

**VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BUREAU**



**INSPECTION AND AUDIT UNIT MANUAL**

12/12/2019

# Mission Statement

The mission of the Inspection and Audit Unit is to assure services provided by the Sheriff's Office are delivered to the public in an effective and efficient manner. Our strategy to accomplish our mission is to conduct independent reviews of every organizational division, bureau, unit and their tasks; to evaluate existing policies, practices, and procedures; document these reviews; and propose recommendations for improving operations.

## Objectives

- Assess the agency's efficiency and effectiveness
- Be free from personal and external impairments
- Provide statistical data
- Furnish information necessary to implement changes
- Determine adherence to policies and procedures

## Strategy

- Conduct periodic Citizen satisfaction questionnaires/surveys
- Conduct periodic criminal report audits
- Conduct reviews/audits of divisions, bureaus and units
- Track reviews/audits conducted by individual bureaus/units
- Review policies and procedures to ensure they are contemporary
- Review traffic collisions, vehicle damage and towing expenses

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# Inspection & Audit Unit Policies and Procedures

## **ORGANIZATION**

The Inspection and Audit Unit is staffed by one Captain. The Captain reports to the Commander of the Professional Standards Bureau in the Support Services Division.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

This unit is responsible, through periodic and regularly scheduled inspections and audits, for ensuring that the work of the agency is being conducted within the framework of established policy and according to the procedures set down for each task, function or process. Through verbal questioning and review of administrative reports, crime reports, audiotapes and other information, personnel of this unit will critically compare performance against written directives and expected results. Where necessary, recommendations will be encompassed in the final report. Follow-up inspections shall be conducted to determine if the corrective actions have been implemented.

This unit is also responsible for tracking results of internal inspections and audits conducted by the divisions, bureaus and units.

## **TYPES OF INSPECTIONS AND AUDITS**

### **Operational Audits**

This type of audit reviews the principal operational functions of the Department. Operational audits are undertaken for the purposes of assessing compliance, efficiency, economy and effectiveness of management practices and controls associated with these operational functions.

### **Compliance Audits**

Compliance audits determine the degree of adherence to policies and procedures set out in the Sheriff's Policy Manual, Divisional Policies and individual Unit Policies/S.O.P.

### **Citizen Surveys**

Citizen surveys are conducted periodically to residents who had made a "call for service" to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. These surveys are designed to measure the level of satisfaction with the services provided by employees of this agency, including dispatchers, civilian report writers, volunteers, and deputies.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **OPERATIONAL AUDITS**

#### **Bureau Audit**

Conducting operational audits is a five-step process: information gathering, evaluation, analysis, action planning and summary and conclusions. The first step, Information Gathering, begins with a series of questions regarding the specific division/bureau/unit being audited. These questions should reflect the unique requirements of the area to be audited.

The second step, Evaluation, is a review of the responses to the questions in Step 1. The review will consist of comparing specific responses to known acceptable business practices in determining compliance and efficiency.

The third step, Analysis, compares all evaluations to determine the overall function and performance of the division/bureau/unit. The result will be the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the division/bureau/unit.

Step four, Action Planning, is designed to convert the analysis into specific actions that can be taken to capitalize the strengths, as well as make needed corrections.

Step five, Summary and Conclusions, is a synopsis of the first four steps, combined with the opinions of the auditor.

#### **Sheriff's Policy Manual Review**

The Inspection and Audit Unit will continually review the Sheriff's Policy Manual, in conjunction with Lexipol, for needed updates. If potential changes in procedures are identified, the recommendations shall be reviewed by the Inspection and Audit Captain and the subject matter experts.

Any changes in policies reference procedures will be approved by appropriate Command and/or Executive Staff.

## **COMPLIANCE AUDITS**

### **Criminal Report Audits**

Criminal reports are any and all reports written by agency personnel that are generated via a call for service or by personal observation. Exceptions to this are traffic accident and courtesy reports, which will not be considered for audit purposes.

#### **Procedure:**

1. The Audit and Inspection Captain shall request the Crime Analysis Unit to randomly select fourteen criminal reports. Some variables are to be utilized to ensure a pre-selected number of reports are chosen from each patrol area and detention services, however, the reports will still be random. The quantity of reports to be audited are based upon staffing levels made available but should be no less than two per area.
2. The review consists of the following:
  - 1) Review the audio of the incoming calls for service and dispatching of the patrol units for accuracy. Where appropriate, the auditor would seek comments from the citizens filing the reports.
  - 2) Review of the reports for thoroughness, completeness and adherence to policies.
  - 3) Review of any property/evidence submitted to the property room/crime lab for discrepancies.
  - 4) Review of the follow-up investigation conducted by detectives to determine the status of the case and if it was submitted to the DA's office for filing. If it wasn't submitted or filed, the auditor should determine the circumstances for the non-filing.
  - 5) Verify the report was received by the Records Bureau via File Net,
  - 6) Finally, determine if any of the reports exposed the agency to potential civil liability or citizen's complaints.
3. The auditor shall document the findings for each report based upon the areas listed in section 2. A summary report shall also be written and will consist of the auditor's opinions and conclusions detailing any systemic problems identified, if any, and recommendations for improvement.

