

Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Update



LAS CRUCES POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM



Date: June 16, 2014
To: Robert Garza, City Manager
From: Jaime Montoya, Police Chief
Subject: PERF Work Session

PERF (Police Executive Research Forum) will be present for the June 23, 2014 Work Session. PERF will present their key findings for their fourth year providing police auditor services for the Las Cruces Police Department.

Justice and Security Strategies (JSS) was hired by City Administration to review Las Cruces Police Department's relationship with the community, policies, procedures and oversight options. In May of 2009, JSS presented their recommendations on a variety of issues, they ultimately recommended a Police Auditor be hired to review policies and procedures for the purpose of changing the direction of the Police Department. PERF is a Washington, D.C. based nonprofit research and consulting firm specializing in policing, they were hired as the Las Cruces Police Department's Police Auditor in 2010. PERF started their services in 2010 by reviewing Las Cruces Police Department's internal investigations, high risk policies, implementation plan of policy recommendations and the conducting of focus group meetings. The last two years (2012 and 2013) PERF has concentrated its review of Las Cruces Police Department's internal investigation and process.

PERF will be conducting its final review by evaluating the investigations performed by the Las Cruces Police Department's Professional Standards Unit. PERF will provide general comments on their observations and provide opportunities for improvement for the Las Cruces Police Department.

The contract with PERF has expired and the city has released a Request for Proposal to solicit proposals from qualified firms interested in entering an agreement for future police audit services.

Police Auditor Services for the Las Cruces Police Department

by the Police Executive Research Forum

Craig Fraser, Ph.D.
Bill Tegeler





Date: June 23, 2014

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Location: Las Cruces City Hall



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Present Key Findings of PERF's
Fourth Year Providing Police
Auditor Services for the Las
Cruces Police Department

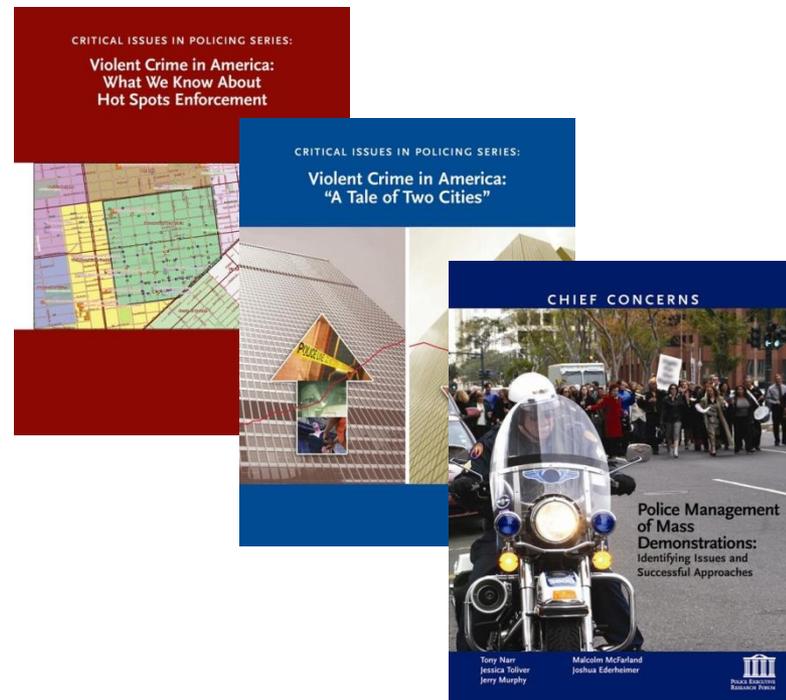




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About the Police Executive Research Forum

- PERF is a Washington, D.C. based non-profit research and consulting firm specializing in policing.
- PERF has performed more than 250 management studies of police agencies, and has published many reports on policing issues.
 - Civil Rights Investigation of Local Police: Lessons Learned (2013)
 - An Integrated Approach to De-Escalation and Minimizing Use of Force (2012)
- PERF stimulates debate about police issues within the profession and among policy-makers, the media, and the public.





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PERF Year-Four Police Auditor Services



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YEAR 4

Evaluate Investigations Performed by the
Las Cruces Police Department's
Professional Standards Unit



PERF reviewed 107 cases in Year Four

- 80 Preliminary Inquires
- 27 Complete Investigations
 - Officer Involved Shootings
 - Vehicle Pursuits



PERF Observation

The high quality of Police Standards Unit investigations has continued under the current Administration.



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Keys in Staffing a Professional Standards Unit

- Maintain strong leadership within the PSU.
- Selection of high quality detectives.
- Provide ample transition time when new personnel are assigned.
- Continual formal and informal training of new and current personnel.



The Las Cruces Police Department does not hesitate to accept citizen complaints.

- Most frequent methods are in person and by telephone.

The Las Cruces Police Department is not reluctant to initiate an investigation into an allegation of misconduct.

- Majority of investigations into potential employee misconduct is initiated by the department.



- The Professional Standards Unit continues to incorporate a holistic approach in its investigations, examining all potential violations rather than just the behavior identified in the complaint.
- Ancillary issues are explored in all inquires/investigations.
- The police department provides its personnel with referrals to and information on the City's Employee Assistance Program when warranted.



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- Investigations are completed in a reasonable time with extensions provided as required upon the approval of the Chief of Police.
- The PSU provides proper notification with supporting documentation to citizens and members of the department while maintaining the rights and privileges of personnel.



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- The PSU continues to utilize effective investigative practices:
 - Prepared for interviews.
 - Educate themselves as necessary.
 - Use all available information and resources
- Workload is prioritized efficiently.
- The LCPD cooperates with other agencies in the investigation of misconduct.



- Overall, the Professional Standards Unit investigations reviewed by PERF are objective and thorough.
- Investigative conclusions and findings are reasonable and based upon the facts as determined in the investigation.



- A use of force expert within the department reviewing the actions of an officer involved in an OIS to determine compliance with policy was identified by PERF as a **“policing best practice.”**





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INVESTIGATIVE & ADMINISTRATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



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- *Investigative improvement opportunities include:*
 - Investigations may be strengthened by gaining compliance with officers using their recording devices on all Domestic Violence calls for service as required by policy.



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- All Officer Involved Shooting investigations should comply with the protocol as outlined in LCPD General Order 156.
- Field personnel may benefit from clarification and reiteration in the following areas:
 - Administrative time off.
 - Completion of reports.
 - Crime Scene containment.
 - Administering drug/alcohol test.



- *Administrative improvement opportunities include:*
 - When the PSU identifies an ancillary issue or recommends an informal action to a supervisor the supervisor should notify the PSU that action was taken.



- PSU preliminary inquiry memorandums should include the assigned case number on the “Subject” line of all related memorandums.
- Citizen Complaint Forms should be carefully reviewed for completeness so the complaint can be pursued as quickly as possible.



- The department and community may benefit from Citizen Complaint Forms in both English and Spanish.
- Notification letters to complainants should be written in the same language used in completing a complaint.



Police Auditor Services for the Las Cruces Police Department

