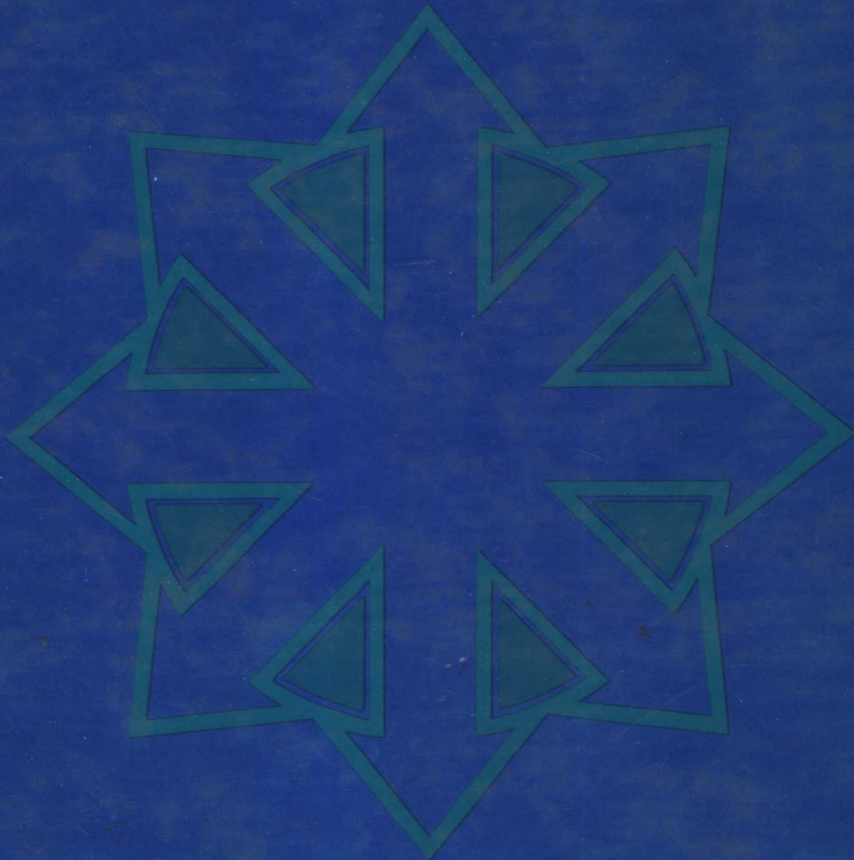


SECOND EDITION

POLICE FIELD OPERATIONS



THOMAS F. ADAMS

113900
OWENS TECH
\$40.95

POLICE
FIELD
OPERATIONS
SECOND EDITION

THOMAS F. ADAMS

*Chair, Criminal Justice Department,
Rancho Santiago College
Santa Ana, California*



REGENTS/PRENTICE HALL
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Adams, Thomas Francis

Police field operations / Thomas F. Adams.—2nd ed.
p. cm.

ISBN 0-13-684820-6

1. Police patrol—United States. I. Title.
HV8080.P2A397 1990
363.2'32'0973—dc20

Editorial/production supervision and
interior design: **Eileen M. O'Sullivan**

Cover design: **Bruce Kenselaar**

Manufacturing buyer: **David Dickey**



© 1990 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.
A Simon & Schuster Company
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

ISBN 0-13-684820-6

PRENTICE-HALL INTERNATIONAL (UK) LIMITED, London

PRENTICE-HALL OF AUSTRALIA PTY. LIMITED, Sydney

PRENTICE-HALL CANADA INC., Toronto

PRENTICE-HALL HISPANOAMERICANA, S.A., Mexico

PRENTICE-HALL OF INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED, New Delhi

PRENTICE-HALL OF JAPAN, INC., Tokyo

SIMON & SCHUSTER ASIA PTE. LTD., Singapore

EDITORA PRENTICE-HALL DO BRASIL, LTDA., Rio de Janeiro



Dedicated to my son **Tom**,
who courageously earned
the Peace Officer Medal of Valor

Preface

As a peace officer it is your responsibility to preserve the peace and tranquility of your community and to protect the lives and property of the people who live in—and visit—that community. There are few individuals in society who have a more sacred trust than yours. There will be times when you will have to decide whether or not to arrest a suspected offender, and that decision will have a profound influence on many lives and reputations. In less than a second, you may have to decide whether or not to use deadly force, to take the life of someone who you believe is presenting an immediate threat to your life or that of someone else. You will make wise decisions, and you will make mistakes as well. There will be times when you will have overwhelming support and other times when you will be all alone, with no one willing to give you moral or physical support. Because of these considerations, service as a peace officer is one of the most selfless and courageous career choices you could make.

