

TELEMASP BULLETIN

TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

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Reserve Officer Programs

Introduction

In an era of lessened governmental revenues, increased demands for service and unfunded mandates, police administrators face the dilemma of providing increased services with shrinking fiscal resources. Many community outreach programs, such as DARE, Crimestoppers and Neighborhood Watch are expensive in terms of monetary and human resources. Traditional police functions such as patrol and traffic may suffer. On the other hand, the elimination of popular community programs could damage a police department's relationship with its public. Even a well-funded police department could be strained beyond capacity by a natural or man-made disaster. As a governmental agency, police departments do not have the means to dramatically increase revenues. Therefore, police administrators need to develop ways of increasing (or maintaining) services with a minimum of cost. One method is the use of volunteers to perform non-essential tasks (see the August 1996 *TELEMASP Bulletin*). This frees regular personnel for law enforcement duties. Another method is the use of reserve police officers. Reserve police officers may or may not be compensated. The duties performed by the reserve police officer are various in nature. Depending on the locality, reserve police officers' duties range from full police powers to clerical functions. For the purposes of this bulletin, the emphasis will be on reserve police officers who perform law enforcement functions normally the responsibility of sworn officers.

Definitions

The literature concerning civilian volunteers in police agencies include various titles for the persons involved. For simplicity, this bulletin will utilize the terms "reserves" and

"reserve police officer" to include auxiliary and reserve personnel, both paid and volunteers.

Issues

Some of the advantages of having a reserve police force are cost savings, increased human resources and the development of a qualified, trained applicant pool (Aragon 1993). Sundeen and Siegel (1986) note that a reserve police force offers several benefits to the community. The first benefit is cost savings. Reserve police officers supplement the regular police force. They provide extra human resources in a crisis and provide and/or maintain services within a limited budget. Another benefit is better services. Reserves can perform duties that free a sworn officer for other law enforcement tasks, such as crime prevention. A third benefit of a reserve police force is citizen participation. With citizens and police working together, police-community relations can improve. A reserve police force is also a source of recruits. The reserve police force can become a part of the screening process as well as an applicant pool.

Among the perceived impacts of reserve police officers, Sundeen and Siegel (1986) list the following:

- (1) increased effectiveness of the police department;
- (2) decreased crime rates in the city;
- (3) increased morale of officers due to greater citizen support;
- (4) decreased use of overtime salaries;
- (5) greater community input into the police department;
- (6) increased productivity of the police department;
- (7) improved services provided by the police department.

Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas

Sundeen and Siegel (1986) also note that "none of the departments could provide any measurable evidence to support these perceptions, except in terms of the total number of hours worked by volunteers."

Weinblatt (March-April 1991) found that reserve police officers have been utilized by several agencies in law enforcement activities much different than traditional patrol and traffic control. Reserve officers in Anchorage, Alaska, may discharge their duties in vice and prostitution details, in addition to patrol. Harris County, Texas, reserve deputies are sometimes used in undercover narcotics activities because "[t]he dealers know all the regular narcs; they even have pictures of them. The reserves can come in as an unknown." In Los Angeles County, the reserves have film producers, psychologists and lawyers among the ranks. These outside talents have been used to produce anti-drug videos. The Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary Trooper program has been expanded to cover narcotics. Weinblatt emphasizes that "The reserve program must reflect comparable departmental standards of recruitment, selection, training and deployment."

