

The Chief's Chronicle



NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION
OF CHIEFS OF POLICE, INC.

MARCH 2025

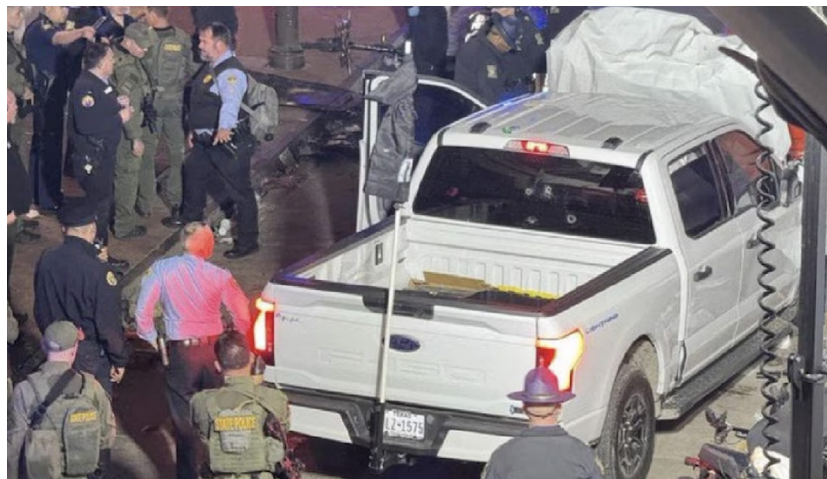
The Silent Threat

Electric Vehicles in Ramming Attacks

By Chief Stuart K. Cameron - Old Westbury PD

Terrorist groups continue to seek methods to attack western nations to inflict maximum harm on our society. As authorities implement methods to reign in one type of attack strategy terrorist groups continue to adapt, adding new tactics or refining existing ones. Fortunately, many of these plots have been foiled, but the list of methods is long, including shoe bombs, liquid explosives and printer cartridge bombs to name just a few. These methods have vastly impacted air travel and the items that can be

Continued on Page 9



The FBI, Which Is Leading The Investigation, Has Classified The Incident As "An Act Of Terrorism." | Credit: X

What's Ahead

INTERSECTIONS:
Traffic Safety
Committee

**TRAFFIC SAFETY IS
PUBLIC SAFETY**

**FACTORS IN LEADER
DEVELOPMENT**
Greg Veitch
Ret. Police Chief

**LEADERSHIP
CULTURE**

GORDON GRAHAM:
FINDING

THE 5%ERS

COUNSEL'S CORNER:
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Chief Shawn Heubusch, BATAVIA PD



Honoring the Fallen, Prioritizing Officer Safety

As we move forward into 2025, we take a solemn moment to reflect on the officers we lost in the line of duty throughout 2024. Their dedication, courage, and sacrifice in service to their communities will never be forgotten. Each name represents a hero who answered the call, placing the safety of others above their own.

The past year was particularly devastating for law enforcement. According to the Officer Down Memorial Page 162 law enforcement officers tragically lost their lives while serving, a 5% increase compared to 2023. Firearms and automobile accidents were the leading causes of death, underscoring the ever-present dangers faced by those who put on the badge each day.

For the families, friends, and colleagues left behind, the loss is immeasurable. We keep them in our thoughts and prayers, recognizing the deep and lasting impact of such tragedies. It is our responsibility not only to honor the memory of the fallen but also to support those affected—offering a hand, a shoulder, or simply the assurance that they are not alone.

These solemn reflections serve as a reminder of the

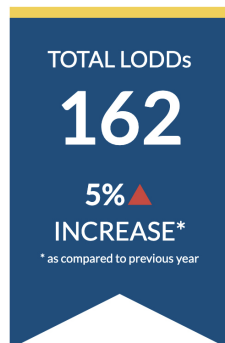
risks law enforcement officers face daily. Officer safety must remain a top priority, and as leaders, we must ensure that our officers have the training, resources, and support needed to stay safe while fulfilling their duty to serve. This means fostering a culture of vigilance, wellness, and preparedness—encouraging officers to look out for one another and to never hesitate in seeking help when needed.

The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police stands committed to promoting policies and initiatives that enhance officer safety and well-being. As we move

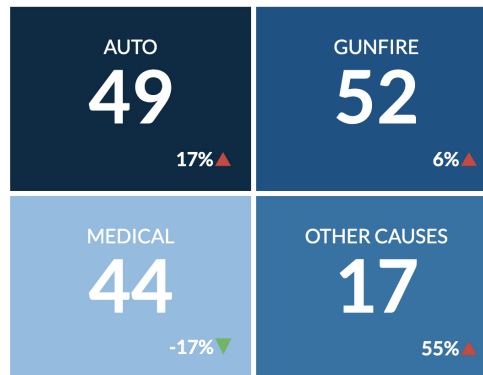
ahead, let us reaffirm our commitment to those who wear the badge, ensuring that they are protected, supported, and never forgotten.

May we honor our fallen by continuing to serve with integrity and an unwavering dedication to the safety of our officers and communities. Stay safe, stay strong, and take care of one another.

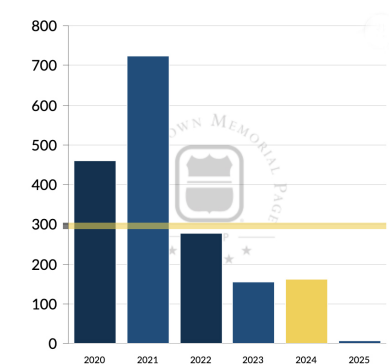
LODDs at a Glance



Leading Causes of Death



LODDs by Year (2020 - 2025)



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chief/Ret. Patrick Phelan

The 2025 Legislative Agenda of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police

PUBLIC SAFETY

✓ Discovery reform – the changes to discovery laws have made it difficult for our district attorneys to prosecute cases and for police departments to comply with, resulting in a drop in convictions. We advocate for reasonable change to the discovery process including a tiered discovery process.

✓ Raise the Age – juvenile crime has spiked since the raise the age legislation was passed. We support legislation that protects the rights of juveniles while also protecting the rights of crime victims. There must be some accountability for juveniles who commit crime.

✓ Deadly driving bill – We support the passage of the deadly driving bill.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

✓ 207M – As always, the number one issue on our legislative agenda is the restoration of general municipal law 207M which provided fair and equal treatment for police chiefs and was removed through the budget process by Governor Cuomo.

✓ Raise the salary cap – raising the salary cap for those collecting pensions will help the recruitment and retention process, particularly for small departments that rely on part time officers. Many departments rely on part time officers that are retired police officers. Many of those part-time officers must stop working at some point during the year because they have reached the

salary cap. Eliminating the salary cap entirely would also help to recruit and retain qualified, competent police chiefs.

✓ Civil Service Reform – Currently, every department in New York is struggling with recruiting police officers. The archaic civil service laws that govern the hiring of police officers create

additional hurdles. Simplifying, streamlining, and standardizing civil service laws will help to alleviate some of the confusion and frustration regarding the bureaucracy of civil service.

✓ DROP - A DROP retirement program would help in the short term to alleviate the personnel crisis in New York law enforcement.

✓ Tier 6 – Tier 6 should be amended to help recruit and retain police officers.