Police Field Operations, Second Edition, has been developed for your guidance. Literally hundreds of sources have been drawn upon, including several dozens of the training bulletins and course outlines that I have used in 20 years of teaching in police academies, 14 years as a police professional and more than 30 years as a part-time, and then full-time, college instructor. We have been where you are, and it is my hope that the work that my colleagues and I have done in developing the tactics and techniques covered in this book will aid you in becoming a better professional peace officer. We all learn through the wisdom and experience of others.

We have attempted to present those techniques necessary for you to function as an effective field officer. You will, no doubt, decide that you and your fellow professionals have a better way to handle some of the situations discussed in this book. There are valid arguments why you should or should not—depending on your own perspective—follow the guidelines presented in this text. In the absence of a better way, may I suggest that you start with the data presented here and then improve upon it in your own way as you progress. Each one of the tactics and techniques included in the pages that follow has been field tested and has proven successful under the circumstances at various times over the past 30 years. Please look upon this material as a compilation of guidelines rather than as a collection of arbitrary rules to follow.

Sources of information and ideas for this book number literally in the hundreds, and most of the credit should go to those individuals in the profession whose unselfish devotion to our dream of professionalization has motivated them to share their “trade secrets” with their fellow professionals. None of this material has been taken verbatim from any source. You will note the limited use of footnotes and references, the reason being that this is a procedures book, not a compendium of information sources or a survey of the literature, as are some academic publications.

To you, my fellow professionals, I present this material. I challenge you to improve upon it, even render it obsolete, if you must.

Special thanks to Jack Pritchard, wherever you are, for getting me started in writing textbooks many years ago; to Criminal Justice Editor of Prentice-Hall Paul Corey for having more faith in me than I have had in myself at times; and to three of the country's finest for helping me update this second edition and for keeping me honest in presenting the principles and procedures in this book: Captain Dennis Conte, Los Angeles Police Department; Lieutenant Greg Cooper, Santa Ana Police Department; and Larry Richey, Lieutenant, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department.

T. F. Adams, Santa Ana

Law Enforcement

Code of Ethics

As a Law Enforcement Officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities, or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession . . . law enforcement.

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Introduction to Patrol

INTRODUCTION

The uniformed field officer of the local police or sheriff's department is the personification of law enforcement in the United States. To many people in the community, uniformed field officers are the *government*, or the *establishment*. To many, they alone are the criminal justice system, as the one judge they encounter becomes *the courts*. These are the people who cannot see the mayor, or the council members, or the prosecuting attorney, or a judge. Field officers thus become the representatives of those individuals because they are highly visible. The majority of the people in the community who are served by the police and who come in contact with them on a day-to-day basis respect the officers they know and respect them as their protectors. Others, however, see the uniformed officer as a nuisance; and still others look upon them as the *enemy*. It is the officer's responsibility to serve all members of the community with equal dedication, respect, and with a sense of justice.

As you many know, probably more than 80 percent of this nation's police agencies employ less than 20 officers. Those smaller departments probably have all, or all but one or two, of their officers assigned to field responsibilities, with additional special duties on an as-needed basis. Consider the police agency with only one officer; in that case, the chief is also the juvenile officer, records clerk, traffic investigator, patrol officer, and writer of parking tickets during slack hours. In that one-officer department, the chief will spend

the greatest percentage of time with field police activities. As the department grows to keep up with the increasing population, expanding geographical boundaries, and growing diversity of the jurisdiction, the chief will begin to add on to the force of officers, then will hire office personnel to take over the secretarial and record-keeping functions to free the officers for their field responsibilities. As the department continues to grow, officers are taken out of the field to specialize in traffic investigation and control, juvenile victims and perpetrators, plainclothes detective activities, and all the other specialized functions, each time adding to the patrol force to replace the specialists. All the while, the patrol force continues to be the principal functioning unit of the department.

