

Recommendation Update Form

This response is in reference to recommendation # 23-1/ Training Academy

Responsible SME: Commander McDermott

Date Sent: 2/28/23

Date Due: 3/6/23

*Please provide response to highlighted portions.

APD UPDATE:

Training on how to write the proper type of report and not using "boiler plate" language is taught at the APD Training Academy by the Basic Staff to the following:

PSA's - are primarily taught how to write accident reports while at the Academy. When out on OJT and after OJT, their reports are reviewed by their assigned sergeant.

Laterals - do not receive the block of report writing that our cadets do. However, they practice report writing while at RBT's to document each scenario. These reports are graded by Basic Staff.

When out on OJT their FTO reads their reports in addition to their assigned sergeant.

Cadets - receive report writing training during their Basic Training. They are taught how they are to articulate the elements of a crime, the information needed for a synopsis and a narrative, and identification of victims, suspects, witnesses.

The cadets practice note taking on a daily basis and are required to turn in those notes the following day in addition to miscellaneous essays that are assigned as homework (nightly).

The cadets practice report writing during RBT scenario training that is graded by Basic Staff. Basic grammar issues are noted and corrected.

From the Advanced Training and what is taught to all sworn outside of the Basic Training are the following:

Previous Officer Training: The 2020 use of force Mechanics of Arrest Restraint and Control training included a component of report writing. This training consisted of officers performing a reality based training scenario and completing a written exercise documenting the use of force incident. The written exercise required officers to provide a detailed account of the incident, articulate the reason for initial police presence, specifically describe the actions leading to the use of force, and a description of the use of force employed and the justification for each action taken. Specific instruction against the use of boilerplate language was included in the lecture portion of the training. Furthermore, officers written narratives were reviewed for completeness and to ensure boilerplate language was not used throughout the report. Feedback was provided to each officer, and if issues were identified the officer was required to correct them prior to final submission.

Supervisor Training: All first line supervisors and acting sergeants are required to complete a 100-hour First Line Supervisor Course prior to assuming supervisory responsibilities. This course includes a component on supervisory responsibilities when reviewing police reports and written narratives. This training stresses the importance of a first line supervisor in identifying deficiencies in written reports related to the use of boilerplate language, spelling and grammatical errors, or unclear accounts of an incident.

Upcoming Department Training: The APD Academy has identified the importance of on-going training related to report writing and is in the process of working with an external vendor to develop and deliver an in-service training on report writing. This course will provide officers with guidance on how to capture information for a thorough police report; reinforce the importance of a clear and concise account of an event; remind officers of the wide audience who will be reading the report; and direct officers to avoid the use of vague language, boilerplate terms, or police verbiage in written reports. This training will be provided to department personnel in 2023.

Detective Academy Training: The APD Academy recognizes the importance of report writing as a crucial skill for detectives and currently works with Blue to Gold to deliver an eight hour training course, entitled "Bulletproof Report Writing" for detectives or officers who aspire to work in an investigative capacity to further develop this skillset. This training course is offered as an optional training course twice per year.

Recommendation Status: Approved Denied

*If denied please give reasoning:

Chief made aware of recommendation: Yes No

Chief Signature: Mike Smathers Date: 3-6-23
Mike Smathers Acting Chief

Recommendation Submission

CPC -This response is in reference to recommendation # 23-1

CPC -Area Command Valley

CPC -Referenced CASA area (A,B,C,D,E): Officer Training

APD -Responsible SME: Cmdr. McDermott

APD -Date received 2/24/2023

RECOMMENDATION (One (1) recommendation per submission.

Recommendation/Reasoning must be 500 words or less for submission):

The Valley CPC recommends that police reports be written clearly and coherently rather than using 'boilerplate' language. More descriptive language is important also, as brief descriptions can be vague and directionless. We also recommend that immediate supervisors read officer reports with that in mind, and proof them with care.

Officer reports are part of court records, it is vital that they are written concisely and plainly so as to communicate incidents are not obfuscated by excessive language, poor grammar, or hard to understand phrases.

We were requested to submit this recommendation by a former Commander of the Valley Command Area