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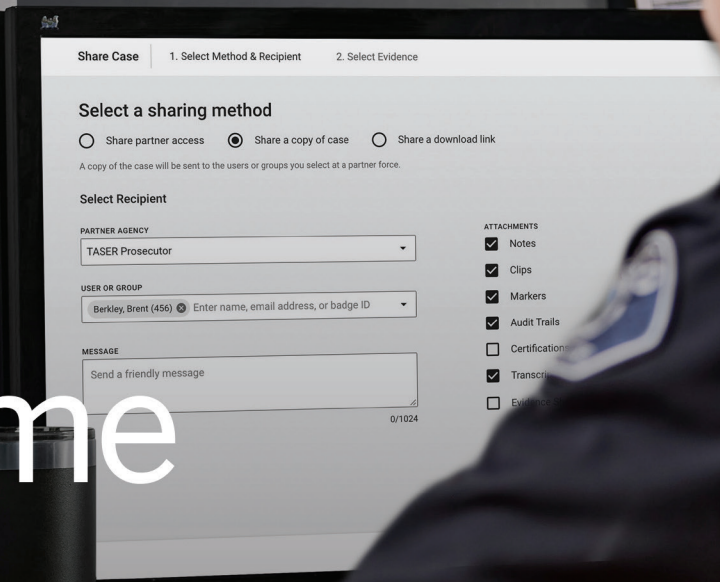
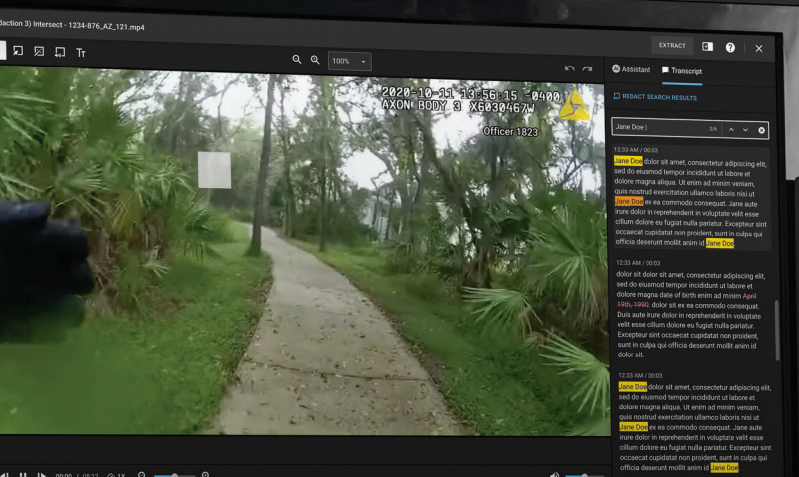
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The Silent Threat

Electric Vehicles in Ramming Attacks



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carried onto a commercial airliner.

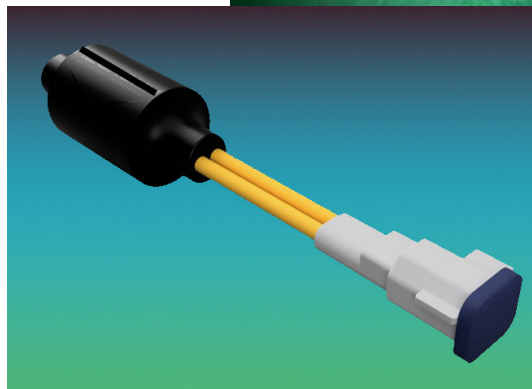
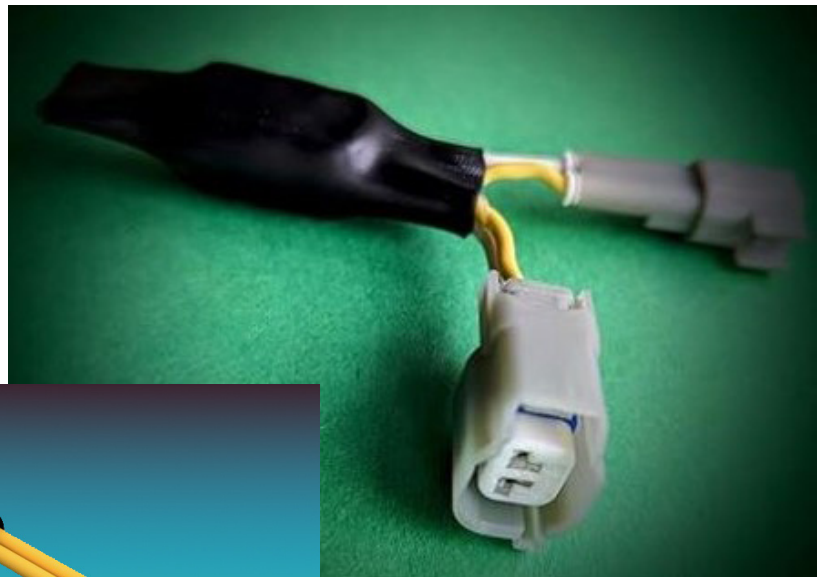
In many cases simple attack strategies have proven to be very effective. One such method is the use of vehicles to run down pedestrians in so-called vehicle ramming attacks. This attack method has been used on numerous occasions, often with devastating results. This strategy is relatively straight forward and within virtually anyone's reach.

One such attack in Nice France in July of 2016 proved just how horrific this type of attack could be when an individual drove a large truck into a Bastille Day celebration. This attack resulted in eighty-six people being killed and over four hundred being injured. Closer to home eight people were killed and thirteen injured during a vehicle ramming attack in New York City in October of 2017.

As a result of this attack strategy, plans for large outdoor events must include methods to deny access to vehicles into areas where pedestrians will be present. These methods are not dissimilar to those historically used to deter vehicle borne explosive devices from getting near crowds during well attended celebrations. Often this is accomplished using concrete barriers, bollards, and large heavy vehicles that block off all possible vehicle ingress routes.

Tactical teams may also deploy large bore ri-

fling, such as .50 BMG, to disable the engines on vehicles that penetrate the perimeter and attempt to engage in a vehicle ramming attack. Clearly, however the best strategy is to prevent an attack from occurring by attempting to identify suspicious behavior in advance of the attack, providing outreach about suspicious activity to car and truck rental facilities and hardening the perimeter around a potential target.



Commercially available by-pass units can disable the speaker on the Ford Lightning, making the truck virtually silent during low-speed operation.

The most recent vehicle ramming attack in the United States that occurred in New Orleans on New Year's Day included some unique elements that are worth a closer examination. A review of

Continued on Page 11

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open-source reporting makes it difficult to determine if these new tactics were deliberately chosen by the attacker, however either way these tactics are worth examining as they may well be incorporated into future attacks.

One proven technique to diminish terrorist attacks is to identify businesses that could be exploited to foster the goals of the attacker. New York State's Operation Safeguard educates business owners regarding how to recognize suspicious behavior. The program encourages businesses to promptly report any suspicious activity that is noticed. Operation Safeguard also includes assurance testing to determine how effective the program is and to determine ways to improve it. With respect to vehicle ramming attacks, outreach to business that rent vehicles, especially trucks, is an important component in a comprehensive prevention strategy. Vehicles used in ramming attacks have been rented, such as the truck used in the attack in New York City in October of 2017.

The vehicle used in the New Orleans attack was also rented, but not from a traditional vehicle rental business, but rather through a business named Turo, a peer-to-peer carsharing company that enables individuals to rent their personally owned vehicles out to others. Much like the way ride-sharing companies have changed the taxi industry, car-sharing is altering the vehicle rental industry, akin to an Air B&B for vehicles. Turo rents vehicles through an online or mobile interface and they currently have hundreds of thousands of vehicle listings available. While continued outreach to traditional vehicle rental companies is important, car-sharing adds a new complication to educating

entities regarding suspicious behavior and how to report it.

The United States Coast Guard employs .50 BMG weapons to disable the engines on non-compliant small vessels. In a similar manner, tactical teams may be able to disable the engine on a traditional gasoline or diesel-powered vehicle engaged in a vehicle ramming attack by firing a large bore weapon at the engine block. The New Orleans attacker however opted to use an electric vehicle, specifically a Ford F-150 Lightning.