In this chapter we take a look at the basic field unit, which is usually known as the patrol division. What are the objectives of the police or sheriff's department? Whatever they are, so are the objectives for the patrol unit, which is the primary operating unit for the entire organization. We list those objectives and briefly discuss each one; then we describe the many activities that the officers perform to meet each of those objectives. Next, distribution of the patrol force is explained, along with the administrative considerations that influence such distribution.

Administrative evaluation of the field activity reports of patrol officers included a goal of *absence of activities* amounting to the optimum of 50 percent of each officer's duty day. Minutes devoted to arrests, transporting prisoners, answering calls for service, and conducting routine and special investigations were tallied and subtracted from the 550-minute day (8½-hour day, including lunchtime) with the goal of having each officer's log show 200 to 300 minutes not accounted for. This was interpreted as *patrol time*, when the officer ostensibly was checking out the neighborhood, looking for crimes in progress—or recently committed—and being visible to the public and ready to take whatever action a situation called for. Of course, this never has been verifiable; perhaps an officer was just simply *doing nothing*.

With ongoing austerity programs brought on by budget constraints, expensive fuel, skyrocketing criminal activity related to the drug epidemic, rapid urbanization, cutbacks on personnel, and cost-effective analyses, there must be some hard decisions made as to whether "reactive patrol" (driving around the district waiting for something to happen, which is not too different from the old-time movie stereotype police officers who sit around the squad-room playing cards waiting for their calls) is still affordable, or sensible. The alternative is "proactive patrol," which puts the field units in their districts with prescribed objectives and verifiable tasks scheduled for the day to augment the calls and other on-sight activities that round out the officer's day.

During those times between called-for services when the officer would otherwise be "patrolling," the proactive officer would be making burglary prevention inspections of businesses and residences, going to the residence or workplace of known drug dealers or burglars and "tailing" them for a while to

see if they are plying their unlawful trades, making follow-up contacts with victims and witnesses of crimes and traffic collisions previously reported and currently under investigation. We shall come back to proactive patrol from time to time throughout this chapter, and it will pop up elsewhere whenever "routine patrol" comes up.

The entire book is directed to the people who make up the police department, both men and women of all races and all origins. However, because of the more recent emergence of the woman officer as a viable member of the department, we shall briefly discuss that development. Three additional topics will be addressed in this chapter: civil liabilities, discretionary prerogatives of the field officer, and the Peace Officer's Bill of Rights. All three go hand in hand, because an officer's use of discretionary powers involves risks and liabilities and the officer is entitled to rights of defense and other constitutional guarantees provided any other person.

OBJECTIVES OF POLICE FIELD OPERATIONS

Protect and Serve

This all-encompassing phrase includes the objectives of protecting lives and property and providing all those other services you as a police officer will be expected and required to provide. Essentially, this objective is met by obtaining an open line of communication between the people and the officers who serve them. Included in this category are the functions of "community relations" and "public relations." "Public relations" may be viewed as a series of programs to educate the public through speeches and public appearances at civic and school functions, keeping people informed on department attitudes and policies concerning law enforcement and crime prevention. "Community relations," an expansion of that concept, emphasizes establishment and maintenance of open lines of communication between the people and their police officers for the purpose of improving police services and communication channels with the public. Community-oriented policing would fall in this category. That concept is discussed under "Participative Law Enforcement."

Participative Law Enforcement

Attitudes of the people about how effective the police are in protecting them in their homes, on the streets, and wherever they may go in the city or county are extremely important. Opinion polls taken by media such as television or national magazines tend to take on the appearance of contests, listing which city is most dangerous for shopping in the malls—which has the greatest number of thefts from autos. Many people are impressionable and pay heed to what they read in those reports, making decisions about where to move the

home office of their major corporation, or their drug laboratory, and where they want to raise their children. Although the surveys may accurately reflect the exact results the reporters wish to report, people may be misled because they not only want security, but want to be told that the security is better than the city from which they are moving. For example, a gate, a high fence, and a security guard at the gate do not necessarily assure absolute safety. Rather, they create an *illusion* of security. Also, you are going to be hard-pressed to convince a family that has just been tied up in their home and robbed by a bunch of thugs that the city they live in is actually safer statistically than any of six other cities in which they might choose to live.