While most of the literature addresses reserve police officers of municipalities, counties or states, universities also have reserve police officers. Weinblatt (1995) examined the reserve police officer programs of several state universities. The New Mexico State University Police Department reserve program not only supplements the University Police Department but also the Las Cruces, Sunland Park and Mesilla police departments as well as the Dona Ana County Sheriff's Department. All of the reserves must complete either the basic law enforcement course of the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy or the New Mexico Mounted Patrol Academy. Armed reserves are paid \$15 per hour to work special events such as concerts. Most of the reserve duties are in relation to special events, although reserves are allowed to patrol with the regular officers. Reserves are differentiated from regular officers by their uniform, badge and patch. At the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, the reserve police officers are required to be certified law enforcement officers. They work mostly special events for \$16 per hour. The University of South Carolina at Columbia Police Department Reserve Police Officer program incorporates a different method of recruitment for their reserves. The reserves are composed of criminal justice majors with at least a 2.0 grade point average who have completed a state-certified 80-hour training course. Reserve police officers are certified as state constables and have arrest powers. They are paid \$5.25 per hour and can accumulate college credit for their work. Reserve police officers have been used in lieu of female students posing as prostitutes in dorms to break up drug operations. Reserve police officers are not uniformed as such; they are issued golf shirts, blazers and khaki trousers.

Evans (1991) found that in Nacogdoches County, Texas, the sheriff's department initiated a reserve deputy force to supplement the department after forced layoffs. Applicants for the reserve deputy position had to meet the same standards that are used by all Texas law enforcement agencies. All training and equipment costs are paid for by the reserve deputy. After completion of the state-mandated training, the reserve deputy begins field training and a probationary period, which lasts from six months to one year, depending on his or her prior experience. After completing the program's field training, the reserve deputy is still required to attend various training opportunities as well as firearms qualifications twice a year. Reserve deputies must work 16 hours per month, with assignments to the various divisions within the sheriff's department. A reserve deputy's authority is limited to the actual duty hours. They are taught not to interfere while off-duty unless a life is threatened.

While a reserve police force can be very beneficial to a community, reserves may also pose problems and liabilities for a department. A reserve police officer usually serves as a volunteer and receives no compensation, although some equipment costs may be borne by the department. According to the U.S. Department of Labor rules, anyone who donates public time and service without expectation of compensation is not considered an employee (Wallace and Peter 1994). If a reserve officer is paid, employment regulations may apply. If a reserve officer is paid a wage that is less than the wage for full-time officers performing the same tasks, then the reserve police force morale can suffer (Wallace and Peter 1994). Paid reserves also raise labor relations issues among full-time staff. If a paid reserve force is utilized and limits or eliminates overtime for full-time officers, the police union may bring the issue into the bargaining process (Wallace and Peter 1994).

A liability issue associated with reserve police officers is worker's compensation. Depending on the state, volunteer police and firefighters are automatically covered by worker's compensation. If the reserve police force is not covered automatically, then the sponsoring agency may consider providing worker's compensation coverage to demonstrate that the department is concerned with the reserve officers' well-being and to limit the department's civil liabilities in case of a seriously injured reserve officer (Wallace and Peter 1994).

Another liability issue is training, or the lack of training. An agency could be held liable by the courts for failure to train its reserve officers. Wallace and Peter (1994) state, "Administrators should bear in mind that all training of reservists must be as professional and timely as that offered to regular officers." The courts have found that the training offered to reserves must be adequate in content and quality (Wallace and Peter 1994).



THE CITY OF FORT WORTH POLICE RESERVE OFFICER

The City of Fort Worth is seeking concerned citizens who desire to serve their community and assist in making our City a safer place in which to live.

Police Reserve Officers are sworn law enforcement officers and must become certified by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education. Reserve Officers, while on duty, possess the same authority as a peace officer. Although Police Reserves may work in different divisions of the Police Department, they are generally assigned to the Patrol Division, and assist regular patrol officers in the performance of their duties. A normal work assignment usually is six (6) hours, one (1) day a week.

REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION:	High school diploma or GED Certificate
AGE:	Must be 21 years of age at time of certification
WEIGHT:	Standards based on an individual's percentage of body fat
EYESIGHT:	Vision correctable to 20/20. (No color vision deficiency)
LICENSE:	Valid Texas Class "C" Driver's License

- Applicants for the Police Reserve Officer Position must pass a physical fitness test, a medical exam, an extensive background check, polygraph examination, and a psychological examination. Before acceptance, all applicant credentials are reviewed by the Police Personnel Review Board.
- Selected applicants will undergo training on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 6 - 10 P.M. for a period of at least sixteen (16) weeks.
- Uniforms and all necessary equipment are furnished.
- While this position does not provide any monetary compensation, it does give the satisfaction of public service in protecting the life, liberty, and property of Fort Worth citizens.

