

Training:

BRINGING THE NYPD INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

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THE TRAINING CHALLENGE

The primary mission of the NYPD Training Bureau and its Police Academy is to provide training for all NYPD employees, and primarily for police officers at all rank levels in the Department. As the police in New York City take on new challenges and face increasing complexities in the field, the NYPD must provide the highest caliber training possible to sustain its continued success in preventing crime, maintaining order and building community confidence.

Historically, the primary focus of NYPD training has been on teaching new recruit officers the fundamentals of policing and on specialized training for certain officers in special assignments. While training has provided recruits with the basic information they need to perform as police officers, a recent review of NYPD training identified a number of shortcomings.

Participants in training at all police ranks have viewed Police Academy training as overly formulaic and mechanical, relying on lectures rather than situational engagements. In-service/post-academy training for serving and veteran officers has been limited, both in content and availability. The core Police Academy recruit training curriculum has not been reviewed comprehensively in more than a decade, nor has it been updated regularly or systematically. While there are many excellent instructors, some have no recent field experience, nor has there been sufficient effort to develop instructors and hone their skills. The old Police Academy on 20th Street in Manhattan did not provide the most effective learning environment, especially with respect to scenario-based training, which has been quite limited as a consequence.

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In sum, members of the service, both cadets and veterans, were not regularly receiving the reality-based skills training to prepare them for the complexities of policing a highly dense urban environment. Surveys of veteran members undertaken during the re-engineering process showed that they want good training in tactics that will increase their effectiveness, as well as training on a regular basis throughout their careers. There is a clear need for substantial recurring training to keep serving officers tactically sharp and abreast of new challenges and new concepts in their dynamic and continually evolving profession. The NYPD must invest heavily in officer development on a regular basis and provide training that is inspiring, technically correct and relevant to the challenges members face in the field. While this transformation in training is now under way, full achievement of the NYPD’s training goals will take some time. In the coming years, the NYPD will develop a modernized capacity to prepare officers for American policing’s critical and evolving challenges — including providing police service that is perceived as effective, fair and legitimate by all of New York’s communities.



PROGRESS IN 2014, 2015 AND BEYOND

In 2014, the Department moved forward with some needed improvements in training. A series of short-term, in-service training initiatives for uniformed members were developed, initial changes were made to the recruit-training curriculum and an initial community-based field training orientation for new officers was implemented. In early 2015, the first full-scale field training program was initiated in the 77 precincts, nine Housing Bureau police service areas and 12 Transit Bureau districts, with specially prepared field training officers guiding and mentoring probationary police officers' initial experiences in the field at a ratio of four recruits to one training officer.

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This program included the use of community partners, who are volunteers recruited from among community leaders, business owners and other residents to help orient newly assigned probationary officers to the neighborhoods they will be patrolling. With the graduation of a new class of recruits in July 2015, the Department will implement a comprehensive field-training program providing one field trainer for every two probationary officers.

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The Training Bureau's new curricula will keep veteran and incoming officers safe by teaching them the latest tactics and will increase their effectiveness by emphasizing that being courteous and respectful to citizens is in their best interest. The NYPD's new training will engender a more service oriented mindset and give trainees the

tactical tools to de-escalate tense situations while using the least amount of force necessary to gain control of physical confrontations.

The training goals for the coming years are as follows:

- Making training an important part of every member's work experience, strengthening their professional skills and adding to knowledge that directly relates to their responsibilities.
- Infusing the values of fairness and respect in every academic discipline, as well as firearms and tactics instruction, to ensure that officers receive a consistent message about how to communicate a sense of legitimacy and trust to the community.
- Ensuring that all training programs are vibrant, interesting and directly related to an employee's job responsibilities.
- Developing instructors for Academy courses who function as facilitators of learning in scenario-based curricula and who have sufficient recent field experience to be aware of current patrol working conditions and challenges.
- Bringing the community into the training process as curriculum collaborators, instructors, and classroom discussion facilitators in selected topics.
- Linking training to career development so that employees will be prepared for progressively more challenging leadership roles as they move up the career ladder.
- Providing new police recruits with the knowledge and skills to interact effectively with communities and neighborhoods, as well as the opportunity to practice their skills in realistic scenario-based training.
- Providing probationary police officers with effective field training by skilled training officers who serve as mentors and coaches, as well as community partners who introduce new officers to a neighborhood, its residents and its business people.