Teamwork between the public and the police is not a luxury; it is mandatory if we are to perform effectively. It is not a new concept. The *teamwork concept* just seems new to those of us who have forgotten the basics. In the small, intimate community, there is a constant interchange of ideas and vocalization of needs between the police and the people. In our drive to "professionalize," the police service has, in many respects, removed itself from the people you are to serve. Get back to the basics, and make a constant and deliberate effort to know your district and the people in it. Some people have called this "community-oriented policing" or "basic car plan." What they have done is to break the large and impersonal police departments into small units, creating a series of small "hometown" police departments that are responsive and responsible to smaller parts of the city as though they were separate cities. The citizens and the police work together to reduce crime, prevent delinquency and criminal behavior, maintain the peace, and reduce local problems that are the *mutual* responsibility of the police and the people.

The field officer's responsibility is to ensure that this one-on-one relationship between themselves and the public yields maximum results. There must be a constant effort to use every available opportunity to allow the people personally to know the officers and their enforcement philosophy and to become familiar with the overall attitudes of the department toward its general and specific responsibilities. Unfortunately, far too many people have formed attitudes based on their impressions of certain motion picture and television police personalities, or on what they have read in biased newspaper and magazine stories about the police, or on what they may have personally observed in isolated or unrelated incidents on occasions when certain police officers did not exemplify the professional image. There is no better opportunity for the police officer to cultivate attitudes toward the police—positive, it is hoped—than through personal and informal contacts.

Prevention of Criminal and Delinquent Behavior

This police objective is particularly aimed at ways and means of reducing the desire to commit crime. Sometimes you will succeed, but most of the time when you are influential in causing someone to "go straight," or decide not to commit a crime, you will probably never know it and will have no way to

measure how much crime you prevent. It is going to be virtually impossible for you to convince the successful burglar who nets thousands of tax-free dollars per month that crime does not pay and that a job in a fast-food restaurant at the minimum wage is the better way to go. Nevertheless, it is worth the effort. One objective must be to cause the burglar's net income to diminish through careful planning and effective law enforcement.

Rehabilitation and redirection of the criminal offender is the responsibility of parole and probation officers after those offenders have been identified and brought to trial by the police. The police responsibility is to identify those offenders, delinquents, and near-delinquents before an arrest becomes necessary. This is more regularly carried out by the field officer in contacts with juveniles whose behavior patterns are not so indelibly impressed and who might be amenable to change. Through keen observation and diligent investigation, the officer attempts to locate and detain the first-offending juvenile either before or during the commission of a criminal act and then take steps to help the child to redirect energies into lawful and socially acceptable channels.

Repression of Criminal and Delinquent Behavior

Repression of crime is generally accomplished either by having police officers present at specific locations maintaining a highly visible profile or by publicizing a highly active undercover operation. In both cases, the objective is to cause people to decide not to commit crimes for fear of being caught in the act. The theory is based upon the assumption that people will not commit crimes if they believe they are certain to be arrested when they do. Uniforms and distinctively marked vehicles immediately and unquestionably identify the police. As a field officer, your repressive activities are accomplished by making your presence known in such a way that, even when you are not at a specific location, the would-be miscreant will refrain from misbehaving because of the likelihood that you will suddenly pop out from nowhere and nab him, or her. We usually refer to this phenomenon as *police omnipresence*.

Actually, the uniformed police comprise only a small percentage of the overall force of individuals responsible for enforcement of public health and safety laws. Fire marshals, building inspectors, occupational safety and health investigators, health officers, fish and game wardens, the Coast Guard, harbor police, agriculture investigators, weights and measures examiners, investigators for the multitude of licensing agencies, and all types of referees and umpires and other investigators are constantly looking into the behavior of the people in the community. Other people responsible for the enforcement of police powers include social welfare investigators, probation and parole officers, prison guards, school principals and attendance officers, college administrators, driver's license examiners, highway patrol and animal control officers, customs inspectors, airport security, border patrol, secret service, the various federal and state investigative units. The lists goes on. But it is you, the uniformed field police officer, who represents them all.