Open-source reporting has indicated that the attacker reserved this vehicle well in advance of the attack. It would be speculative at this junction to proffer that he deliberately chose to use an electric vehicle in this attack, however an electric vehicle may be less susceptible to being disabled by a large bore weapon.



Some police departments have begun piloting the use of fully electric vehicles for their patrol fleets”.

Using an electric vehicle as the platform for a ramming attack does create some potential new and unique challenges for the law enforcement community. Since the vehicle does not have a traditional engine but instead uses a battery and electric motors that are built into the chassis of the vehicle, disabling the vehicle with a large bore weapon may be more challenging or at the very least it may require different tactics. Additionally, a fully electric vehicle may have less of a chance of becoming disabled as it accumulates damage to the front end during the attack. A traditional gas-powered, front engine mounted vehicle could suffer damage to essential components through impacts to the front end, thereby disabling the vehicle's engine and curtailing the attack. Since the drive components on an electric vehicle are not located in a traditional engine compartment, the vehicle may continue

Continued on Page 13



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Continued from Page 11

to operate despite serious front end damage.

Electric vehicles also have tremendous torque, despite their increased heft. The electric version of the F-150 pickup is about one thousand pounds heavier than its gas-powered sibling. Heavier vehicles cause more damage to pedestrians. Many studies cite the migration to larger vehicles, such as SUVs and pickup trucks, from sedans, as a major factor in increased pedestrian deaths, because these vehicles impact higher on a person's body, they may cause significant damage to vital organs. Car bumpers often directly impact people's legs, thereby reducing the severity of the damage caused to vital organs, when compared to a truck or SUV.

Electric vehicles are also often incredibly fast. The Ford Lightening, for example, has 0 to 60 times in the four second range, which is more akin to a sports car than a large heavy pickup truck. This incredible acceleration could allow the vehicle to rapidly attain much higher speeds than a compara-

ble gas- or diesel-powered truck, making the vehicle much more lethal during an attack, as it has the ability to impact people at higher speeds.



The SPEC-REST is designed to handle virtually any rifle.

Electric vehicles are also organically much quieter than a comparable gas or diesel vehicle. As a result, the National Highway Traffic Safety Adminis-

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tration requires that hybrid or fully electric vehicles must emit artificial sound at speeds less than 18.6 miles per hour. This is accomplished in the F-150 Lightning via a speaker mounted near the front bumper that emits an artificial engine noise when the vehicle is in forward motion and a subtle beeping noise when the vehicle is in reverse. This system can be disabled however by replacing the speaker with an aftermarket, fifty-dollar product called a Ford External Speaker Bypass Kit, which plugs into the speaker wiring socket in place of the speaker. With this modification an electric pickup could rapidly speed into a crowd without making any telltale engine noise, thereby catching many victims off guard. Simply unplugging the speaker may work as well, however it would produce a variety of error messages which would be of no consequence given the intended use of the vehicle.

Terrorist attacks have been thwarted during preoperational surveillance because prospective attackers have engaged in suspicious behavior, such as taking unusual photos or videos. Open-source reporting reveals that the New Orleans attacker did in fact do preoperational surveillance around the area of the attack, however instead of using a more traditional camera or cell phone to take video or pictures, he employed Meta Smart Glasses.

Meta Smart Glasses resemble traditional Ray-Ban sunglasses, allowing them to blend easily into everyday life, however among the tech

features they possess is the ability to livestream video in a much less overt way when compared to a traditional camera. Merely walking through an area wearing the glasses could allow the user to stream and record video for further planning purposes, making the preoperational surveillance virtually undetectable.



A .50 caliber rifle, which can be used to stop a gas-powered car by disabling the engine.

Whether the New Orleans attacker deliberately opted to use an electric vehicle in his attack due to some perceived benefits to the platform or not, it is likely that others planning for a similar attack may take

note and be inspired to do the same, or even somehow take it to the next level. As new technology continues to become available, there is little doubt that new challenges will be created for law enforcement professionals. From drones to artificial intelligence and self-driving vehicle technology, police professionals need to adopt technology to improve their capabilities, while envisioning ways that malefactors may exploit the same technology to cause harm to others. Staying one step ahead has never been more of a challenge or of greater importance.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Central New York Association of Chiefs of Police

On December 14th police chiefs from the Central New York Association of Chiefs of Police; Homer Chief Robert Pitman, Camillus Chief Michael Schreyer, Camillus Captain James Nightingale, Syracuse PD Deputy Chief Rich Shoff, Cortland PD Chief David



Guerrera, Cayuga Nation Police Superintendent of Police Michael Dubois, Cicero Chief Steve Rotunno participated in the annual National Wreaths Across America Day at the Onondaga County Veterans Cemetery and also delivered some donated times to the Syracuse Veteran

undergarments donated by the Homer Men and Boys Clothing Store along with donating an additional \$250 in personal hygiene items to the Veterans on the 8th floor of the Syracuse Veterans Medical Center.

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)

(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2007 to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine wreath maker Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's yearlong mission – Remember the fallen, Honor those who serve, Teach the next gener-



Medical Center during the Holidays. This year several police agencies also escorted the Wreaths Across America Tractor Trailer from Binghamton to the cemetery in the Town of Onondaga.

This year CNYACOP brought several boxes of



ation the value of freedom – is carried out, in part, each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at thousands of participating locations in all 50 states and beyond. <https://www.wreathsaacrossamerica.org/>

COUNSEL'S CORNER

Chief/Ret. Michael Ranalli, Esq.
LEXIPOL PROGRAM MANAGER



Two Recent Tragedies Emphasize the Importance of Risk Management

On Jan. 29, 2025, a tragic mid-air collision occurred over the Potomac River near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, involving an American Airlines regional jet and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter flying a training mission. All 67 individuals aboard both aircraft perished, marking the deadliest U.S. air disaster since 2001.

Preliminary findings indicate the Black Hawk helicopter was operating at an altitude higher than it should have been and its Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) system—a critical safety feature providing real-time aircraft position data—was turned off. A single air traffic controller was reportedly managing both aircraft, a situation described as “not normal” for that time of day at such a busy airport. This staffing decision is under scrutiny as a potential contributing factor to the crash, as well as the aging and outdated traffic control systems.

Completely unrelated to this incident is the tragic death of Robert Brooks at Marcy Correctional Facility in December 2024. Brooks, a 43-year-old inmate, was fatally beaten by correctional officers while handcuffed in a medical examination room. The incident was captured on body-worn camera footage that the officers did not know was recording, revealing multiple officers assaulting Brooks as others stood by without intervening. The [video](#) is difficult to watch, and

even without knowing the full story of what started the incident, the force used was clearly excessive and abusive. An autopsy determined that Brooks died from asphyxia due to compression of the neck and multiple blunt force injuries, ruling his death a homicide. In response, 13 correctional officers and two nurses were suspended without pay, and one officer resigned. Governor Kathy Hochul called for the termination and criminal prosecution of those involved, emphasizing the need for accountability.



Okay, one is a horrific plane crash – an accident – and the other is a clearly unjustified assault leading to a man’s death. What do they have to do with each other and what can we learn from them?