FOR INFORMATION: Fort Worth Police Training Academy
1000 Calvert Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76107
(817) 871-6500

City of Fort Worth
Human Resources Department
1000 Throckmorton
Fort Worth, Texas 76102
(817) 871-8667 or (817) 871-7763
or 1-800-532-0678

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The City of Fort Worth affords Equal Employment Opportunity To All Individuals Regardless of Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, Religion, Age or Disability



According to Sundeen and Siegel (1986), several problems of a reserve police force are relevant. First, reserve police officers are initially distrusted by the regular officers, and sometimes the reserve officers have to prove themselves to the regular officers. Second, since the reserve officers are employed or committed to other things (i.e., school), their availability is generally limited. Finally, reserve officers may lose interest in the program, especially depending on the incentives to remain.

Texas Statutes

Reserve officers in Texas are appointed under the appropriate local government code. Reserve deputy sheriffs are appointed under Section 85.004, reserve deputy constables are appointed under Section 86.012 and municipal reserve police officers are appointed under Section 341.012 of the Local Government Code. Section 341.012, entitled "Police Reserve Force," establishes the following criteria for developing a reserve police program:

- (a) The governing body of a municipality may provide for the establishment of a police reserve force.
- (b) The governing body shall establish qualifications and standards of training for members of the reserve force.
- (c) The governing body may limit the size of the reserve force.
- (d) The chief of police shall appoint the members of the reserve force. Members serve at the chief's discretion.
- (e) The chief of police may call the reserve force into service at any time the chief considers it necessary to have additional officers to preserve the peace and enforce the law.
- (f) Members of a reserve force serve as peace officers during the actual discharge of official duties.
- (g) An appointment to the reserve force must be approved by the governing body before the person appointed may carry a weapon or otherwise act as a peace officer. After the appointment is approved, the person appointed may carry a weapon only when authorized to do so by the chief of police and only when discharging official duties as a peace officer.
- (h) Reserve police officers may act only in a supplementary capacity to the regular police force and may not assume the full-time duties of regular police officers without complying with the requirements for regular police officers.
- (i) This section does not limit the authority of the mayor of a Type A general-law municipality to summon a special police force under Section 341.011 (Vernon's Texas Code Annotated: Local Government 1988).

The reserve police officer is considered a peace officer under Texas laws and must meet the requirements of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and

Education (TCLEOSE). Chapter 415 of the Local Government Code establishes the Commission and sets forth the guidelines for the operation of the Commission. The Commission is given the authority to adopt rules for the administration of Chapter 415 (Vernon's Texas Code Annotated: Local Government 1988).

TCLEOSE develops the rules and regulations governing peace officer standards and training in compliance with Chapter 415 of the Local Government Code. Since a reserve police officer is considered a peace officer, the same standards are applied to reserve officers as are applied to full-time police officers. Section 211.80 of the Texas Register sets the minimum standards for licensing. Some of these standards are:

- (a) An applicant for a peace officer, a reserve, an armed public security officer, or a jailer license must
 - (1) be a citizen of the United States of America;
 - (2) meet the minimum standards for age (Section 211.97);
 - (8) not have ever been convicted at any time of a felony offense;
 - (9) be of good moral character;
 - (10) be subjected to a thorough, comprehensive background investigation by the appointing authority;
 - (12) be examined by a licensed physician and be declared in writing within the past 180 days both:
 - (A) to be physically sound and free from any defect which may adversely affect the performance of duty appropriate to the type of license sought; and
 - (B) to show no trace of drug dependency or illegal drug use after a physical exam, blood test, or other medical test (Texas Administrative Code 1996) [see Section 211.80 for a complete listing].