For the crime and delinquency repressive objective of the police to be successful, it is imperative that the vast majority of the people comply with the law, be it out of fear of being caught or simply a desire to do what is right. Your role is to help those people continue to obey the law. Crime repression by police patrol is to try to create an impression of total and continuous presence without creating an air of oppressive dominance. In New Amsterdam (now known as New York), the night warden walked down the streets and alleyways shaking a noisy staff that sounded like a rattle, warning any criminals that he was in the area and that they should behave, at least while he was in the neighborhood. This "rattle watch" was less sophisticated than our present methods of using distinctively painted vehicles with light and siren bars extending across the roof and wearing readily recognizable uniforms. A continuous and unpredictable patrol by the field officer is an attempt to create this feeling of omnipresence. This repressive patrol activity may become a luxury that cannot be justified on the basis of cost-effectiveness because of the increasing cost of fuel for the vehicles and the higher salaries of the officers.

One of the most effective activities of the crime repressive role of the police is the field interview program, which consists of making actual field contacts with individuals you encounter in your district when their presence causes you to have reasonable suspicion as to their identity and motive for being where they are under the circumstances that call for further inquiry. The program has proven to be highly effective.

Identification and Apprehension of, and Conviction of, Offenders

This objective is addressed by the field officers knowing their districts and the behavior patterns of the people in them. As one of those officers, you will be in a position to readily identify obvious or suspected violations of the laws and to take immediate enforcement action when possible. When you are assigned to investigate a complaint of a crime in your jurisdiction, it is first your responsibility to know what is a crime and what is not. You must initiate the investigation immediately, locate and question victims and witnesses, protect the crime scene against further contamination, and make very effort to locate and apprehend the suspect.

For misdemeanors not committed in your presence, and for other crimes requiring further investigation, it is your responsibility to make the decision *not* to arrest at that time, but to carry through with the investigation as fast and as far as you can before taking the case to the prosecutor for a warrant, or turning it over to your investigation unit in the department for follow-up and completion.

Your responsibility also extends to include exoneration of the wrongfully accused, as well as conviction of the guilty. Your participation in this process does not end until you have presented evidence and testimony in court as required by the prosecution and have gained the eventual outcome of the case: conviction of the accused when that person is guilty.

The *due process* provisions of the Constitution of the United States and the respective states have been interpreted by the various courts, and their decisions have served as controlling influences on such police procedures as field interviews, stop and frisk, arrest, search, seizure of evidence, impounding contraband, storing vehicles, interviewing the suspect, use of force, and various other activities. It is your duty to work within the framework of the many laws and guidelines and to assure fair presentation of evidence in court to assure a conviction that will withstand the test of constitutionality.

Traffic Flow and Collision Reduction

Pedestrian and vehicle traffic must be free-flowing and collision-free so that people may move safely from one place to another in your jurisdiction. The police objective is to determine the causes of congestion and to relieve it, which involves investigation and the Three E's: education, engineering, and enforcement. Enforcement is the most highly visible aspect of these three aspects of the police traffic responsibility, and engenders the greatest amount of antipathy from traffic law violators. Intelligent enforcement of traffic law violations, focusing attention on those violations that cause the most number of injuries and property damage and citing according to a set of priorities designed to significantly reduce those violations and corresponding collisions does yield significant results that even the most severe critic cannot dispute.

Engineering at first does not strike one as a police responsibility, but it is. For example: analysis of the collision statistics show that an inordinate number of unlawful left turns at a certain intersection are listed as the cause of collisions. Officers issue a lot of citations to the violators of those violations at that location and the collision rate goes down. But did they solve the problem? The reason for the collisions may be that many drivers are frustrated because there is no left-turn lane and traffic is so heavy that they cannot make a left turn without taking a chance and cutting in when they see a break in opposing traffic. What they need is a left-turn lane and a traffic signal with a left-turn green sequence so that the people turning left can do so without having to play "chicken" with opposing traffic. Officers in the field can recognize this problem because they are dealing with it on a daily basis, and they should pass this information on to the city traffic engineer or public works department.

The education aspect of traffic control can significantly reduce collisions by requiring violators to attend classes where their specific types of violations are discussed and they may go through a retraining process to reduce their citations and lower their insurance rates. During the past few years we have seen a revolution by the outraged public against drivers who operate their vehicles while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. Education of the driving public is aimed at changing the behavior and attitude of people who use those drugs and have been driving motor vehicles as a matter of routine, but who are now changing their behavior to avoid arrest and tragedies that they might cause.