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Communication in Law Enforcement

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Effective communication is an essential feature of law enforcement. Police officers use technical jargon in investigations due to which problems may arise as the loss of evidence or witness due to miscommunication. Maintaining order through involvement also necessitates the use of communication skills. Being a good listener in the field of community relations is the key to good communication. To resolve conflicts and provide proper guidance to the officers the police administrators have to communicate effectively. When we talk about police research it is important to have a good communication for delivering accurate results and conclusions. In such a progressive society it is an important aspect to have good communication in law enforcement. Communication is possibly the most valuable feature of law enforcement. To understand effective communication in the police agencies this paper will survey the strength, importance, weaknesses, and problems of communication in law enforcement.

Keywords: *communication, effective communication, law enforcement, police agencies.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's culture, communication is an essential tool as without good communication nothing can be served effectively. Misunderstandings may arise due to miscommunication. It gives the police officers to manage the evidence and witness in a better way without any miscommunication. Also helps them in taking quick decisions. Both social and professional communication should be mastered by police officers to succeed and be comfortable with the

citizens to do their job with utmost efficiency. The communication of the police officer with the public determines how well his communication is as it also influences the public's response. Focusing on what the public is trying to convey and listening and speaking to them will help the officer to engage the public. The communication might affect the community's reaction so the officers should take note of that too. For optimal police work, these skills are important such as good communication to make the job easier and more positive. Mastering multiple forms of communication, such as speaking, writing, and presenting, helps a police officer do his or her tasks more effectively. Enforcing the law is done by some governmental officers who are together to enforce the law effectively by identifying and punishing the ones who break ¹ the laws. It is mainly concerned with the protection, prevention, and punishment of the wrongdoers of the law. More than anything in today's world communication is something that holds a lot of importance and it is also required to investigate crimes, sort conflict, and create trust among the citizens. Everyone working in enforcement, especially those with leadership ambitions must be able to write memos, reports, and grants. The media's attention to all or any of the cases and crimes results in police involvement.

WHY IS COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT?

Police officers who should be trained for the use of force are now expected to use communication skills to resolve disputes without using force. In most affluent countries, police officers are being trained to use their communication abilities rather than force. The communication used is rapidly growing and taking more focus on strategy. The basic purpose that the police are there's to stop the crime from happening and maintain order. The police perform their duties on the basics of the public approval they must be ready to co-operate and also be very observant of the law to maintain a secure environment. Due to the use of physical force the cooperation of the public has been reduced so to seek their approval communication is the best way. When persuasion, advice, and warning are shown to be insufficient, police use physical force to the degree required to secure respect for the law or to revive order. The police

¹ 'Effective-Communication-and-Police-Officers' (123 Helpme) <<https://www.123helpme.com/essay/Effective-Communication-and-Police-Officers-293195>> accessed 16 January 2022

should within the least time maintain friendly relations with the overall public as they're paid full time to concentrate on the wants of the overall public. The proof of effective policy is the absence of crime.

Actions and interactions with the community function as means of communication. Only the best practices are used by the department. These ideals are not recognized by recruits, agency members, or the agency itself without efficient communication, and the values become meaningless. Effective communication gives scope for giving value to the community in a sensible manner. Officers must open and maintain lines of communication to receive and transmit information from and to the public to prevent crime and disruption. Preventing disorder also depends on communication skills.

The communication will help in minimal use of force. Using effective communication instead of physical force will maintain public trust and demonstrate complete² impartiality regardless of who the police are working with. The people will also support a decision achieved by communicating rather than by the use of force. Police officers are reminded that they are members of the public. Communication is essential in all partnerships so that the public sees the police as citizens. These ideas can only be reaffirmed and reinforced by open dialogue. The officers are expected to communicate their decisions in court with skill clarity and concise language and also to give the reasoning for each action taken by them. Remaining calm in pressure situations should be done by them in court or a boardroom. In today's world, the police officer is expected to have excellent communication skills for the effective working of everything.