During 2014, construction was completed on a new state-of-the-art training facility in College Point, Queens, and the Training Bureau successfully transitioned to the new facility. The Department's January 2015 recruit class was the first to fully experience all that the new Police Academy has to offer, including simulated tactical village environments with storefronts, a subway car, vehicles, and bank windows. Officers will learn strategy and tactics through practice in these settings. Because only ten to twenty officers can use the simulated settings at a time, trainees under instruction in the tactical settings will wear body cameras that broadcast their experiences to classrooms where larger groups of students can watch their peers and be better prepared when they undergo the simulation exercises themselves. The NYPD will be the first police department anywhere in the world to use body cameras in a training environment to increase student cognitive and tactical experiences in simulation exercises.

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THE 2015 IN-SERVICE TRAINING INITIATIVE

The largest and most comprehensive portion of the in-service training program in 2015 is a three-day course designed to improve uniformed officers' interactions with the public, especially in confrontation and arrest situations. Each of the three days is designed to address a different area of significance.

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- Day 1 is titled Foundations of Policing and is intended to improve “police-public interaction while maintaining officer safety and effectiveness.” The training is designed both to address personal development, including an individual officer’s frame of mind, physical health and mental health and to equip NYPD officers with the mental toughness and verbal tactics to maintain courtesy and respect in the most strenuous situations.

- Day 2 focuses on field policing actions with a program developed by the NYPD Training Bureau on problem solving, conflict management, and officers’ responsibilities concerning the appropriate use of force. This day includes eight separate training modules, including crisis and conflict management, controlling adrenaline and unnecessary force, understanding ego and abuse of authority, control techniques, legal issues, officer discretion, and providing quality service.

- Day 3 is a hands-on module that provides instruction in the tactical mindset, defensive techniques and team-led control/takedown techniques. The course teaches takedown methods designed to protect the safety of both the subject and the members of the service involved. To ensure that the Department’s physical tactics training reflects the latest thinking in the policing field, Police Academy personnel met with – and will continue to meet with – members from other law enforcement agencies to elicit information on best practices from around the country.

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The three-day course is being given to the 20,000 police personnel, including police officers, sergeants, and lieutenants, assigned to all the NYPD field commands. Their managers, including civilian managerial personnel serving in enforcement commands, will attend an abbreviated version of the training program so that they are equipped to reinforce the strategies and tactics the officers have been taught. As noted below, the content of the three-day program will be incorporated into the revised recruit-training program.



In student evaluations of three-day course, more than 80 percent of the officers taking the course said that course content was relevant to members' roles and responsibilities, and more than 70 percent said they would recommend this course to other police officers. In response to the evaluations, modest changes were made in the instruction. Using evaluation results to strengthen course content is a relatively new practice for the Academy, and the current course and its evaluations have provided a good opportunity to embed this approach in Academy protocols.

A Training Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed in November 2014, comprising eight members from various New York City communities who have advised the Training Bureau on the content of the three-day training program and will continue to review training needs, courses and issues. The goal in forming the committee was to establish an inclusive group of community and other stakeholders, representing all boroughs and reflective of the diversity of the city. The Department intends to increase the committee's membership, while keeping the committee small enough to function effectively as a working group. The larger committee will empanel several sub-committees to focus on curricula design, expansion of the field training community partner program, executive development and community instructors in the Academy. The Training Advisory Committee will advise on new curricula prior to adoption by the Academy.

ANNUAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Building on the special three-day in-service training course, the Department is planning to provide all of its uniformed members with annual in-service training, as well as increased opportunities to attend special courses related to their specific assignments. The number and range of in-service training offerings is being assessed and increased accordingly. In-service training options will include sessions on the latest tactics, de-escalation strategies, intervention skills, and changes in the law and police procedures, as well as ways to positively interact and collaborate with community members.

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- The Training Bureau is in the process of developing the new annual in-service training program. The first iteration of this program will commence in July 2015, and end in June 2016, and comparable programs will run annually thereafter. The content will include tactical skills that emphasize the “3 Cs” – Cover, Concealment and Containment – as well as a critical fourth “C” which is Communication. The training will also include other needs identified by the field training officers and NYPD commanders, such as recent changes to the law and Department procedures. As much as possible, officers and supervisors will be trained by platoon in the company of officers with whom they usually work and during the hours that they usually work. Platoon training will prevent needless and disruptive changes to officers' schedules and have the added benefit of reinforcing situational awareness, team tactics and decision making among a group of officers who usually work together. Focus groups will be held with line officers to identify their opinions and perceptions about training needs, and these groups will be asked to review the curriculum in draft form.

