

SEPTEMBER ROLL CALL TRAINING

High-Risk Critical Task/Hiring Retention Early Identification System

The policy of this agency is to hire only those people qualified for employment as law enforcement officers. This agency seeks the highest level of professionalism and integrity in its employees and recognizes that this commitment begins with the selection of candidates for this agency. Officers of this agency have been subjected to a rigorous selection process and only those qualified candidates were chosen. It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to provide officers with continuous training on recurring, high risk, critical tasks that officers will face. It is the mission of this agency to protect and serve the community by retaining highly qualified officers to respond to the ever-growing needs of the community and to deliver professional and courteous service while enforcing the laws and ordinances within the jurisdiction.

A comprehensive Personnel Early Intervention System is an essential component of good discipline in a well-managed law enforcement agency. The Early Intervention System is a supervisory tool and not a disciplinary process. The early identification of employees exhibiting symptoms of stress or other behavior that could pose a liability to the community, the agency, or the officer must be detected as soon as possible. When appropriate, an intervention consisting of a menu of remedial actions can increase agency accountability and offer employees a better opportunity to meet the agency's values and mission statement.

The system should identify patterns of behavior that might be symptomatic that an individual employee requires an intervention. Performance indicators that can help identify officers with problematic behavior include citizen complaints; firearm-discharge and use-of-force reports; civil litigation; resisting-arrest incidents; high-speed pursuits; and vehicle damage.¹

Scenario: An applicant with prior law enforcement experience at another agency applies for employment at your law enforcement agency. A subsequent background investigation reveals that the applicant had six at-fault vehicle crashes while on duty in the last three years. Additionally, a driver's history check showed that the applicant had numerous at-fault vehicle crashes, as well as several speeding citations, before becoming a police officer. Other than traffic crashes, the applicant has no other issues discovered in the background investigation.

Question: Should the applicant's driver's history be a cause for concern regarding whether he or she should be hired by the agency?

Answer: Yes. The hiring and retention of officers who are not qualified may lead to liability where the officer causes injury (physical or constitutional) in an area that can be connected to his or her lack of qualification. In this case, the applicant gives cause for concern regarding his or her qualification to drive with due regard for the safety of others. If the applicant is hired and has an at-fault vehicle crash, the injured party could allege that the agency was negligent in hiring the officer based on his pattern of at-fault vehicle crashes.

Name _____ Date _____

¹ Samuel Walker, Geoffrey P. Alpert, and Dennis J. Kenney, *Early Warning Systems: Responding to the Problem Police Officer*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2001.