Section 219.70 sets the minimum training standards for reserves. To receive a permanent reserve license, the applicant must complete a 560-hour basic peace officer course and any other required training. A conditional reserve license may be issued to an applicant who has passed the reserve exam and who has received credit for a 228-hour basic reserve course. The conditional reserve license will expire if the license holder does not complete a 190-hour intermediate reserve course within two years of obtaining the conditional license and both the 190 intermediate and 142-hour advanced reserve courses within four years. The license will expire after four years if the license holder has not passed the peace officer exam. One interesting fact is that Section 219.70 allows for licensing under both a professional training path (listed above) or an academic path (Texas Administrative Code 1996).

Employment of Reserves in Texas Agencies

Forty-one Texas law enforcement agencies responded to a *TELEMASP* survey regarding use of reserves. Of the 41 responding agencies, 20 had some type of reserve police officer program. Six of the 21 agencies that did not currently have a reserve police officer program had previously had one. Reasons for disbanding the programs among these six departments included liability concerns, lack of interest, cost, elimination of need for reserves, and changes in the accreditation process. The El Paso Police Department was the only agency without a reserve program currently considering establishing one.

The year that a reserve program was established varied considerably. Harris County Sheriff's Department had the oldest reported reserve program (1945), while the San Angelo Police Department had the newest (1995).

Authorized strength ranged in size from two to no limit. The reported number of reserve police officers currently serving totaled 738. The Harris County Sheriff's Department has the largest program with 328 reported reserve officers.

Levels of TCLEOSE certification were examined. Most of the current reserve police officers (506) are certified at the Basic Peace Officer level or above. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
**Reported TCLEOSE Certification Levels
for Reserve Officers**

	N
Basic Reserve Officer	45
Intermediate Reserve Officer	106
Advanced Reserve Officer	66
Basic Peace Officer or Greater	506

The command and supervision structure of the reserve programs were reported as entirely the responsibility of the regular command agency hierarchy by 55% of the respondents (n=11), while 45% reported shared command structures between the reserve command personnel and the regular agency hierarchy.

Agency requirements prior to acceptance as a reserve police officer were identified. In all agencies, the requirements for reserve police officers were the same as those for regular police officers. Forty-five percent of agencies (n=9) required training hours in addition to state training requirements. The additional amounts of training ranged from the same as a full-time officer to an additional 20 to 40 hours per year.

BE A RESERVE DEPUTY SHERIFF WITH THE HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S RESERVE

"For many years the Harris County Sheriff's Reserves have performed a vital law enforcement function for the Department. Whether the task is the enforcement of ongoing operations or special emergency responses, our Reserves are always willing and able to provide professional service."

The Harris County Sheriff's Department offers interesting and rewarding positions as Reserve Deputies. Qualified persons who seek the opportunity to perform community service as a member of a professional law enforcement organization should contact the Sheriff's Reserves at (713) 755-7286. A challenging and fascinating experience is awaiting men and women in the Harris County Sheriff's Department Reserve Program"

Tommy Thomas, Sheriff
The Harris County Sheriff's Reserve

The Position

"The Reserve Deputy Sheriff provides a ready citizen resource of trained, qualified personnel able to assist the Sheriff's Office in meeting the law enforcement requirements of HARRIS COUNTY and for such emergencies as floods, riot control, searches and rescues. Reserve Officers on duty interface with Regular Deputy Sheriffs and have the same authority and responsibilities. Reserve Officers serve voluntarily without pay."



All of the reporting agencies required reserve police officers to work a minimum number of hours per month. This number ranged from a low of eight hours per month to a high of 24 hours per month. The most common required amount of hours was 16 (n=11), followed by 20 (n=3) and 24 (n=2).