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- Community Affairs Bureau (CAB) officers and newly appointed neighborhood coordinating officers (NCOs) assigned to precinct sectors will be trained as conflict mediators, which will help them to resolve community conflicts and disputes. (For a full description of the roles and functions of neighborhood coordinating officers see the Tackling Crime



section of this plan of action). CAB personnel often perform the role of communication coordinators and conflict resolvers in situations ranging from interpersonal disputes to highly stressful and potentially volatile protests and demonstrations. CAB personnel and NCOs will receive a four-day mediation training course approved by the New York State court system that will impart the communication skills they need to work collaboratively with external partners, effectively solve community problems, and apply de-escalation techniques during emotionally charged situations.

- The Training Bureau, in cooperation with the Deputy Commissioner of Collaborative Policing and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, is developing a Mental Health Training program for police officers and supervisors. Members of the service in Bronx and Northern Manhattan will be trained to better identify people who are mentally ill or substance abusers, to interact more effectively with these populations, and to assist them in obtaining timely mental health or substance abuse services. This training will include an overview of mental illness, specific common indicators of mental illness, intervention strategies; an overview of legal considerations, including mental hygiene law; and negotiation techniques and strategies, including mediation training.

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- The Training Bureau will develop training for select members of the Department in problem-solving and creative crime control. Police can be more effective when they engage in problem solving with others, especially those people in the neighborhoods most affected by the problem in question. There are a number of modern creative crime control strategies, including Focused Deterrence, Predictive Policing, Situational Crime Prevention, and Civil Enforcement that have proven effective in reducing crime and disorder. The objective of this training will be to encourage police personnel to develop new perspectives on the old problems of public safety and disorder and to implement new and innovative strategies that produce results.

RECRUIT TRAINING AND INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT

The Training Bureau is currently in the process of redesigning its recruit training program. While some changes were incorporated in the curriculum for the 900-officer recruit training class that started January 2015, the total redesign of the program has been implemented for the class that started in July 2015. The new program incorporates scenario-based training, instructors trained as learning facilitators, the concepts of procedural justice and implicit bias and specific training in the de-escalation skills needed to effectively deal with conflict situations.

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During the recruit training program, recruits will spend at least one week in the field as observers of police activity. They will also meet with community partners to strengthen recruit awareness of community perspectives on crime, order and quality-of-life issues. Following these field experiences, recruits will report what they have observed in class sessions and discuss and evaluate how the complexities of “real world” situations compare with instruction in the Police Academy.

Instructor development will help ensure that training is interactive, vibrant and effective. Instructors in the recruit program will be motivated to become expert in their respective fields and to return to field assignments on a regular basis for exposure to current field operations. The Police Academy’s instructors will increasingly move away from static lectures and become facilitators of learning, both at the recruit and in-service level.

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- To support and encourage instructors to specialize in a specific field, the Academy will no longer assign a single instructor to present the three topic areas of Law, Police Science, and Humanities to each of the Academy companies. Instructors will work in teams with each team member specializing in one of the primary subject areas. During the training, instructors will strive for consistency in the strategies and messages being taught. Instructors will ensure that practical scenario-based exercises are incorporated into lessons for each topic area. Instructors will encourage recruits to actively engage in academic exercises, group discussion and presentation of course content.

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- The Police Academy will cross-train instructors so that all disciplines are operating under the same tactical and communication guidelines. The instructors teaching the academic disciplines, as well as InTac tactical trainers, firearms instructors and driving instructors will all be briefed extensively on each other’s fields of expertise. Cross training will ensure a consistent message with respect to the strategic use of communication and physical tactics.

- Instructors will be required to work for a few months in field-related commands once every three years to ensure that all Academy instructors have a core set of current and relevant field experiences to relay to recruits and guide their training. Upon promotion to higher rank, Academy instructors will be required to take a post in another command for a set period of time. This requirement will give the promoted instructor time to learn about his or her new rank and to acquire a set of current experiences that can inform the instruction of future companies of recruits. It is critical that all instructors in the Academy be aware of changes in field strategies and tactics, as well as understanding the changes occurring in the city’s neighborhoods.

- Civilian instructors with competency in special areas, such as psychology, communi-

ty engagement, and other areas will be added to the instructional staff of the Academy.

- Community members will be brought into the training process regularly to interact with recruits and help them understand the dynamics of community life and neighborhood priorities.