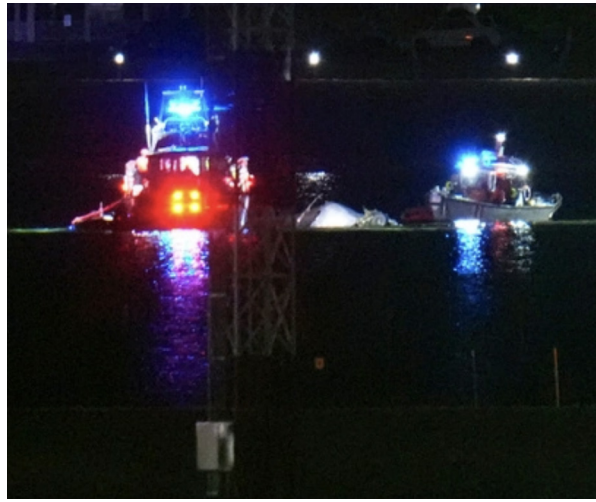
How Proper Risk Management Should Work

Risk management is the systematic process of identifying, assessing and mitigating potential risks to minimize negative impacts on an organization, project or operation. It involves evaluating uncertainties, implementing preventive measures and developing response strategies to enhance safety, efficiency and resilience. For law enforcement, the focus is mitigating and monitoring risks to ensure the safety of officers, the public and the organization.

This process can and should involve proactive strategies as it is not a passive process. In other words,

management by lack of negative consequences is the antithesis to proper risk management (RM). True RM is also not about reducing civil liability. Instead, it is a systems process with the goal of accomplishing organizational tasks safely and effectively. If that process results in reduced liability, then great, that is yet an added benefit. But prioritizing the reduction of liability may taint the systems analysis process, rendering it less effective and misguided.

Implementing comprehensive root cause analysis in the aftermath of tragedy is essential. This process involves a thorough examination of the factors contributing to the failure, including individual actions, supervisory oversight, training adequacy and organizational culture. Identifying these root causes allows institutions



Boats work the scene on the Potomac River near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025, in Arlington, Va. (AP Photo/Julio Cortez)

to develop targeted corrective actions aimed at preventing recurrence. We need to know what the actual cause or causes are, not the proximate cause, which just tells us what happened. Critical to true RM, however, is that organizations must be perpetually uneasy, trying to identify and prevent problems *before* they occur. How do we do this? One way is to look at incidents that occur elsewhere and ask, “Could this happen here?”

Now let’s go back to the two situations we started with. What is the difference between the two in the world of RM? The plane crash will receive a thorough investigation, based upon proper RM and root cause principles, by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). These organizations have a long



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history of digging deep into tragedies such as the one in Washington and identifying definitive causes and corrective recommendations. The FAA, and the NTSB in more serious cases, will also monitor and analyze near-miss data to improve safety.



Black Hawk Helicopter

Law enforcement and corrections do not have an NTSB or FAA or anything close to it. Instead, we have a piecemeal system of civil suits, criminal prosecutions, and, if a death occurs, an investigation by the New York State Attorney General Office of Special Investigations (OSI). Nor do we have any type of cohesive or collaborative way to review “near-misses,” or incidents that do not rise to the level of a death. Instead, those are typically dealt with by varying degrees of agency-led internal affairs investigations and civil suits. As for the latter, qualified im-

munity can impair a proper RM approach because it can defeat a civil suit, creating the impression that nothing was done incorrectly and there is nothing to learn from the underlying incident and response.

Because it resulted in a death, the Marcy incident will be under tremendous scrutiny. Citing a conflict of interest, the Attorney General appointed an independent county prosecutor to investigate the incident. While important, this investigation is not a true RM approach since the purpose of the investigation will be to prosecute the individuals involved. In other words, it is the proximate cause of Robert Brooks’ death and not the root cause that is important in a criminal prosecution.

Do we have enough information on the Marcy in-

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cident to draw some likely root causes? I think many signs point to deficient organizational culture.

The first indicator of this is in the video itself. This incident highlights a profound failure in the duty to intervene—a fundamental responsibility requiring officers to prevent or stop misconduct by their peers. The presence of multiple officers, including sergeants, who either participated in or passively observed the assault without taking action underscores systemic issues within the facility’s culture and oversight mechanisms. Clearly the duty to intervene does not exist in their culture.

Another strong indicator of a seriously flawed culture is the number of complaints of excessive force and civil suits in the years leading up to this incident. Numerous former incarcerated persons consistently provided the same information: They were told by corrections officers this was a “hands on facility” and if they did not do what they were told there would be physical repercussions. Despite all this publicly known information, the behavior obviously continued.

For purposes of this article, let’s assume the NTSB will cite the outdated air traffic control system as at least a partially contributing factor in the Black Hawk crash. One recommendation will be what everyone in the industry already knew before the Washington crash, and that is to replace the system. And for the Marcy incident, it is clear the culture of the organization needs to be changed dramatically and the duty to intervene indoctrinated in all its members.

However, identifying root causes is only the first step. Effective RM necessitates the implementation of corrective measures and continuous monitoring to ensure their efficacy. Otherwise, the root cause analysis would be for nothing. To do this, it is sometimes necessary to look in the past to see what problems may arise when trying to implement needed changes.

Risk Management and the Lessons of Positive Train Control

A case study that illustrates both the importance of root cause analysis and the challenge of follow-through is the nationwide implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) in the U.S. rail system.

PTC is a safety technology designed to prevent train collisions, overspeed derailments and other human error-related accidents. While its benefits were widely recognized, the system was not fully implemented until 2020—over a decade after a deadly accident highlighted the need for it. The long road to full deployment reveals key lessons about risk management that are highly relevant to law enforcement leaders.

The urgency for PTC implementation became evident after the 2008 Metrolink train collision in Chatsworth, California. The accident, which killed 25 people and injured over 135, was caused by an engineer who

ran a red signal while distracted by text messaging. A post-accident investigation revealed that PTC could have prevented the tragedy by automatically stopping the train before it entered a conflicting track.

This was a textbook example of risk management in action: a catastrophic failure led to a root

cause analysis, which in turn identified a solution. However, what followed was a struggle to implement that solution effectively.

Despite a congressional mandate in 2008 requiring PTC implementation by 2015, railroads encountered numerous challenges, leading to deadline extensions first to 2018 and then to 2020. The delays stemmed from multiple factors, including the complexity of integrating new technology with existing rail systems, interoperability challenges among different railroads, high costs (over \$14 billion industry-wide), supply chain shortages and regulatory hurdles. Although progress was steady, ensuring the necessary corrective action was fully implemented took years of sustained effort and oversight. In the meantime, more lives were lost, and hundreds of injuries occurred in train crashes that probably could have been prevented if the PTC



Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) - Terminal & Air Traffic Control Tower.

system had been fully implemented on time.

If the NTSB report into the Black Hawk crash includes a recommendation to replace the outdated air traffic control system, it is entirely possible that results similar to the PTC rollout could occur. Purchasing and installing the necessary equipment, training an already short staff of air traffic controllers, and maintaining safe and uninterrupted passage for the tens of thousands of flights that occur daily would be a difficult task.

The Difficulties Lying Ahead

Drawing parallels to the previously discussed aviation and rail disasters, the death of Robert Brooks illustrates the catastrophic consequences that can arise from the absence of effective RM and accountability systems. Just as the failure to implement safety technologies like PTC in the rail industry led to preventable tragedies, the lack of a proactive duty to intervene policy and enforcement within correctional facilities and police agencies can result in loss of life and erosion of public trust.

For law enforcement leaders, the lessons from the PTC rollout are clear: RM requires more than just identifying problems—it demands persistent follow-through

to ensure that corrective actions are implemented effectively. In policing, failures—whether related to use of force incidents, officer safety or community trust—often have identifiable root causes. However, the difference between a proactive agency and a reactive one is in its ability to move beyond analysis and execute meaningful, lasting solutions.

Much like the railroad industry's struggle with PTC implementation, law enforcement agencies may encounter resistance to change, logistical challenges and financial constraints when attempting to mitigate risks. Yet, failure to follow through can lead to preventable tragedies, reputational damage and legal liability.