COMMUNICATION IS NECESSARY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

For top enforcement professionals, communication skills are the key to success. Effective communication skills are identified by many top officers and professionals in enforcement as a critical belief in their success. That's because the foremost effective enforcement executives

² 'Communication in Law enforcement' (*BC Campus*)

<<https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/communicationinlawenforcement/chapter/introduction/>> accessed 16 January 2022

skills to speak with people from all backgrounds during a sort of situations that are often unanticipated. Communication is employed to create trust and transparency. Many cops are trained to form use of certain strategies which helps to resolve conflicts³ and ease situations to seek out the basis cause before it's out of hand. Use of visual communication to point out to the general public that the officer is listening. Although a private with a mental illness won't grasp all of what an official says, they go to note the officer's tone and demeanor. The strain is increased if the officer is shouting instructions and appears tense. Speaking slowly and quietly can assist in de-escalating a situation and showing the person who the officer isn't in a hurry which they have the maximum amount of time as they need to speak and are available to an agreement. When there is a language barrier it is hard to communicate and get people involved in conversations the officers are advised to possess the skill of knowing different languages for effective communication. To help modify police attitudes and enhance community ties, a lot of communication is used.

The increasing rate of crime and disorder is putting pressure on the police to act effectively to resolve all the disputes with strategies by making arrests and communicating with other citizens. In police, de-escalation may be a tactic that tries to undo the long-taught and encouraged the practice of employing force to dominate a situation. rather than demanding answers and displaying strength and authority, de-escalation aims to alleviate a situation through peaceful techniques like speaking gently, showing empathy, and asking open-ended inquiries to engage individuals in true discourse. The importance of resolving problems by communicating is putting an honest impact on the police departments. However, learning the way to speak with a good range of individuals, from criminal suspects to victims, welfare work organizations, witnesses, and other members of the community a number of whom could also be dealing with trauma, addiction, mental disease, poverty, or any number of other issues aren't easy. For the communication skills to be effective, they must be practiced and learned well to excel in it.

³ Brian Douglas Fitch, *Law Enforcement Interpersonal Communication and Conflict Management: The IMPACT Model* (SAGE Publications, Inc. 2015)

Police officers mostly engage in two activities: talking to individuals and touching them. One of these actions is included in almost every police operation. Concern for officer safety drives the touch to think about police training, which incorporates teaching on firearms, automobile stops, self-defense, arrest and control, and responses to crimes ongoing. Instructors can easily observe and assess officers' abilities in these areas. In weapons training, for instance, recruits must achieve a specific score to hold a weapon. The talk thinks about police focuses on interaction during investigations, interviews, and interrogations. Officers need these skills. Enforcement officers need to do interaction with the general public and can't do away with it as they need to resolve any conflicts and interaction with the community is their duty. Traffic stops are one of the best ways to prevent crime, and they provide the primary opportunity for officers and the public to communicate; unfortunately, when they result in conflict between the stopped individuals and officers, traffic stops are also the most common source of complaints against⁴ the police. Even if the event necessitates law enforcement action, police should make every attempt to reach a satisfactory conclusion for all parties involved. Officers cannot predict the exact behaviors they will encounter during traffic stops, therefore they must have great interpersonal skills to avoid aggression and misunderstandings.

Agencies can train officers on core competencies that facilitate communication between the police and the public during traffic stops, criminal investigations, and domestic problems to improve officers' performance in typical police procedures. Setting the scene, obtaining evidence, and confirming information are the three types of talents. For effective communication, the officers practice a lot of conversational habits that include eye contact, body language, etc. While collecting evidence four skills help in communicating that's focusing, paraphrasing, reflecting, and confronting. Reframing and reconstructing difficulties are often aided by focusing. Officers rephrase someone's thoughts during a new language and during a nonjudgmental manner when paraphrasing.

⁴ Peter J. McDermott & Diana Hulse, 'Focus on Training and interpersonal skills: Interpersonal Skills Training in Police Academy Curriculum' (*Articles*, 1 February 2012) <<https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/focus/focus-on-training-interpersonal-skills-training-in-police-academy-curriculum>> accessed on 16 January 2022