CURRICULUM

The Police Academy’s curriculum and teaching methods will move away from lecture-based learning and towards interactive problem solving. Coupled with this shift, the Training Bureau will also move away from a “one size fits all” approach to training recruits. The new training system will seek to identify the areas where individual recruits require improvement and, when necessary, work with those recruits as individuals to strengthen them.

- To take full advantage of the Police Academy’s new facilities and tactical environments, recruit training courses will employ real scenarios from the five boroughs of New York City and ask recruits to analyze specific test cases. Academy instructors will guide conversations and draw on their own experience. Depending on the subject, guidance and policies stressed for that day, the scenarios will change. While each case will have its own unique characteristics, these scenarios will be similar to situations that NYPD officers tend to encounter multiple times during their careers.

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- To ensure that recruits are prepared for the realities of the field, they will be brought to the field to observe officers in action at numerous points during the training process.

- The Training Bureau will seek information about errors Police Academy graduates and veteran officers make in the field to help guide necessary changes to the curriculum. Field Training Officers will meet with the Police Academy’s staff to suggest opportunities



for improvements to the Police Academy's curriculum and learning experience.

- The new three day in-service training will be expanded and integrated into all the other courses taught at the Academy. The goal is to develop Probationary Police Officers (PPOs) with excellent conflict communication skills, who are committed to fairness and legitimacy in their policing activities, and who practice techniques that reduce unnecessary force, discourtesy, offensive language and abuse of authority, while providing quality service.
- Recruits will be trained and tested on communication skills to demonstrate empathy, gain voluntary compliance, build rapport and trust, and de-escalate emotionally charged situations. The development of these communication skills is critical to building trust and displaying respect with the public, as well as being able to gain voluntary compliance from uncooperative people.

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- The Police Academy will be adding civilian curriculum specialists and educators to its staff to provide guidance in curricula design, adult learning, student evaluation, facilitation by instructors and the development of scenario training as the key learning tool.
- The Academy will emphasize the writing skills required to complete patrol and related paperwork. Police Academy personnel will assess the writing skills of each probationary police officer and develop exercises to improve recruits' skills. When necessary, individual instruction will strengthen a recruit's ability to complete necessary reports.

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- With the NYPD moving forward with plan to equip patrol officers with body cameras, the Academy is exploring the use of body camera videos from the field as a means of developing instruction about both exemplary and poor officer interactions during difficult situations. These videos could be used to develop lessons about how to best handle situations. Based on what can be learned from the videos, training modules can be adjusted to take advantage of the field experiences to the benefit of all members of the Department.

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- A group of officers assigned to field commands will be invited to sit on a committee that will review new curricula to ensure that they meet the needs of officers in the field.
- The standards for graduating from the Police Academy will be made more stringent to insure that new officers are prepared to handle the work required of them.
 - o Historically and currently, recruits must qualify with firearms to graduate. Starting with the current class, the Police Academy will test probationary police officers on critical tactics skills, requiring all recruits to be tactically qualified prior to graduation.
 - o To graduate, recruits will have to demonstrate the ability to write clear, factually correct and complete narratives on critical reports.
 - o To graduate, recruits will have to demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate in conflict situations.
 - o To graduate, recruits will have to be able to choose the correct responses to a wide variety of street situations.



FIELD TRAINING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Because there has been little or no formal field training of new officers for some time and no ready cadre of experienced field trainers, it has been necessary to develop the current field training program in stages. In past years, new recruit officers were assigned to high crime Impact Zones immediately upon graduation from the Police Academy. The objective was to give the new officers exposure to difficult policing environments, but they were poorly prepared for the realities of street policing they would face in the Impact Zones. They soon learned that officer performance was frequently judged by activity numbers, and they often aggressively engaged in stop and frisk and searches for weapons and other contraband. Without guidance in the field, the officers often found the environment difficult.

“The Department, at the direction of the Police Commissioner, organized an initiative called the Partner Officer Program (POP) to provide the guidance needed to acclimate recruit officers to neighborhoods in a positive way.”

When the first recruit class of the current administration graduated in July 2014, it was deemed necessary to place the new recruits in impact zones for the summer to address a spike in crime and disorder. The Department, at the direction of the Police Commissioner, organized an initiative called the Partner Officer Program (POP) to provide the guidance needed to acclimate recruit officers to neighborhoods in a positive way. The graduating recruits, who became Probationary Police Officers upon graduation, were assigned to about 13 impact zones. In each case, experienced officers, who had excellent performance records in the precincts where they worked, were transferred into the impact areas to serve as coaches and partners for the new officers. These officers were called partner officers, bridging the gap for the new recruits between Academy training and street assignments. Each partner officer was assigned four recruits. Sergeants were assigned to supervise the partner officers and the new PPOs.