Reserve police officers are utilized in a variety of ways. The most common use is patrol (n=20), followed by traffic (n=7), dispatch (n=5) and jail/corrections (n=5). Other functions include detectives, juvenile and mounted units (see Table 2).

Table 2

Police Functions Performed by Reserve Officers

	N	%
Patrol	20	100
Traffic	7	35
Dispatch	5	25
Jail/Corrections	5	25
Investigations	4	20
Specialty Units	3	15
Other	13	65
Special Events	4	20
Training	3	15
Juvenile	2	10
Vice	1	5
Administration	1	5
Mounted Unit	1	5
Marine	1	5

All of the reserve officer's required equipment was provided by 55% of the responding agencies (n=11). The amount of officer-supplied equipment varied as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Uniforms/Equipment Supplied by:

	Agency		Reserve	
	N	%	N	%
All uniforms/equipment	11	55	3	15
Firearms	5	25	4	20
Handcuffs	5	25	4	20
Duty Belt	19	95	1	5
Other	---	---	4	20
Footware				
Flashlight				
Radio				

Funding for 90% of the reserve programs came primarily from the agency's budget (n=18), although donations were also utilized by 25% of the agencies (n=5). The results for funding options are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Reserve Officer Program Funding

	N	%
Departmental Budget	18	90
Donations	5	25
Fund-raisers	1	5
Grants	1	5
Dues	1	5
Other (Security Fee)	1	5

The general public's and police officers' opinion of the reserve police officer program is perceived to be favorable by the majority of the responding departments (public opinion, n=14; police, n=16) (see Table 5).

Table 5

Perceptions of the Reserve Officer Program

	Favorable		No Opinion		Unfavorable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Public	14	70	6	30	0	0
Police	16	80	3	15	1	5

Overall, the reserve police programs were considered an asset by 85% of reporting departments (n=17). Two agencies reported no opinion, and only one agency considered the reserve police program to be a liability. These results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Benefits of a Reserve Officer Program

	N	%
Asset	17	85
No Opinion	2	10
Liability	1	5

Table 7 contains a summary of results related to various policy issues. Of particular note is half of the responding departments use the reserve officer program as a recruiting source. Only one agency indicated that its reserve officers were paid.

Table 7

Miscellaneous Survey Responses

	N	%
Full Powers While On-duty	20	100
Armed	20	100
Utilized as an Employee Pool	10	50
Liaison Officer with Reserve Program	14	70
Utilize Outside Skills	6	30
Utilized in Community Service Programs	6	30
Paid Reserve Officers	1	5

Conclusion

Based upon the literature and the survey results, a reserve police officer program is a cost-effective way to increase human resources and to provide additional services without major increases in a budget. In fact, the best summary of a reserve police officer program's benefits is described by the following survey comment:

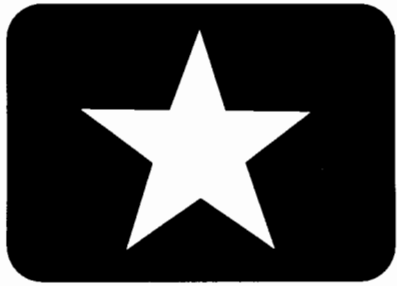
The reserve program has been useful in providing extra manpower. Patrol units are one-person units; a reserve on duty gives us two-man units at various times. In addition, they are extremely beneficial during times of emergencies. They are of 'no cost' to taxpayers and can function the same as full time employees. When we are short-handed for any reason they are available to fill in.

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Thank you to the following agencies for participating in this month's bulletin.

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 Bryan Police Department
 Carrollton Police Department
 Cleburne Police Department
 College Station Police Department
 Corpus Christi Police Department
 Dallas Police Department
 Dallas County Sheriff's Department
 Deer Park Police Department
 Duncanville Police Department
 El Paso Police Department
 Fort Worth Police Department
 Garland Police Department
 Harris County Sheriff's Department
 Houston Police Department
 Irving Police Department
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 Laredo Police Department
 Lubbock Police Department
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