As you get to this point you may be saying wait a minute, just hold on here! This all sounds great and may make sense in a college classroom or in a textbook, but how do we do this?

The first thing law enforcement leaders need to do is adopt proper perspective and priorities. For whatever reason, there can be a tendency for leaders to have willful blindness – the conscious decision to ignore warning signs, risks or systemic failures despite evidence that action is needed – or even feel it necessary to protect

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problem employees. That must change. Supervisors at all levels must understand that their priority is to make the organization a better place for the people who deserve to be there.

I need to point out something very important about the Marcy incident. I have to believe that there are many good corrections officers at the Marcy facility who would thrive in a proper organizational culture. Ultimately, the culture of any agency starts at the top through clearly stated or latent values. If these values are not clear or are flawed, as the result is a cultural cancer. For those corrections officers and employees who deserve to be there, their organization failed them as well as Robert Brooks. The reality is that officers are not going to speak up or act if they know their organization will not support them. Instead, they, as well as their charges, may just suffer in silence for fear of retribution.

Leaders cannot be afraid of confrontation and instituting disciplinary actions. The people who deserve to be there will appreciate it, and I can verify that from my own experience as a supervisor and a chief. The duty to intervene should not be presented as the need to “rat out” someone. Could it be as simple as that? Sure, but it needs to be looked at more expansively. It must be viewed as a means of serving as “redundant systems” for each other and stepping in to prevent issues before they can happen. We are all human beings and can have a bad day or make a bad decision. Knowing that you will be watching over each other is a means of instilling respect in your culture, while doing the right thing to protect the public, your members and the organization. For more information on this, please watch the recent Lexipol webinar on the [Duty to Intervene](#).

In a multigenerational workplace, leaders need to show they genuinely care about their members. To that end, the well-being of members is important. Having some type of wellness solution beyond access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can be critical to a proper organizational culture that embraces a holistic

approach to the duty to intervene. Stepping in when you see that a co-worker is struggling personally or professionally can possibly save a career.

The phrase “compassion fatigue” refers to the physical, emotional and psychological exhaustion that individuals may experience as a result of prolonged exposure to the suffering of others, particularly in caregiving or helping roles. Officers see many bad things that others do not, and this type of fatigue can be a problem. They may need help keeping things in perspective. Plus, officers can be negatively impacted by fatigue and exhaustion caused by excessive shifts or stress-induced lack of sleep. This can also have a negative impact on an officer’s job performance and lead to

an act of frustration or anger. For those of you who have members working excessive overtime due to staffing shortages, you have your first proactive RM assignment before something bad happens: Find out how it is impacting them. Do you need to provide some type of [wellness solution](#)?



First Steps

The death of Robert Brooks serves as a poignant example of the dire consequences that can result from systemic failures in risk management and accountability. It underscores the imperative for law enforcement leaders to not only conduct thorough root cause analyses following incidents of misconduct but also to diligently implement and enforce corrective actions. By doing so, agencies can work toward preventing such tragedies in the future and maintaining public trust in the justice system.

Many leaders will view the severity of the Marcy incident as an outlier and dismiss it. I hope it is an outlier. This should not, however, prevent an honest, introspective examination of your own agency. Ask these questions of your staff: Do our members feel empowered to step in and act when they think it is necessary? Does our culture adequately convey the need for members to act as redundant systems for each other? If not, take action. Your members and your organization will be better for it.

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INTERSECTIONS

Traffic Safety Committee

Bill Georges, A/Chief (ret.) Albany PD

Chair, NYSACOP Traffic Safety Committee

NYSACOP Traffic Safety Outreach Liaison

Traffic Safety is Public Safety

Greetings and happy New Year from your NYSACOP Traffic Safety Team! We continue to serve our members and promote traffic safety engagement throughout the State. The team, working in concert with the NYSACOP Traffic Safety Committee (TSC), the Governors Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) and other traffic safety organizations works to provide information, resources and assistance to all our members, their agencies and allied organizations. If you would like assistance/information regarding your agency's traffic safety matters, please do not hesitate to contact NYSACOP Traffic Safety Services Coordinator, Dan Denz at ddenz@nychiefs.org.

We continuously work with our partners, both at GTSC and DCJS, to promote traffic safety training courses. These are routinely announced in NYSACOP bulletins, sent to our Traffic Safety Points of Contact and also posted on our website so please be on the lookout for them. Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) training is offered continuous-

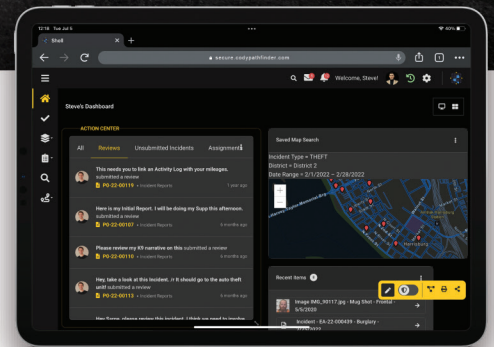
ly as impaired driving, especially drug impaired driving, is on the rise and more DREs are needed to help combat this problem. Cannabis Impaired Driving, DWI Detection/SFST, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement and Below 100 training courses are also available so please contact us if you are interested in any of these. Additionally, as part of our continuing efforts to promote traffic safety, we are currently in the planning phase for scheduling our Traffic Safety Executive Leadership seminars throughout 2025. If your region/agency is interested in having us present this training, please contact us and we will work with you to secure a date and location.

We also work on emerging issues that impact traffic safety with one of those issues being roadside oral fluid testing. If your agency is currently using, or is considering using, roadside oral fluid testing please contact us as we have assembled a user's group to compile and share information on this important issue.

Continued on Page 25

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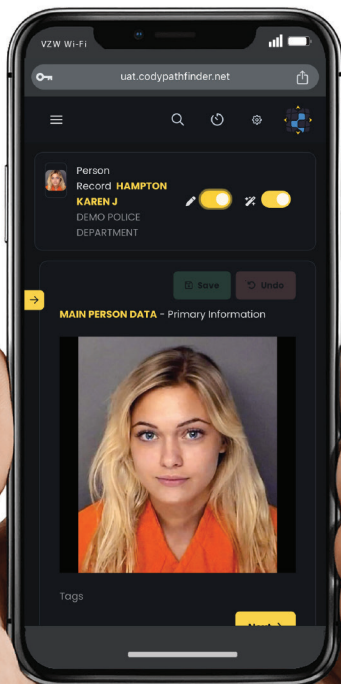
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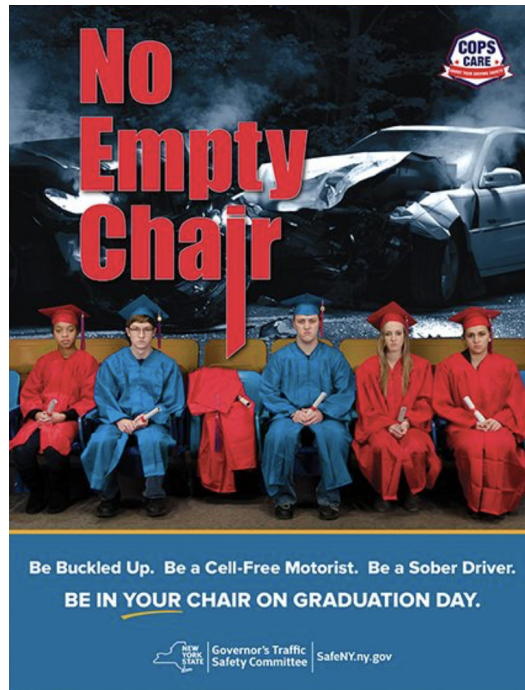


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Legislative issues is another area that we work on with our traffic safety partners. We are currently supporting the reintroduction of the Deadly Driving Bill and passage of NYS Bill A9923 and we are hopeful that these two bills will pass this legislative season. On the other hand, Senate Bill 3662 proposes limiting the frequency of traffic stops for minor violations and looks to prohibit stops for equipment violations such as expired inspections. We are closely monitoring this effort. NYSACOP has a position statement on traffic

safety and enforcement that is posted on our website. Please review it for further information.