## **Vehicle Collision Review Committee**

The **Vehicle Use Policy** has established the means by which all accidents, damage to vehicles, and tow reports involving on-duty Sheriff's Office employees are reviewed to establish responsibility. The committee is comprised of eight members from throughout the agency and meetings are held quarterly. The committee's chairman is the Internal Affairs Captain and the assist chairman is the Background Investigations Sergeant. At the conclusion of each meeting, all accidents, vehicle damage and tows deemed to be avoidable shall require the involved employee to receive discipline, depending on the damage and prior accidents. All involved employees shall receive notification as to the determination of the committee.

The sergeant will be responsible for scheduling the review date. The procedures outlined in the Sheriff's Policy Manual shall be followed.

## **Range Qualification Review**

The **Firearms and Qualification Policy** requires all deputies to qualify at the range once every two months. At the end of each shooting period, the training center staff will forward the names of the deputies who failed to qualify to the Professional Standards Bureau Management Assistant. A letter of reprimand will be generated by the Professional Standards Commander and sent to the respective deputy's bureau for service. Special circumstances preventing deputies from qualifying shall be explained by memorandum to the respective bureau commander and forwarded to the Professional Standards Commander. Any discipline higher than a written reprimand shall be reviewed and approved by the Assistant Sheriff overseeing Professional Standards.

## **Unintentional Firearm Discharges**

The **Firearms and Qualification Policy** defines the procedures for reporting and investigating the unintentional discharge of a firearm not in the presence of a suspect. After following the appropriate reporting and review procedures, the Firearms Safety Committee Chair shall forward the committee's findings to the Professional Standards Commander. If the employee's actions contributed to the unintentional discharge, appropriate training and discipline shall be assigned to the employee. Any discipline higher than a written reprimand shall be reviewed and approved by the Assistant Sheriff overseeing Professional Standards.

## **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Gun Letters**

Whenever a Department gun letter is generated for a sworn member, the Inspection and Audit Unit Captain shall confirm the weapon is authorized by Department policy. The Professional Standards Bureau Commander's Management Assistant generates the letter, who then will forward the letter to the Sheriff to sign.

### **Employment Verification**

The Inspection and Audit Unit Captain signs employment verification letters for department members. The Assistant Sheriff's (of Professional Standards) Management Assistant generates the letter.

### **Retiree I.D. Card Renewal and CCW Endorsement (Includes Federal Retirees)**

Safety member employees that retire prior to January 1, 1981 were issued an I.D. card without an expiration date and there is no requirement for renewal. No endorsement for CCW is required, nor is there any requirement for range qualification. Should a pre-1981 retiree request a new I.D. card, the expiration date should be set for 20 years ahead. If, at the time of renewal, a pre-1981 retiree appears to be incapable of safely handling a firearm, the CCW can be denied for cause. This would be the Assistant Sheriff of the Support Services Division decision.

Safety member employees that retire after January 1, 1981 must renew their I.D. card/CCW every five years. All Sheriff's Office retirees will be required to complete the *RETIRED OFFICER CCW ENDORSEMENT* form. CCW authorization requires an expiration date to indicate a valid CCW endorsement. If, at the time of renewal, the retiree appears to be incapable of safely handling a firearm, a range qualification can be required prior to a CCW endorsement. CCW can be denied for cause.

Federal safety members must be honorably retired and had been authorized to carry a weapon while on-duty. The retiree must have been assigned to duty within the state for at least one year or retired from active duty in the state. Retiree must provide a certification letter verifying active service in the state, reason for retirement, and indicating the agency's concurrence for a CCW permit. Retiree shall complete State CCW application (do not submit to State) for review by the CCW Unit. If approved, retiree must present a weapon qualification letter and then be Livescanned prior to issuance of Retired Federal Peace Officer I.D. card. Retiree is responsible for Livescan fees. No Livescan is necessary for renewals. (Livescan is necessary so the Department will be notified of any future arrest of the retiree within the state). The CCW permit must be renewed every five years.