To help PPOs develop an understanding of their respective assigned neighborhoods, a group of community partners – volunteers recruited from among community leaders, business people and other neighborhood residents – worked with

the new officers, introducing them to residents and business people and walking with the recruits during some periods of the day. The partner officers and community partners were trained in joint Academy sessions, where they met and discussed the relevant neighborhoods. This process laid the foundation for important elements of the field training initiative that would be adopted for the following recruit class.

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After a successful pilot, the POP program was integrated into the newly-developed field training officer (FTO) program in January 2015. Under the FTO program, graduates of the Police Academy were distributed among all precincts, Housing Bureau police service areas and Transit Bureau districts, rather than being assigned to impact zones. Field training officers were selected to coach, mentor and train probationary police officers in these commands. Staffing needs were assessed and each precinct, police service area and transit district was assigned from six to 18 probationary police officers from the graduating Academy class.

“Each FTO has been partnered with two probationary police officers in a precinct, PSA or transit district. PPOs are assigned to FTOs on one of the three platoons for a two-month period and then rotate to another shift for the next two-month period until they have worked all three shifts.”



- Precinct, PSA and transit district commanders selected the personnel to serve as field training officers. Nearly 500 officers have been designated and trained as full-time or alternate FTOs. In addition to the FTOs, field training sergeants (FTS) have been selected and trained to oversee and manage the field training process.

- Each FTO has been partnered with two probationary police officers in a precinct, PSA or transit district. PPOs are assigned to FTOs on one of the three platoons for a two-month period and then rotate to another shift for the next two-month period until they have worked all three shifts.

- Each precinct, PSA and transit district has identified civilian community partners to act as liaisons between the new officers and key community groups, leaders and institutions, and to assist in identifying conditions in the community. Thus far, more than 400 community partners have been identified and agreed to assist with the new program.

- The Training Bureau will solicit comments from FTOs and community partners to identify the program's strengths and the areas that need improvement. The Training Bureau will revise both the academic curriculum in the Police Academy and the FTO program based on comments from the FTOs.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The Training Bureau is developing a senior executive program that will connect selected officers with corporate executives and academic institutions. This program is designed to identify leaders capable of advancing to highest levels of the Department and to develop their organizational management skills and experience in a variety of different corporate and police environments. This initiative will also allow these officers to learn from people who are widely recognized as experts in the fields of race relations, labor relations, and strategic management.

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Plans are being developed to modernize both the NYPD's driver's training facility at Floyd Bennett Field and firearms training facility at Rodman's neck. Renovations at both of these facilities are long overdue and are necessary to effectively train officers in firearms tactics and defensive driving.

THE FUTURE OF NYPD TRAINING

The Training Bureau and its Police Academy recognizes the challenges the NYPD faces in an era when police departments have been subject to intense criticism for uses of force and on other grounds. The bureau seeks to ensure that NYPD training is vibrant and meaningful, equips officers with the necessary skills to manage the city streets and engenders officer conduct that embodies fair and impartial policing. The Department has greatly increased in-service training for veteran officers, with a strong emphasis on managing street encounters, including arrests, to peaceful outcomes and on use of force tactics, when they are necessary, that protect the officers and the arrest subject from injury. After years in which in-service training opportunities were severely limited, the NYPD has committed to annual tactical training for all officers.

Training will become the cornerstone of professional development of all employees in the Department, and each employee will spend substantial time in training aimed at providing them the skills and knowledge needed to successfully address the policing challenges of the future. Probationary officers will be exposed to the full range of policing jobs and functions through a comprehensive field training program, giving them the foundation they need to work successfully as sector officers and neighborhood coordinating officers in the new Neighborhood Policing Plan.

“The NYPD will be molding a more effective and skilled police officer, able to exercise intelligent discretion in the field, to work with community members at solving local problems that give rise to crime and disorder, to defuse emotionally charged situations, thereby minimize the use of force, and to act decisively and safely in cases when use of force is necessary. “



Interactive problem solving exercises will be the hallmark of the new training for recruits and in-service officers alike. The NYPD will be molding a more effective and skilled police officer, able to exercise intelligent discretion in the field,

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