We are always very pleased to get information about traffic safety initiatives that agencies have conducted in their regions and would like to take this opportunity to highlight that the Kingston Police Department has recently launched a new Traffic Safety Unit to increase enforcement and safety in their city. If your department is conducting a traffic safety initiative, we would love to hear about it so we can show-

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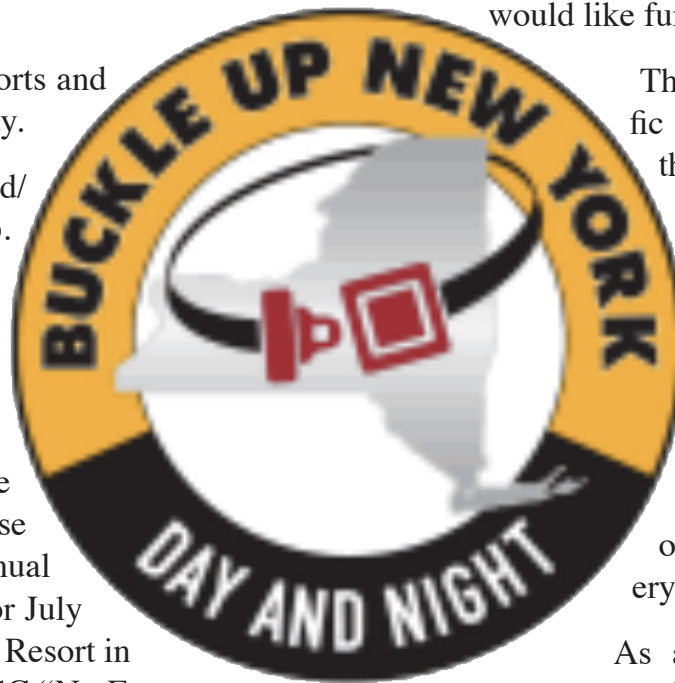


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case your department's efforts and commitment to traffic safety.

Several conferences and/or initiatives are coming up. The New Chiefs Executive Training is scheduled for the week of March 24th in Niagara Falls, the ESLETS Conference is scheduled for April 9th and 10th at the Doubletree Hotel in Syracuse and the NYSACOP Annual Conference is scheduled for July 13th – 16th at the Karthrite Resort in Monticello, N.Y. The GTSC “No Empty Chair” initiative is scheduled for April 21st – 25th and “Buckle up New York” is scheduled for May 19th – June 1st. Please contact NYSACOP GTSC LEL Frank Galerie at fgalerie@nychiefs.org if you



would like further information.

Thank you all for making traffic safety a priority and special thanks to our Traffic Safety Points of Contact for assisting us with our mission. We all know the important components of traffic safety are enforcement, education and public information so please keep up the good work to ensure our roadways are safe for everyone.

As always, we welcome your comments, inquiries, suggestions and involvement. For further information, or if you would like our assistance, please contact NYSACOP Traffic Safety Services Coordinator Dan Denz at ddenz@nychiefs.org.

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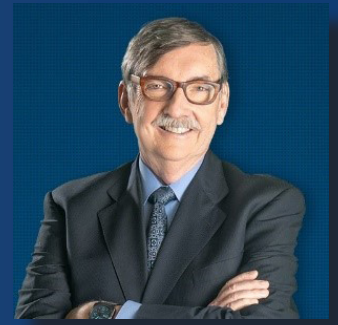


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Finding the 5%ers

By Gordon Graham



Gordon Graham here and hello again. In past articles I have bemoaned that “mediocrity has replaced accountability.” Without accountability, the house of cards starts to collapse. And regardless of what profession you are in, this is a ticket for future major problems.

What do leaders at each rank need to do to address the accountability issue? Executives must increase accountability by building good “systems” – policies and procedures – that are properly designed and kept up to date. Executive accountability continues with promoting good people to the rank of supervisor. People in supervisory positions must have the guts to do their job, which is the enforcement of organizational policy. Executives must also have a robust audit process in place to make sure what you say you are doing is in fact being done. Finally, executive accountability continues with having a discipline system in place to address people who think that organizational policy does not apply to them.

Supervisor accountability is much more direct. The primary mission of the supervisor is enforcement of organizational policy – i.e., “systems implementation.” Again, executives must have a promotional process in place that fully addresses how supervisors are selected, trained, mentored and developed – and they must support them when they make the tough calls. When supervisors think they will not be supported by management, they will stop making the tough calls – and that is a ticket to tragedy.

Accountability for line personnel is even simpler: knowing the policies that apply to your job and following these policies – not some of the time, not most of the time, but all of the time.

I’ve stressed this focus on accountability in my lectures over the last several decades, yet I have not seen much improvement, particularly in government operations. The bane of civil service is that if you work hard and do your job right you get paid “X” – and if you don’t care and are counting the days to retirement you get paid “X.” So why work hard? Why care? Why should I do this when others are not?

In past articles I have talked about the “5%ers.” For those of you not familiar with that term, here is a quick explanation: Give me 100 cops, or 100 firefighters, or 100 teachers or 100 “whoever” in a class. Ten of them do not want to be in the class – in their view this is a waste of their time – and they will spend the time in the class on their phone, texting or viewing some “brain rot” sites to pass time. Eighty to eighty-five of the 100 are good people who will do what they are told to do. And then there is the 5% – maybe as much as 10% – who pay attention and have the drive and desire to do their job right and “make excellence the norm, not the deviation” – the essence of being fully accountable.

In my last article I mentioned Dr. Tony Kern, a prolific author who I’ve worked with on various projects over the decades. He is a retired B-1 pilot who picked up his doctorate along the way and is one of the smart-



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est people I have ever met. Years ago as we were preparing a webinar, I told him “Dr. Kern – you are one of the smartest people I have ever met.” And he chuckled and responded, “I don’t know if that is true, but I do know I am intensely curious.”

Not to digress (readers of this column know I am prone to do that), but I have never considered myself smart – but I do know I am intensely curious – and while this is not the focus of this writing I wonder if there is a link between curiosity and intelligence. Perhaps I’ll explore that in a future article.

But back to Dr. Kern. In his great book *Going Pro: The Deliberate Practice of Professionalism*, he talks about the “5%ers” differently. In his words, there are three levels of professionals. Level One – you are a member of the organization. Level Two – you comply with the rules. And Level Three – you are constantly trying to make “excellence the norm – not the deviation.”

For those of you who have not read *Going Pro* (it is on my recommended reading list), early in the book Dr. Kern talks about a young lady at Starbucks who is diligently wiping tables at 0600 hrs. He watches her using three separate cloths – one for the initial wiping of the table, a second one for drying the table, and a third one to really make it shine. Fascinated by her attention to detail, Dr. Kern asks, “Is there going to be an inspection today? Why are you so diligent in your work?” Her response was simple: “My parents told me if it was worth doing, it was worth doing right.” And that impressed Dr. Kern.

With this in mind I am asking you – each of you – to start looking at how people do their job. Don’t start with your co-workers – start with the cashiers at stores, the waitstaff at restaurants, the mechanics who work on your car, the IT person who is addressing your

computer problems or the person you are dealing with on the phone. When you see “the deliberate practice of professionalism” – people who really care – let them know you are impressed.