Officers communicate a person's emotions, whether stated or implied when reflecting. Finally, addressing allows cops to identify inconsistencies during a tale. Clarifying helps to exchange information and establish the knowledge gathered accurately. Though enforcement and medicine seem unrelated both of them need great communication skills. Like doctors, even cops should listen and understand their people. Both doctors and police rely on how the officers conduct the questioning, witnesses volunteer as much or as little information as they are asked for. The same elements influence an individual's propensity to cooperate with the authorities, just as spoken and unspoken language influences a patient's inclination to comply with their doctors. The law enforcement agency which is the police is an important part of the state administration. The police are a key player in providing the maximum level of security to the people by regulating crime and maintaining law and order. The primary function of police officers in ancient times was to preserve law and order and to establish the state's sovereignty. Public⁵ agencies should be able to communicate effectively to protect and serve the community with the most potential. The police agencies have made agreements to manage different communication systems. Effective communication skills help in preventing any physical harm. Effective communication skills allow cops to build relationships with the public, coworkers, and offenders, as these skills may save an officer's life or prevent serious injury. Officers can communicate in a variety of ways, both verbally and nonverbally.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO COMMUNICATION IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

The reason why officers are appointed is to show the ability to communicate effectively with everyone. Tests are taken to check the ability to communicate through words written. Despite all these humans, many a time find it difficult to communicate. Due to many reasons one of which is multiculturalism as many people belong to different cultures and backgrounds, sometimes it's difficult to communicate and understand the other person. The officer should try his level best to adapt to the culture and provide the best to the citizens. Officers who have an unconscious bias towards a group of persons may find it difficult to understand why it is

⁵ 'Communication' (Toppr) <<https://www.toppr.com/guides/business-studies/directing/communication/>> accessed on 16 January 2022

difficult to establish rapport with a member of that group. Officers should be conscious of their implicit biases and understand that they are possible triggers for communication breakdown. Officers should devise methods to reduce these triggers and remove any obstacles to communication that may exist. Officers may have a predisposition against specific people because of their previous interactions with them. These biases, unlike implicit bias, are manifested by the officer and are neither unconscious nor hidden.

Not all officers are experienced in communication especially when it comes to difficult situations. Officers with less experience may struggle to listen or communicate actively. Officers are frequently placed in circumstances where they must deal with emotional persons. As a result, police are frequently influenced by the subject's emotions and may have difficulty speaking effectively. When sitting with a mourning individual, some cops may experience this; witnessing and listening to a person in such an emotional condition might compel the officer to experience the same reaction. Officers can also become emotional seeing someone in pain and should develop strategies to mitigate these feelings. Officers may be cautious in their words for fear of being held accountable, and they may not say what needs to be said to diffuse a situation. For example, an officer who wishes to apologize may refrain from doing so for fear of being held accountable for his or her actions.

Law enforcement has its acronyms. The officers rely on them to shorten the communication and make it more efficient. But by doing this the officers don't realize others might not understand them. An officer should use acronyms by at least writing down their meaning when using them for the first time. The usage of the acronyms will make it tough to read at times as many may not understand its meaning. When the police and other members of the community work altogether for a safe environment and effective police. The officers must show excellent skills and talents but also good interpersonal skills to successful communication. Enforcement agencies must train their officers on the way to effectively interact with the people. An enforcement agency that's established well will train and evaluate its recruits for technical skills. The fact that all officers require interpersonal skills to accomplish any legal tasks and keeping this in mind many agencies don't even focus on

training and evaluating their recruits. The most technologically progressed department will collapse if the officers are⁶ not able to communicate with the people.

CONCLUSION

The process of communication is instrumental ineffectiveness of not only the police but all criminal justice agencies. The process of communication, which includes both formal and informal channels, aids law enforcement professionals in transmitting vital signals upstairs and downwards within a department's structure. The communication process not only aids a department's ability to transmit directives and receive orders, but it also aids in overcoming the language, cultural, and personality obstacles that hinder law enforcement teamwork and productivity. Police academicians need an efficient structure or teaching important interpersonal skills. Counselor education schemes include numerous techniques for teaching and evaluating these abilities, which academies can modify to their current curriculum to help them during this attempt. When recruits graduate from the academy, they are going to possess the interpersonal skills to enrich their legal and tactical ability. Officers who enter the workforce with this firm foundation are better ready to break down sort of the barriers that exist between the police and thus the general people. Officers require interpersonal training that their instructors can observe and assess easily. With this preparation, police recruits feel competent and guaranteed once they join the force. This assures that they're going to speak with others civilly and respectfully, leading to better public partnerships and safer communities.

⁶ 'Police-communication-important-today' <<https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/police-communication-important-today/>> accessed on 17 January 2022