fe Police Department).

Recently, the Rural Crime Prevention Center at Ohio State University presented the following data on rural crime:

Ten to 15 percent of rural households nationwide will be vandalized in a given year.

Seven to 10 percent of all rural households will be victims of yard theft.

Three to 5 percent of all rural households will experience break-ins.

Farms have a 25 percent greater chance of being broken into than non-farm homes.

Ten percent of all farmers will be victimized by fraud.

Eighty percent of all rural crimes are perpetrated by community residents.

Boys, ages 17 to 19, make up the largest group of persons arrested for rural crimes.  
(Ronald Barri Flowers, 1988 P. 52)

Based on the Uniform Crime Report issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, violent crimes had an increase for the past three (3) years and property crimes had a increase with the exception of 1990. In 1989, there were 3,175 violent crimes reported to the F.B.I and 34,644 property crimes (Department of Justice 1989, p.66). For the year 1990, there were 3,711 violent crimes reported and 32,415 property crimes reported (Department of Justice, 1990, p.68). And in 1991 there were 4,161 violent crimes reported and 35,125 property crimes reported (Department of Justice, 1991, p.76)

In the past, small town or rural police departments did not need or desire to increase their departments size because they were relatively crime-free communities. That is no longer the case.

From the research conducted of the survey sheet, it is apparent that the highest majority of offenses committed are burglary, theft, assault, auto theft and criminal mischief. There was a small percentage of robberies and forgery offenses reported.

Listed below is a chart of the most common crimes committed in the communities responding to the survey. This chart will list five (5) communities from each population group as indicated. This chart is listed

accordingly by the population beginning with the agencies of 8,000 to 10,000 population and then from 10,001 to 13,000 in population. This data is of the 1991 crime statistics:

**Figure 2.**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Burgl.</b>	<b>Theft</b>	<b>Aslt.</b>	<b>Auto Theft</b>	<b>Criminal Mischief</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Addison</b>	598	645	218	95	208	<b>1764</b>
<b>%'s</b>	34%	37%	12%	5%	12%	
<b>Lockhart</b>	140	402	215	15	n/a	<b>772</b>
<b>%'s</b>	18%	52%	28%	2%	0%	
<b>Highland Pk</b>	107	389	n/a	47	213	<b>756</b>
<b>%'s</b>	14%	51%	0%	6%	28%	
<b>Converse</b>	158	197	158	n/a	183	<b>696</b>
<b>%'s</b>	23%	28%	23%	0%	26%	
<b>Liberty</b>	180	266	146	n/a	117	<b>709</b>
<b>%'s</b>	25%	38%	21%	0%	17%	
<b>Henderson</b>	438	600	380	111	278	<b>1807</b>
<b>%'s</b>	24%	33%	21%	6%	15%	
<b>Brenham</b>	183	520	265	n/a	240	<b>1208</b>
<b>%'s</b>	15%	43%	22%	0%	20%	
<b>Taylor</b>	260	473	115	37	n/a	<b>885</b>
<b>%'s</b>	29%	53%	13%	4%	0%	
<b>Rockwall</b>	82	366	58	50	n/a	<b>556</b>
<b>%'s</b>	15%	66%	10%	9%	0%	
<b>Dickinson</b>	179	573	254	81	n/a	<b>1087</b>
<b>%'s</b>	16%	53%	23%	7%	0%	



## CONCLUSION

Manpower allocation in a police department is of vital concern, not only to the police executive but also to the city manager, city council and the taxpayers, since it directly affects crime, safety, tax rates and services to the people of the community. The quality of law enforcement depends greatly upon the distribution of police personnel, especially patrol officers. Proper staffing and equipping of the patrol force are, therefore, of prime importance.

Based on the workload, manpower planning can be determined for the patrol division for each shift. The number of officers could vary from shift to shift as workloads seldom occur in equal proportions. For instance, daytime burglaries could be moderate to where three (3) officers are assigned to the day watch. Calls for service might increase on the evening watch, therefore four (4) to five (5) officers might be assigned and the midnight watch could have three (3) to five (5). One would also take into account the time of the year when crime is at the lowest or highest and even the days of the week when those peaks are low or high.

Another variable for planning of manpower is to determine what type of shift schedule one department might utilize based on the number of officers a department might employ, the workload and types of offenses a community normally encounters.

Some agencies do not have the luxury of having three to five officers on any given shift. Or the geographical area might be so remote (deep west & east Texas small communities) that officers might be on call twenty-four hours a day and receive calls at their residence and respond to the scene from their home, not assigned to a set shift to patrol the streets or check by at the station to do reports.

It was noted from the 26 surveys returned that different shift schedules were utilized. Eighteen (18) agencies utilized the eight hour shift schedule, five (5) utilized a ten hour shift schedule, two (2) utilized the twelve hour shift schedule and one (1) was crossed-trained and utilized police/fire and worked a twenty-four hour shift with forty-eight hours off (Highland Park Police & Fire Department).

There are some barriers that police executives encounter, such as finances. Some agencies do not even have a line item in their budget for overtime pay and extra help and with small communities that have no industry and the tax roll is based on the homeowner, additional monies are not available. Therefore, manpower planning is sometimes limited to whether reserve officers are utilized.

The police executive must consistently study scheduling and deployment of patrol manpower with the temporal and geographic demands for service that ensures an efficient match for call for services, including both criminal

and non-criminal. A study must prescribe the number of field supervisors needed to manage field patrol officers effectively.

In defining the patrol staffing requirements of any law enforcement agency, the following factors should be considered, the mix of which is unique to each locality and agency:

- Number of calls for service
- Policing philosophy
- Policing priorities
- Police policies and practices
- Populations size and density
- Composition of population, particularly age structure
- Stability and transiency of population
- Cultural conditions
- Climate, especially "seasonality"
- Policies of Prosecutorial, Judicial, Correctional, and Probation agencies
- Citizen attitudes
- Crime reporting practices of citizenry
- Municipal resources
- Trends in the forgoing areas

Small police agencies must make maximum use of their personnel. Chiefs must consider officer safety, response time and the welfare of the community when determining manpower levels.

#### **SUMMARY OF CONCLUSION**

Once the Chief acknowledges what the citizens and his or her superiors (city manager or mayor) need to feel secure in the community, manpower planning would be the next process. The Chief examines his manpower availability, determines in what manner they are deployed based on all data available and assigns them properly. The deployment might change during the year based on

increase and decrease of crime, calls for service and other data.

During that time, the Chief can accumulate data if needed to justify an increase in manpower, not only for the patrol division, but also for investigations. If monies are limited, consider available grants and or the utilization of reserve officers.

The Chief must at all times review the shift schedules based on data to properly deploy his personnel when needed. Maximum use of all personnel must be utilized to effectively meet the goals of the department and of the city.

Each Chief must consider all the data available to him or her and make a decision. Research and experiments make law enforcement agencies work more efficiently.

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