I have been doing this now for many years (frankly, since I first read *Going Pro* many moons ago) and I have made it my goal to “catch people doing something right” and thank them for their efforts. I am preparing this at the Tallahassee airport after addressing the Florida Risk Management Fund, a group of great people



who are truly trying to improve the quality of sheriff’s office operations in the Sunshine State. Yesterday I met many of the “5%ers” and I was impressed.

Sheila was my Uber driver today, and she was a “5%er,” showing up early at the hotel and wearing her seatbelt, extremely courteous and an excellent driver. On my flight to Florida earlier this week I sat next to a fellow who was using his iPad to watch a football game (or so I thought). You probably know I am not a sports fan, but Mrs. G and I were at a restaurant in Manhattan Beach on Sunday night and the Ram’s game was on the big screen. I noted that my fellow passenger on the Delta flight had this game on his screen and he was replaying (over and over and over again) the same running play of the Rams. After about 10 viewings of that same play I politely asked, “Excuse me, I can’t help but notice you are watching the same play over and over.” Turns out he is an NFL referee and he wanted to see if he and his fellow referees missed anything

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When I inquired whether this was a required duty of his position, he told me no, but he wanted to make sure he was doing his job right. I thanked him for his hard work and explained my thinking on “5%ers” and asked him if his fellow referees were doing the same thing. He smiled and avoided a direct answer but thanked me for recognizing his work.

Make it your goal to catch them doing their job right, praise them in public, pat them on the back, ratify their good behavior

During my change of planes in Atlanta I visited the Delta Sky Lounge, and the woman checking my credentials for entrance was clearly a “5%er” – very kind and courteous – advising me of my new gate and the boarding time. The crew

on the quick flight from Atlanta to Tallahassee were all “5%ers” – and several passengers recognized this and said thanks to them.

In the last article I mentioned the concept of “fulfillment.” Knowing you are making a difference is important. Yet too often we ignore the great work that so many people do. Yes, I am winding this piece up because Madame Editor is the “ultimate 5%er” – but make it your goal to compliment people on their work. Of particular importance is letting the women and men you work with, or work for, or who work for you, know when they are doing great work. The number one complaint I get from line personnel around the world is, “The only time I hear from my boss is when something is wrong.”

Our people in law enforcement do a lot of things right. Make it your goal to catch them doing their job right, praise them in public, pat them on the back, ratify their good behavior and you will encourage future good behavior – not just by that employee but by their co-workers who see them being complimented for their work. My goal is to increase the “5%” to a higher number – and perhaps there will be a “tipping point” where excellence is achieved by all on a regular basis.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. If you are reading this line, you are probably a “5%er.”

Gordon Graham is a 33-year veteran of law enforcement and is the co-founder of [Lexipol](https://www.lexipol.com/), where he serves on the current board of directors. A practicing attorney, Graham focuses on managing risk in public safety operations and has presented a commonsense approach to risk management to hundreds of thousands of public safety professionals around the world. He holds a master’s degree in Safety and Systems Management from University of Southern California and a Juris Doctorate from Western State University <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/nilygWunsKM/maxresdefault.jpg>



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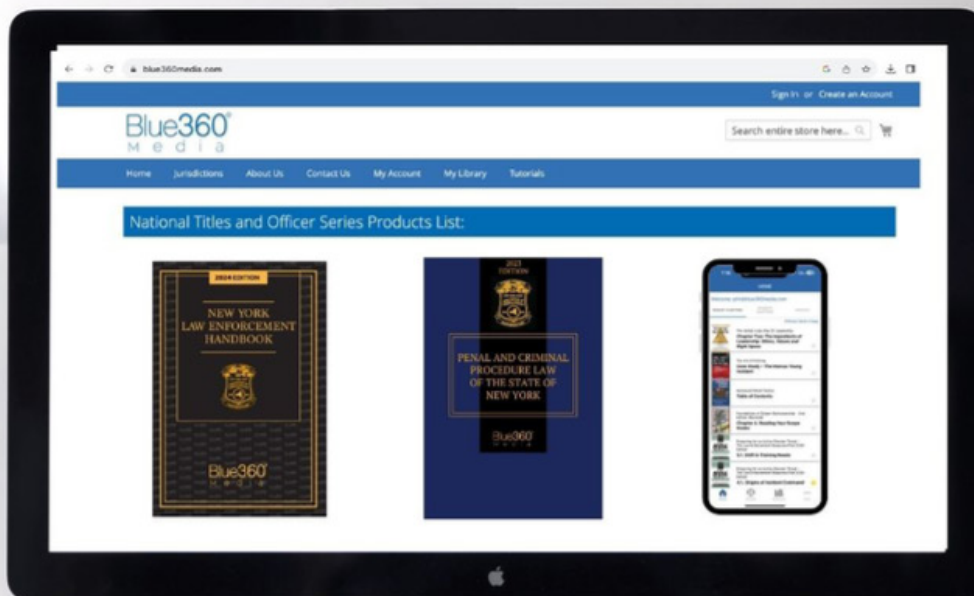
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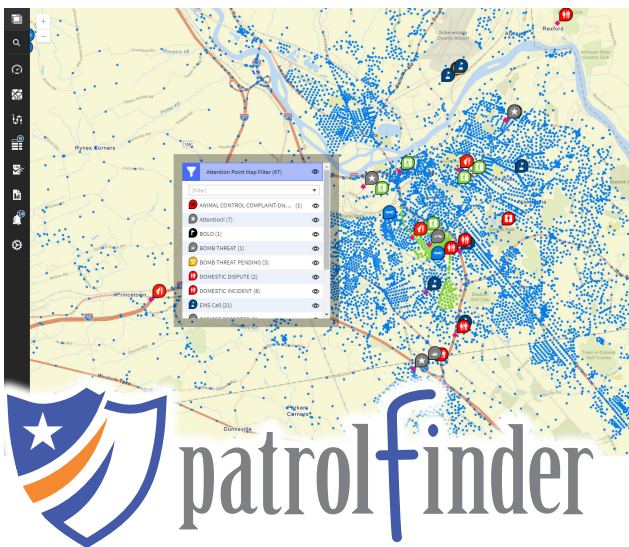







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Factors in Leader Development: *Leadership Traits*

By Greg Veitch, Retired Chief of Police from Saratoga Springs, NY



Leadership Culture

Leaders of all types of organizations are concerned about culture. Police leaders are no different. I once heard it said that our best defense against civil lawsuits is culture, not qualified immunity. Another well known saying is that “culture eats strategy for breakfast.” (I think it was Peter Drucker who said that)

One of the difficulties many leaders have when it comes to organizational culture is that culture is sometimes difficult for us to define. We have a hard time pinning down a solid definition. Some definitions are lengthy and complex (our academic friends like to use those) and other definitions are simpler and more general like, “the total way of life of a group of people.”

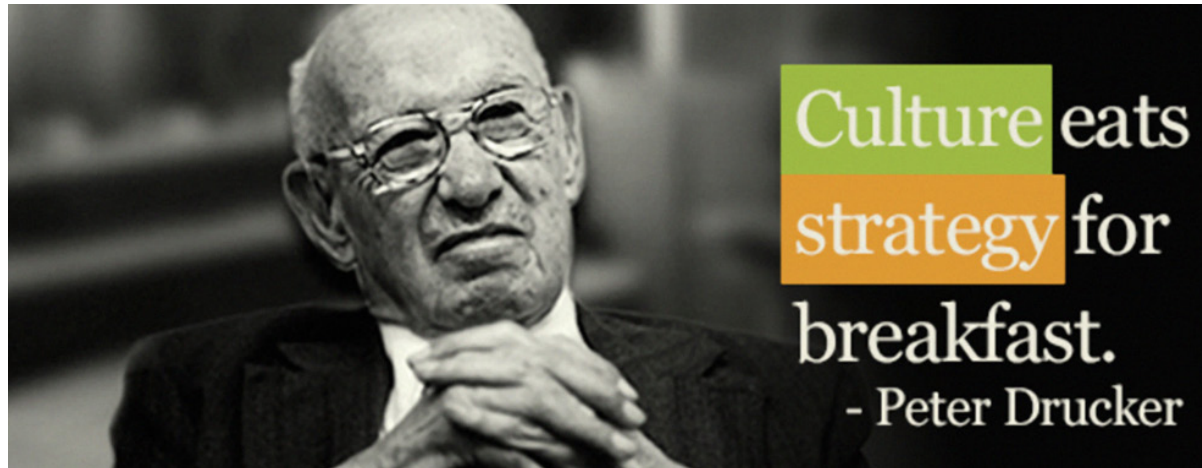
Adding to the difficulty in understanding organizational culture, many organizations have two or more subcultures that each have common components and distinct differences.

Regardless of which definition you use or how you think about culture, we all live and interact with it as leaders. If we want to build a culture of leadership within our organizations, we would do well to recognize that our leadership culture is simply how leadership is done within any particular organization. In other words, how are we doing leadership here?

This includes physical, social, emotional and psychological components of culture that we can identify and take practical steps to improve, if we so desire.

Take, for example, the physical environment of the police station. Is the workplace clean and well organized? Are all paperwork and computer stations organized logically and efficiently for the work that needs to be done in those areas? Is the armory properly secured? Booking area cleared of blood, garbage, debris etc...?

When we ask officers about the importance of hav-



ing clean police vehicles on the street, there is often agreement that it is a good thing and that it sends a positive message to the public that we care about our appearance and jobs. What message then, are we sending each other if inside the station our hallways are not swept, restrooms not kept clean, locker rooms filled with derogatory and cynical stickers, notes and cartoons?

Leaders are responsible for the work conditions of the group. It may not be “your job” to sweep the hallway during the weekend when the janitor is on his or her days off, but the officer-in-charge is the leader-in-charge none-the-less. If there are notes, pictures or cartoons hanging around that have no business being in a professional workplace, guess whose responsibility it is to get rid of them? The physical environment is a reflection of how leadership is done in any organization.

It is part of the leadership culture.

Another dimension of leadership culture is the shared experiences and standards that leaders have within the organization that sets them apart from other subcultures.

The first distinction might be the basic supervisor course that all supervisors attend upon promotion. All department supervisors have had that experience, although they are not all together at the same time. Internally, only supervisors attend staff meetings. This is a shared experience for leaders.

Are staff meetings held regularly, on time and in a business-like format? Or is your leadership culture a little more laid back and informal when it comes to staff meetings? Do you think that how you conduct staff meetings has an impact on how your supervisors think of themselves and how business is conducted within the organization?

The work that supervisors produce also reflects the leadership culture. If you have a solid leadership culture that takes management discipline seriously, use of force reports, internal affairs complaints, and performance appraisals are all completed fully with no short cuts taken.

The level to which your supervisors are committed to high standards when it comes to internal paperwork tells a lot about your leadership culture. When all supervisors internalize high standards, like justifying high ratings on appraisals and following all protocols on internal and use of force investigations, then your leadership culture is in good shape. Leaders feel that this is just how we do leadership here, and their work reflects that shared belief.

Another component of any culture is the emotional attachments and relationships that hold together the or-

ganization.

You cannot have a healthy culture without trust. The leadership culture reflects the level of commitment that individuals have to not only the organization, but to each other. Not every leader has to be as enthusiastic about every program or initiative as every other supervisor, but all supervisors must be on the same page. Swimming in the same direction and mutually supportive of one another.

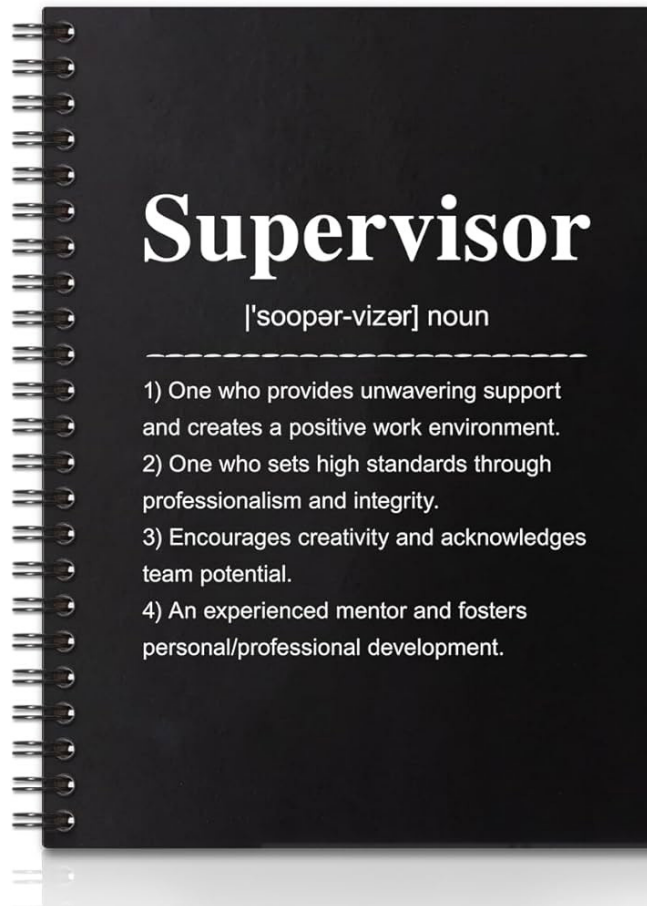
In-fighting, backstabbing, overly political actions have no place in the leadership culture. This may be the most difficult component for leaders to work on, however it cannot be ignored. Just one supervisor who is working against the other supervisors in the department and/or the chief's initiatives must be addressed. Trust built within the leadership ranks will spread out as a positive influence throughout the ranks.

The final culture component we will look at is the psychological connection among members of the culture. For the leadership culture that means what shared histories, beliefs and attitudes among leaders in

the department.

In business, CEOs are often taught to tell stories about past successes that the company has had. They are encouraged to celebrate small wins in the workplace. This tactic is believed to generate a shared understanding of what it means to belong to the company and what success within the company looks like. These ideas are true when trying to build a leadership culture as well.

When something goes according to plan, it should be recognized and celebrated. When a sergeant makes a great leadership decision, it should be documented. Command staff should actively look for good leader-



ship and support it. Just like our officers deserve to be recognized for the good work that they do, our supervisors deserve to be recognized for the good leadership they display. Look around for good leadership and you will find it.

Going through an officer-involved critical incident together creates a history together. As leaders, we need to remind each other of the successes we have. So much of what leaders do in policing is addressing negative behavior. Leaders need to change their mindset and create positive memories (histories) together. The bonds of the leadership culture are strengthened in this way.

Building a leadership culture isn't always easy. Leaders know that we are influenced by the culture

and we, in turn, influence the culture by our actions and beliefs.

Leaders can improve their culture by keeping in mind that culture encompasses everything that the leadership team believes in and does. It has physical components, like the conditions of the building, equipment and vehicles. It has social aspects such as shared experiences and standards of conduct. It includes the emotional bonds of trusting relationships and the psychological aspects of shared histories and beliefs.

Leadership culture can be a positive, powerful force in an organization. It takes leaders to understand and live out good cultural practices to develop a lasting leadership culture in your agency.



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